

# LOS ANGELES FIRE COMMISSION

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August 16, 2017

Honorable Members of the City Council  
City of Los Angeles  
City Hall, Room 395  
Attn: City Clerk

Honorable Eric Garcetti  
Mayor, City of Los Angeles  
Room 303, City Hall  
Attn: Mandy Morales, Legislative Coordinator

[BFC 17-093] – FEE REQUESTED FOR INSPECTION TO OBTAIN A FIRE CLEARANCE LETTER

At its meeting of August 15, 2017, the Board of Fire Commissioners approved the Fee Requested for Inspection to Obtain a Fire Clearance Letter report and its recommendations. The report is hereby transmitted concurrently to the Mayor and City Council for consideration and approval.

Should you need additional information, please contact the Board of Fire Commissioners' office at 213-978-3838.

Sincerely,

Isela Iñiguez  
Acting Commission Executive Assistant

Attachment

cc: Board of Fire Commissioners (without attachments)  
Fire Chief Ralph M. Terrazas (without attachments)

August 15, 2017

# LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



RALPH M. TERRAZAS  
FIRE CHIEF

APPROVED: 8/15/2017  
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
BY: [Signature]  
COMMISSION EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

July 27, 2017

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
FILE NO. 17-093

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: [Signature] Ralph M. Terrazas, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: FEE REQUESTED FOR INSPECTION TO OBTAIN A FIRE CLEARANCE LETTER

FINAL ACTION:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved w/Corrections	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn
	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied	<input type="checkbox"/> Received & Filed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

## SUMMARY

The purpose of this proposed Ordinance and fee is to establish cost recovery to the City of Los Angeles for the time spent to conduct a requested inspection. Requested inspections are to be defined as, *"An inspection that is requested from a business or building owner with the intent to receive a fire clearance letter stating that the building and business are fire code compliant at the time of the inspection. Normal periodic inspections and inspections covered under other sections of this Code would not be considered a requested inspection."*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board:

1. Approve that a fee shall be charged for requested inspections.
2. Approve the requested inspection fee to be a minimum one hour plus hour for hour for any additional time at the current Inspector hourly rate (currently \$216/hour).
3. Direct the Board Executive Assistant to forward this report to the Mayor and City Council for consideration and approval.
4. Request the City Council to instruct the City Attorney to draft an Ordinance to the Los Angeles Municipal Code (L.A.M.C.) Section 57.122 establishing charging a fee for a requested inspection, Section 57.202, defining a requested inspection, and Section 57.114.1.1 establishing the method of calculating the fee.

5. Request the City Attorney to report back to the City Council within 30 days with an Ordinance amending the L.A.M.C. Sections 57.122, 57.202, and 57.114.1.1, per the recommendations in this report.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

If implemented in July 2018, this new fee is expected to generate revenue of \$108,000 for Fiscal Year 2018-2019.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### Requested Inspection

The State agencies responsible for the administration of insurance payments from Medicare, Medi-Cal, and other public assistance programs to doctors' offices and clinics often require these establishments to obtain a fire clearance letter from the local Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). The letter simply states that the facility has been inspected and is compliant with the fire code.

The Los Angeles Fire Department as the AHJ must conduct an inspection of the facility and then generate a fire clearance letter in order for them to continue to participate in the programs. These offices and clinics normally are not complex inspections but require at least one hour to be completed.

The language for a requested inspection will be broad enough to include any request where a fire clearance letter is requested for any purpose not already addressed in this code. The key element of the requested inspection is the request for a fire clearance letter.

At the current time the fire department does not have a tracking mechanism to track the total number of requested inspections conducted each year. It would be fair to estimate that the number of requested inspections is between 500 and 1,000 annually. These inspections are conducted by both Inspectors assigned to the Fire Prevention and Public Safety Bureau as well as field resources assigned to Emergency Operations Bureau as established by policy (Manual of Operations 11/1-28.84).

There is no California State law prohibiting the City of Los Angeles from charging for these inspections.

#### Tracking

At the current time these inspections have not been tracked. There are several sources that conduct these inspections. For example, there are 104 fire stations to handle the requests in buildings for which they have primary inspection responsibility and a total of 40 Fire Inspectors handle the majority of the other requests, which are in buildings they have primary inspection responsibility.

When implemented these inspections would be consolidated at the Fire Prevention Bureau and tracked. A standalone computer application will need to be developed pending enhancements to the FPA application or development of a replacement application.

Fee

The current Cost of Special Services, Resolution No. 1242, established the hourly rate at \$216/hour for inspections. The Department estimates it conducts 500 requested inspections per year, which would generate estimated annual revenue of \$108,000 under the current hourly rate.

**CONCLUSION**

Currently the fire department conducts between 500 and 1,000 requested inspections each year. By implementing this fee the 500 to 1,000 hours spent conducting these inspections required outside of the normal inspection cycle will achieve cost recovery for the inspection time.

Board report prepared by Scott Miller, Captain I, Public Assemblage Unit, Fire Prevention and Public Safety Bureau.