



Santa Rosa Police Department Sideshow Ordinance

Santa Rosa City Council Meeting
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Characteristics of a Sideshow

- Sideshows are an informal exhibition of automotive stunts, often held in vacant lots and public street intersections in local neighborhoods
- A sideshow includes spinning doughnuts, which are exhibitions of speed in combination with loss of tire traction, as well as other reckless driving maneuvers
- Often crowds of spectators, both in and out of cars, gather around the reckless driving exhibitions which can be very dangerous

Characteristics of a Sideshow

- Many times, violent incidents including fights and shootings will occur at the events
- Suspects and spectators involved in these events frequently flee the scene, resulting in high-speed vehicle pursuits
- Until more recently, sideshow exhibitions have impeded law enforcement's ability to intervene in an active incident due to the number of people and cars that show up
- Sideshows significantly effect local neighborhoods resulting in numerous calls to dispatch of loud music, speeding, blocked intersections and squealing tires



Impacts of Sideshows

- Blocked Roadways: Emergency Services are completely shut off from roadways, often without notice, impacting police, fire, and medical responses
- Dangerous Events: Collisions, violence, shootings, and fights occur. Participants and spectators are hospitalized or killed
- Officer Injuries: Officers assaulted by participants and spectators
- Public Damage: Police vehicles, streets, signs, light posts, and signal lights
- Environmental impacts
- Private Damage: Fences, houses, landscaping, and parked vehicles
- Nuisances: Noise from engines and tires



Strategies to Address Sideshows

- SRPD has towed over 100 vehicles over the past 18 months during Sideshow traffic stops and court ordered tows
- Intel to detect upcoming events
- Upstaffing when information points to a Sideshow event anticipated in our area - Cost of over 35k so far this year in overtime operations
- Training officers in specialized enforcement codes
- Use of technology - Drones

Strategies to Address Sideshows

- Collaboration with our Sonoma County LE partners
- Focus on Enforcement/Education/Engineering
- Working with City Attorney's Office on Sideshow Ordinance
- California Assembly Bill 3 - upcoming legislation in 2025 which would suspend licenses of drivers participating in a Sideshow
- SRPD has developed well organized techniques and tactics to resolve sideshow incidents with maximum safety and efficiency, and to create universal procedures that enable consistent responses to sideshows with a county-wide protocol

Strategies



- Engineering: SRPD worked with Traffic and Engineering to identify and install Botts Dots and barriers
- Sebastopol at West now has raised delineators
- Identified 30 intersections that would benefit from raised barriers

Sideshow Ordinance

Sections:

- 10-26.010 Name- Sideshow Ordinance
- 10-26.020 Definitions
- 10-26.030 Participants Prohibited at Street Races and Reckless Driving Exhibitions
- 10-26.040 Spectators prohibited at Sideshows
- 10-26.060 Promoting, Organizing or Facilitating a Sideshow

10-26.030 Participants: Prohibited at Street Races and Reckless Driving Exhibitions

Knowingly participate as a driver at a Sideshow, Street Race or Reckless Driving Exhibition conducted on a public street or highway; or

Knowingly present as a Passenger at a Sideshow, Street Race or Reckless Driving Exhibition conducted on a public street or highway or in an Off-street Parking Facility

Proving this section includes; (10-26.050)

- Previous participant
- Previously aided and abetted
- Previously attended
- Previously present at locations where preparation were made for a Sideshow
- Absence of mistake or accident or propensity of defendant

10-26.040 Spectators Prohibited at Street Races and Reckless Driving Exhibitions

Makes it unlawful for any person to:

- **Knowingly** present as a Spectator where Preparations are being made for a Street Race conducted on a public street or highway; or
- **Knowingly** present as a Spectator where Preparations are being made for a Reckless Driving Exhibition conducted on a public street or highway or in an Off-street Parking Facility.

Proving this section includes;

- Previous Spectator
- Previously aided and abetted
- Previously attended
- Previously present at locations where preparations were made for a Sideshow
- Absence of mistake or accident or propensity of defendant

10-26.060 Promoting, Organizing or Facilitating Spectators to Gather

Makes it unlawful for any person to:

- **Knowingly** encourage, promote, instigate, assist, facilitate, aide, or abet the gathering of persons as Spectators **at a Sideshow, Street Race or Reckless Driving Exhibition** conducted on a public street or highway; or conducted on a public street or highway, or Off-street Parking facility.
- **Knowingly** encourage, promote, instigate, assist, facilitate, aid or abet the gathering of persons as Spectators **where preparations** are being made for a Sideshow, Street Race or Reckless Driving Exhibition conducted on a public street or highway, or in an Off-street Parking Facility.

10.26.070 – Penalties

- Misdemeanor or Infraction-Maximum of six (6) months in jail and a fine of \$1,000.00, **unless at the discretion of the city attorney or district attorney, the violation is reduced to an infraction.**
- Defendant may be liable for the actual damages caused by said violation, the total amount may be determined by a jury or a court sitting without a jury.
- City Attorney has discretion on whether to charge as a misdemeanor/infraction with community service as option.
- Discretion depending on circumstances/priors/exculpatory evidence.
- Objective is to use as a deterrent and apply accountability.

Recommendation

It is recommended by the Police Department that the Council introduce an ordinance to the Santa Rosa City Code adding Chapter 10-26 Sideshows for citing Participants, Spectators and Organizers of Sideshow events in Santa Rosa.

Questions?