

# LOS ANGELES FIRE COMMISSION

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FIRE COMMISSIONERS

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March 20, 2018

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 18-028] – FEES FOR HIGH-PILED COMBUSTIBLE STORAGE PLANS,  
EMERGENCY RESPONDER RADIO COVERAGE SYSTEMS AND INSTALLATION OF  
GATES AND BARRIERS ACROSS FIRE APPARATUS ACCESS ROADS

At its meeting of March 20, 2018, the Board of Fire Commissioners approved the 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)

# LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



RALPH M. TERRAZAS  
FIRE CHIEF

APPROVED: 3/20/18  
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
BY: *[Signature]*  
COMMISSION EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

March 7, 2018

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
FILE NO. 18-028

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

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

SUBJECT: FEES FOR HIGH-PILED COMBUSTIBLE STORAGE PLANS,  
EMERGENCY RESPONDER RADIO COVERAGE SYSTEMS AND  
INSTALLATION OF GATES AND BARRIERS ACROSS FIRE  
APPARATUS ACCESS ROADS

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 Withdrawn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 the proposed ordinance is to create a new item under Section 118.1.1 for the required plan review for the installation of high-piled combustible storage, to create an additional category for operational permits required under Section 105.6 for the use of high-piled storage in buildings, and an additional two categories for specific action or project permits required under Section 105.7 for the installation of emergency responder radio coverage systems and gates and barriers across fire apparatus access roads.

The above mentioned plan review and new permit categories are currently adopted in the California Fire Code. Adopting the required plan review and permits into the Los Angeles Fire Code lets the Fire Department verify proper system installation, and compliance with fire code and adopted standards. In addition, the operational permit allows the Fire Department means to verify continued code compliance. New fees associated with the plan review and permits ensure that the Fire Department recovers the cost of the services provided.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board:

1. Approve the establishment of plan review fee for the installation of high-piled combustible storage systems.
2. Approve that a fee shall be charged for operational permits of high-piled combustible storage occupancies.
3. Approve the establishment of a permit and a corresponding fee for the plan review for the installation of emergency responder radio coverage systems.

4. Approve the establishment of a permit and a corresponding fee for the plan review for the installation of gates and barriers across fire apparatus access roads.
5. Approve that the required specific action or project permits shall be calculated through the established method prescribed in the Los Angeles Fire Code (L AFC), Section 57.114.
6. Approve that the required operational permits shall be calculated through the established method prescribed in the L AFC, Section 57.113.
7. Request to publish the required notice of public hearing on the proposed fees at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.
8. Request that this report be forwarded to the City Council and Mayor for consideration and approval.
9. Request the City Council to instruct the City Attorney to draft an ordinance to the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC), Section 57.118 New Construction Plan Review and Inspection, Section 57.105.6 Operational Permits, and Section 57.105.7 Required Specific Action or Project Permits.
10. Request the City Attorney to report back to the City Council within 30 days with an ordinance amending the LAMC, Section 57.118 New Construction Plan Review and Inspection, Section 57.105.6 Operational Permits, and Section 57.105.7 Required Specific Action or Project Permits.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **High-Piled Combustible Storage**

High-piled combustible storage by definition of the fire code is the storage of combustible materials in closely packed piles or combustible materials on pallets, in racks or on shelves where the top of storage is greater than 12-feet in height or when Group A plastics, flammable liquids, idle pallets and similar commodities, where the top of storage is greater than 6-feet in height. Occupancies with high-piled combustible storage systems present a great deal of challenges to first responders in a fire incident due to the large concentration of combustible materials.

The fire code currently has regulations under Chapter 32 for high-piled combustible storage that addresses Fire Department access and fire protection systems based on the size, arrangement and commodity of the items that are stored. Fire protection and life safety features often associated with high-piled combustible storage systems involve automatic fire suppression, fire detections, redundant Fire Department access, smoke and heat removal systems and regulation of pile and rack spacing such as flue spacing and aisle widths. Because the fire protection and life safety systems rely heavily on specific commodity type and arrangement it is important that the Fire Department have a means of formally regulating the installation of the systems and the upkeep through annual inspections.

Under the Pre-2014 LAFC, there was no required permit for the installation or maintenance of high-piled combustible storage systems. As of January 2014, the LAFC has been based on the California Fire Code which requires operational permits under Section 105.6.

Adding a new item under Section 118.1.1 for the installation of high-piled combustible storage systems will allow the Fire Department to require plans from the installers in order to verify that minimum fire and life safety protection standards are met. Through the plan review process, installers and building owner would have to disclose commodity types, quantity and arrangement of the combustible items being stored. Provide analysis to prove if existing fire sprinkler systems meet water supply demand for the combustible storage systems. After the permit is issued, the Fire Department will have a formal method to inspect the facility for proper access and verify that fire and life safety systems required are installed per approved plans prior to occupancy.

Finally, amending an operational permit under Section 105.6 for high-piled combustible storage facilities housing high-piled storage over 500 square feet allows the Fire Department means of verifying facilities maintains compliance with code. Annual inspections also allow for the proper documentation of fire code violations which can be communicated to the local fire stations as a warning when responding to a fire incident.

