



# Long Beach Fire Department Bureau of Fire Prevention

## RESIDENTIAL INSPECTION PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **HOW WILL THIS PROGRAM BENEFIT ME?**

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Fire and life safety inspections are done to help protect owners and residents from the devastating effects of fire. By promoting a safe living environment in these occupancies, the chance for fire decreases. Fire can kill, disable, destroy property and disrupt lives. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), seventy-nine percent of all the 480,500 building fires reported in 2012 occurred in residential properties; including homes, hotels, motels, apartment buildings, rooming houses, and dormitories. Eighty-three percent (2,380) of all fire deaths occurred in the home. There were 13,125 civilian injuries and more than 7 billion dollars of loss.

### **ARE THESE INSPECTIONS REQUIRED?**

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Yes. These inspections must be conducted annually for all properties containing three or more dwelling units, such as apartments, condominiums, hotels, motels, lodging houses, bed and breakfast facilities, and congregate residences. The California Health and Safety Code, Section 13146.2 (a) mandates that the inspections be completed annually, (b) provides the City legal authority to charge property owners to recover reasonable costs for providing these annual inspections.

### **WHEN WILL THESE INSPECTIONS HAPPEN?**

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Inspections are scheduled to begin in September 2014. They will be conducted by Fire Prevention Inspectors and Fire Engine Companies Monday through Friday during the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm. Large occupancies may be contacted to arrange inspection dates and times in an effort to ensure access to fire system components and facility personnel responsible for their maintenance.

### **WHAT WILL THE INSPECTORS LOOK FOR?**

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A typical fire and life safety inspection for these occupancies includes, checking for fire hazards specific to access, exiting, exit system components, fire protection equipment, fire extinguishers, storage, housekeeping, and utilities (gas and electric). A "Safety Pre- Inspection" check sheet is available to assist you.

### **WILL THE INSPECTORS ENTER INDIVIDUAL UNITS?**

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Generally, inspectors will not examine the interior of units. However, if an occupant is home, he/she may request the inspector to check their smoke detector. Inspectors may check smoke detectors in occupied or vacant units if the owner or manager is present and gives consent.

### **HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR MY INSPECTION?**

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Your property should be maintained in good order. For example, common areas and exit hallways should be clear of stored items; laundry rooms kept clean; address and unit numbers clearly visible; exit signs well-maintained; hydrants, fire sprinkler systems and utility valves kept clear of vegetation. Fire extinguishers must be serviced and tagged annually by a certified contractor. Fire sprinkler systems require service every five years and fire alarm systems must be serviced annually. Smoke detectors and batteries should be checked twice a year. A "Safety Pre-Inspection" check sheet is available at the Long Beach Fire Department Headquarters, 3205 Lakewood Blvd, Long Beach, CA.

## **WHAT IS THE COST OF THE INSPECTIONS?**

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The cost of the inspection can change over time and is currently \$52 to \$524 per property, depending upon the number of units. Fees will only be assessed after an initial inspection has occurred and may change over time. At the conclusion of the inspection, a report detailing any violations that need correction will be left with or mailed to the property owner. If a re-inspection is necessary, it will be conducted on or after 30 days from the initial inspection. Violations will be cleared on the first re-inspection, when corrective action has been taken. If a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> re-inspection is required, additional inspection fees will be charged.

## **DO OTHER BUSINESSES PAY INSPECTION FEES?**

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Yes, several types of businesses pay Fire Department Permit Fees, which cover the cost of inspections, such as restaurants, nightclubs, and storage facilities.

## **WHY NOT CHARGE FINES INSTEAD OF FEES?**

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The Fire Department's goal is to achieve compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. The purpose is not to penalize property owners, but to educate and gain compliance. The Fire Department's ultimate goal is to have citizens living in safe multi-unit dwelling properties. Funding the program through fines would create an unpredictable revenue source, which will not produce full cost recovery for staffing of inspectors.

Additional information is available at Long Beach Fire Department Headquarters, Bureau of Fire Prevention, located at 3205 Lakewood Blvd, Long Beach, CA 90808 or by calling (562) 570-2563. Additional information includes: Safety Pre-Inspection Check Sheet, and a Fire Code Reference Sheet.