

MOTION

Approximately three to five percent of Americans engage in excessive storage, commonly known as "hoarding." This is a medically recognized disorder, in which an individual has persistent difficulty in discarding or parting with possessions because of a perceived need to save them. Left untreated, a dwelling occupied by someone suffering from this disorder can become packed with acquired belongings, often including hazardous materials, combustible items, as well as unsafe electrical wiring, deteriorated structural elements, and vermin. Everyday living is compromised, and rooms can be so full of items that they can no longer be used for their designed purposes. These conditions pose a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing of the occupants, their neighbors, and first responders who often must respond to emergency situations brought on by those afflicted with this disorder.

Ingress and egress to homes is seriously compromised and sometimes made impossible, because of conditions that cause fire to spread faster and more dangerously. One such property in Atwater Village caught fire in December of 2013 because of "hoarding" conditions. It took over 60 Firefighters several hours to extinguish the fire and caused significant damage to surrounding private and public properties. Thirteen months later, that same property caught fire again and it took a similar number of firefighters to put down the fire. Sadly, there were injuries associated with the 2nd fire, and the fact is that with each incident, lives were put at great risk.

These two incidents exposed significant deficiencies in dealing with this particular location and has provided an opportunity to improve attention to issues involving hoarding cases from a mental health, public safety, and enforcement perspective. Cities across the United States are working to address this issue, and Los Angeles should be no different. The Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD), with assistance from other City Departments, should study what can be done to address the fire danger posed by excessive storage, and propose recommendations for ensuring that homes subjected to excessive storage are less of a fire danger for both the community as well as the men and women of the Los Angeles Fire Department.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Fire Department, with the assistance of the Chief Legislative Analyst, the City Administrative Officer, the Department of Building and Safety, Housing and Community Investment Department, the Department of Animal Services, the Police Department and the City Attorney's Office, and in consultation with the Los Angeles County Departments of Public Health and Mental Health, report back in 60 days on steps that can be taken to address, evaluate and improve the fire safety protocols when dealing with issues posed by dwellings occupied by individuals who engage in excessive storage.

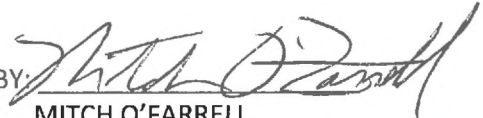
I FURTHER MOVE that the Fire Department, with the assistance of the Chief Legislative Analyst, the City Administrative Officer, the Department of Building and Safety, Housing and Community Investment Department, the Department of Animal Services, the Police Department and the City Attorney's Office, as the principal city

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departments that engage on matters associated with excessive storage, be directed to report back in 60 days on current procedures and interdepartmental communications.

I FURTHER MOVE that this report outline best practices from other major metropolitan centers as well as recommendations for possible revisions to the current Los Angeles Municipal Code.

PRESENTED BY: 
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Councilmember, 13th District

SECONDED BY: 




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