Section 57.118.2.1 computes the fee for plan review and first inspection, (one hour of plan review and up to two hours of inspection time) based on project valuation, with minimum fee of three hours. Using the current cost of services schedule, three hours would reflect as \$648. Annual inspection of these facilities for compliance with the LAFC would require about two hours. Using the current cost of services schedule, two hours would reflect as \$432.

During Fiscal Year 2016-2017, the Fire Department approved about 37 new installations of high-pile storage that would fall into this category and it is estimated that 1,000 facilities exist in the City with high-pile. Section 57.118.2.1 would generate \$23,976 from new installations of high-pile system and Section 57.105.6, operational permit, is projected to generate revenue of \$432,000.

#### Emergency Responder Radio Coverage

As of January, 2014, the Fire Department adopted requirements for Emergency Responder Radio Coverage Systems (ERRCS). Construction types and overall size of buildings have always played role in compromising portable radio signals for first responders. Recent innovations in radio technology have become available which help to mitigate radio signal loss in buildings. Section 57.510 of the LAFC establishes when the ERRCS coverage is required and Section 57.501.2 establishes there should be a permit. These systems were new during the code adoption process so administrative permit portion of the code did not include their reference.

ERRCS is a radio amplification system which allows radio signals to be carried out through the building. The system works via a series multiple antennas that are installed throughout the building that would receive the radio signal transmitted by the portable

radio and then retransmitted through a communication cable to a main antenna on the roof of the building. Such systems are required to have a backup power supply and a two-hour fire resistance rated survivability rating so that the system can maintain functional in the event of an emergency.

Communication is the most critical component during an emergency operation. Having a reliable means of communication between first responders in the building and the command centers outside can have an effect of the efficiency and safety of everyone involved. Reporting additional hazards, water supply issues, requesting additional resources and medical assistance are some of many things that need to be done with a certain level of dependability. Knowing the importance for first responder communication through portable radios, the California Fire Code has made it a standard fire service feature for all new construction since 2010.

Amending a project permit under Section 105.7 for the installation of ERRCS would complete fire code provisions for permits for the formal review process for such installations. In doing so, the Fire Department would be able to request construction documents from the installers in order to verify compliance with code during the planning and building permit phase of the development process. It would also allow for the Fire Department to inspect the installation and test the functionality of the system prior to building occupancy.

In general, ERRC plan review, permit issuance, and field inspection of the system requires about three hours. Field inspections exceeding two hours will be billed at the hourly rate. Using the current cost of services schedule, three hours would reflect as \$648.

During Fiscal Year 2016-2017, the Fire Department approved around 64 ERRCS. This Section, 57.105.7 construction permit, will generate projected revenue of \$13,824.

#### Gates and Barriers across Fire Apparatus Access Roads

The first line of defense for fire suppression is access. The fire code requires that all operation of the first story of a building be within 150-feet from the edge of an improved road or fire lane so that the Fire Department can properly attack a fire. Often times buildings are located in deep lots that require the dedication of fire apparatus access roads on private property but although fire access is provided, site security is compromised.

Unsafe site can lead to vandalism, unwanted trespassing or the more serious terrorist attacks. Many times, fire apparatus access roads pass are entry point to sites that are intended for occupant use such as the areas around LA Live and the Venice Beach boardwalk. Fire Department access for such sites is necessary not only for fire suppression but for medical emergency response due to the large assemblies that are present. The fire code allows the installation of gates and barricades across fire apparatus access roads provided they be installed in a manner that will not significantly reduce response time in an emergency.

Creating a permit for the installation of gates and barricades across fire apparatus access roads under Section 105.7 allows the Fire Department to verify code compliance of the installation.

In general, gates and barriers plan review, permit issuance, and field inspection of gates and barrier requires about two hours. Using the current cost of services schedule, two hours would reflect as \$432.

It is projected for fiscal year 2018-19, the Fire Department will approve about 24 systems. This Section, 57.105.7 construction permit, will generate projected revenue of \$10,368.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Projected revenue generated from the implementation of the above services is estimated to be \$480,168 for fiscal year 2018-19 if the fees are implemented on July 1, 2018. No additional resources are required to implement this program.

<b>Permit</b>	<b>Estimated Permits issued</b>	<b>Estimated Revenue</b>
High-piled combustible storage systems plan review	37	\$23,976
Operational permits of high-piled combustible storage	1000	\$432,000
Emergency responder radio coverage systems plan review	64	\$13,824
Gates and barricades across fire apparatus accessible roads plan review	24	\$10,368
<b>Estimated Totals:</b>	<b>1125</b>	<b>\$480,168</b>

### **CONCLUSION**

Creating permits for high-piled combustible storage systems, installation of emergency responder radio coverage systems, gates and barriers across fire apparatus access roads ensure that minimum fire and life safety standards are met, reduces hazards to firefighters and losses to life and property. The Fire Prevention and Public Safety Bureau respectfully requests that these permits be considered for approval.

Board report prepared by Hani Malki, Senior Fire Protection Engineer, Fire Development Services Section, Fire Prevention and Public Safety Bureau.