

5 Proven Tips that Really Work to Reduce Celebratory Gunfire

As we ring in and welcome New Year's Eve, it is important to understand the reality of illegal celebratory gunfire. Almost 15 percent of all gunfire incidents take place around New Year's Eve, New Year's Day and the 4th of July. The dangers continue to be serious as stray bullets continue to injure innocent people and can be deadly. Law enforcement agencies can take a proactive leadership role to help communities reduce this illegal gunfire this year. Cities like Springfield, MA, Rocky Mount, NC, Miami Gardens, FL have adopted these 5 strategies and they have worked to reduce illegal celebratory gunfire overall.

1 Plan ahead — It's not too early to begin planning for New Year's Eve! Take the time to do research weeks in advance of New Year's Eve to identify hot spots areas and record addresses where celebratory gunfire was detected last year. Then, use this list to engage the community and prevent it from happening this year in those same areas.

2 Engage agency personnel early — Communicate with your agency personnel along with probation/parole officers, and gang enforcement units and let them know the plan for reducing celebratory gunfire. Make a plan to reduce it this year, and talk about it openly at your agency.

3 Engage your community — Knock on doors, Use Social Media. Assign uniformed agency personnel to visit each address on the hot spot list and talk with community residents weeks before New Year's Eve. Take the time to explain the dangers of celebratory gunfire and tell of first-hand tragedies the local agency might have experienced. Communicate your police department's New Year's Eve policing plan with meetings, notices and be sure to announce on social media—make it clear to everyone in the community that celebratory is dangerous and illegal. Tell people that your agency is committed to reducing it this year to protect residents.

4 Enforce consequences of celebratory gunfire — Remind residents of the criminal consequences of celebratory gunfire. (The ShotSpotter team recommends publicizing and enforcing a strict “no tolerance” policy on this activity and aggressive prosecution of the case.) You can also engage community leaders to make them aware of the dangers of celebratory gunfire and encourage them to report all incidents.

5 Assign special police units — During New Year's Eve period, assign additional special police units, resources and/or overtime cars, to hot spot areas for quick response to gunfire alerts.

Bonus New Year's Eve Tip:

Lieutenant Ryan Hepler of the Rocky Mount Police Department has had success with reducing celebratory gunfire over the past few years. Rocky Mount, NC had a 19.3% decline in celebratory gunfire incidents in 2014 vs. 2013 (from 57 to 46 incidents). Ryan told ShotSpotter this week that part of his success includes that patrol officers hand deliver informational letters to residents of addresses that had gunfire alert(s) the previous New Year's Eve. This was an essential component to their success this past year.

For more tips on how to reduce celebratory gunfire, visit our [Celebratory Gunfire Resource Page](#). If you have questions or need additional information on your city, feel free to use SST resources to get the additional information you need to support your analysis of data for media outlets.

Have a Safe and Happy New Year from the ShotSpotter Gunfire Reduction Team!



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