



# Huntington Beach Police Department

2000 Main Street, Huntington Beach, CA 92648

(714) 960-8811

Julian Harvey, Chief of Police

## Press Release

**Prepared by:** Jennifer Carey, Public Information Officer

**Release Date/Time:** May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

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## **Huntington Beach Police Department Declares Unlawful Assembly in Response to Unruly Social Media Gathering**

The Huntington Beach Police Department (HBPD) declared an unlawful assembly at 7:13 p.m. on Saturday, May 22, 2021 in the downtown area due to unruly crowds.

The HBPD was made aware of a viral social media post earlier in the week encouraging individuals to congregate at the beach for a large party. The Department deployed dedicated resources and developed multiple contingency plans in advance to prepare for the highly publicized event, which included the support of partnering agencies throughout the County to assist as needed. Additionally, messaging was posted to the Department's social media pages notifying residents and visitors of the gathering as well as the Department's posture in response.

The initial crowd at the beach grew in size and moved to the downtown area where it was estimated to be over 2,500. As the crowd size continued to grow rapidly, large groups disbursed into various locations throughout the area, throwing bottles, rocks, fireworks, and other items at officers. At that time, the HBPD requested assistance from outside agencies. Throughout the course of the evening, over 150 officers from virtually all agencies within Orange County were deployed to Huntington Beach based on the pre-arranged request for assistance. To assist with crowd dispersal in the downtown area, an emergency curfew was put into effect on May 22, 2021 at 11:30 p.m. through May 23, 2021 at 5:30 a.m. for all individuals within the area of Beach Boulevard to Goldenwest Street and Pacific Coast Highway to Yorktown Avenue.

121 adults and 28 juveniles were arrested and booked for various charges including vandalism, the firing of dangerous/illegal fireworks, failure to disperse, and curfew violations. Multiple downtown businesses, numerous police vehicles and a lifeguard tower suffered damage due to vandalism. At this time, no significant injuries have been reported.

The City of Huntington Beach and the HBPD continue to prepare for potential further gatherings, and as always, will be strictly enforcing all applicable laws and ordinances. The safety and security of our community is paramount; unlawful, disruptive conduct will not be tolerated.