

# Direction on an Ordinance to Ban the Sale and Distribution of Mylar Balloons

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# Summary & Recommendation

- City Council directed staff to present options for an ordinance prohibiting the sale and distribution of mylar balloons in Alameda.
- Staff proposes consideration of a citywide ordinance.

# Background

- AB 847 (2022) phases out conductive metallic balloon sales statewide by 2027 - 2031.
- Mylar balloons cause occasional power outages.
- Staff reviewed eight California cities ordinances and conducted outreach to businesses.
- Staff is restricting mylar balloon use as a condition for event permits and any use of public space such as parks.
- Staff is expanding education campaigns, especially around graduations, holidays, and major events.

# Local Impact

- 54 mylar balloon incidents over 5 years; 7 resulted in outages, four of which were less than 5 seconds.
- The remaining 3 outages range from 0.75 to 2 hours, affecting 60 to 200 customers.
- Estimated cost per incident: \$25,000.

# Ordinance Considerations

- Consider an ordinance to ban sale/distribution of mylar balloons until state law is fully implemented.
- Ordinance options could include:
  - Complaint driven or actively enforced
  - Restricting only mylar balloons or a broader helium ban
  - Immediate versus a phased implementation of outreach, education and then enforcement
  - Tracking outcomes

# Outreach Findings

- Retailers: 80% of balloon sales are mylar; latex alternatives seen as inadequate. Retailer types include grocery, party and discount stores and florists.
- Retailers unlikely to voluntarily phase out sales; prefer ordinance-based compliance.
- Peer cities rely on complaint-driven enforcement; public support grows with education.

# Financial & Environmental Impact

- No additional financial resources required, pending direction. Complaint-based, phased enforcement is within existing Code Enforcement budget with support from Economic Development on outreach.
- Action aligns with Climate Action and Resiliency Plan.

# Recommendation

- Provide direction on an ordinance to ban the sale and distribution of mylar balloons in Alameda.