

Sonoma County Sheriff's Office

PROPOSED ORDINANCE
SIDESHOWS, STREET RACES,
AND RECKLESS DRIVING
EXHIBITIONS

Presented by Sheriff Engram



Characteristics of Sideshows

- 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



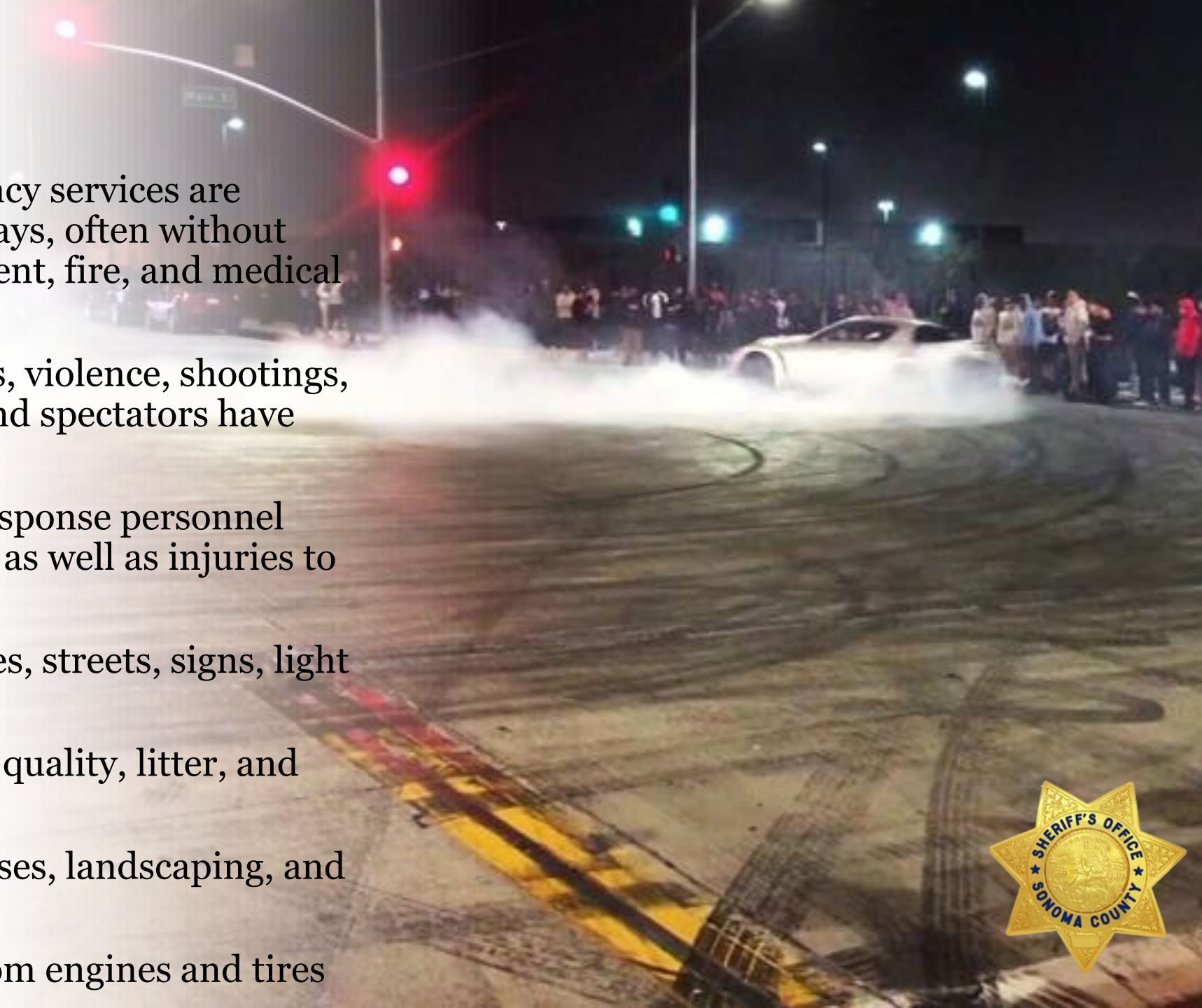
Characteristics of Sideshows Continued

- 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 law enforcement, fire, and medical responses
- **Dangerous Events:** Collisions, violence, shootings, and fights occur. Participants and spectators have been hospitalized or killed
- **Injuries:** to both emergency response personnel and participants and spectators as well as injuries to participants and spectators
- **Public Damage:** Police vehicles, streets, signs, light posts, and signal lights
- **Environmental impacts:** air quality, litter, and fires
- **Private Damage:** Fences, houses, landscaping, and parked vehicles
- **Nuisances:** Noise pollution from engines and tires



Response to Sideshows

- Local ordinances – City of Santa Rosa, City of Rohnert Park, and the Town of Windsor. In process for Cities of Sonoma, Petaluma, and Cotati
- Sonoma County Law Enforcement Chief's Association (SCLECA) Countywide Law Enforcement Protocol
- Training deputies in specialized enforcement codes
- AB 3 – effective July 1, 2025, will authorize the court to suspend license of drivers participating in exhibitions of speed
- Mitigation through education, engineering, and enforcement



Proposed Sideshow Ordinance

- Amends Chapter 19 of the Sonoma County Code to add a new Article VII – titled Sideshow, Street Races, and Reckless Driving Exhibitions
- Prohibits participating, spectating, and/or promoting illegal sideshows, street races and reckless driving exhibitions on public streets, highways, and off-street parking facilities in the unincorporated area of Sonoma County
- 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



Penalties for Violations

- Any person who violates the new chapter is guilty of a misdemeanor subject to a maximum of six (6) months in jail and a fine of \$1,000, unless at the discretion of the prosecuting agency, the violation is reduced to an infraction
- Any person who violates the new chapter or who aides in the violation of the chapter is liable for the actual damages caused by said violations, in such amount as may be determined by a jury or a court sitting without a jury



QUESTIONS

