



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0837, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to adopt resolution acknowledging receipt of the annual report regarding the inspection of certain occupancies, including schools, hotels, motels, lodging houses, apartments, and residential care facilities, pursuant to Section 13146.4 of the California Health and Safety Code. (Citywide)

On December 2, 2016, in Oakland, California, a fire broke out during a concert in a warehouse, known as the Ghost Ship, that had been illegally converted into an artist collective with dwelling units. The Ghost Ship fire killed 36 people and became the deadliest building fire in California since 1906. This tragedy drew national attention and put a spotlight on fire safety laws and inspections in California. Since then, Statewide efforts have been made to increase fire safety and accountability in California cities.

Senate Bill 1205 is State legislation resulting directly from the findings of this incident. Prior to the Ghost Ship fire, Sections 13146.2 and 13146.3 of the California Health and Safety Code (Code) required fire departments to conduct annual inspections of certain occupancies, including schools, hotels, motels, lodging houses, apartments, and residential care facilities. Senate Bill 1205 amended the Code, adding Section 13146.4 to require each fire department to report annually to its administering authority on its compliance with Sections 13146.2 and 13146.3 of the Code. The Code requires this report to occur when the administering authority discusses its annual budget and requires the administering authority to acknowledge receipt of the report in a Resolution or similar formal document.

The California State Fire Marshal mandates inspections to be performed annually in all public and private schools (Group E Occupancy), hotels, motels, lodging houses, apartment houses, and dwellings (Group R-1, R-2, R2.1, and R-4 Occupancy). Under the direction of the City's Fire Marshal, most of these annual inspections are performed by civilian fire inspection staff in the Fire Prevention Bureau, with the balance conducted by staff on engine companies.

A total of 8,352 sites requiring State-mandated inspections were identified for calendar year 2020, including 8,249 residential and 103 educational sites. Of all State-mandated sites, 3,391 were inspected, resulting in a compliance rate of approximately 41 percent, compared to 20 percent in 2020. For residential sites, engine companies performed 149 inspections and Fire Prevention staff performed 3,149 inspections, for a total of 3,298. This resulted in a compliance rate of approximately 40 percent, compared to 20 percent in 2020. Fire Prevention staff performed a total of 95 school inspections of the 103 educational sites. This is a compliance rate of approximately 92 percent for this reporting period. There are many variables that impact the ability to complete annual inspections, which include staffing,

number of required inspections, and emergency/non-emergency call volume. Long Beach is not alone, other municipalities are experiencing the same challenges. The Long Beach Fire Department engine and truck companies are increasing the number of fire inspections conducted annually, and Fire Prevention is adding Combination Building Inspector Aides - two in late August 2021 and three in Fiscal Year 2022 to help achieve 100 percent compliance. Additionally, further efficiencies are anticipated with the transition from paper inspection forms to an electronic clipboard reporting system. We expect our State-mandated fire inspection compliance to increase to over 75 percent in 2022, and be fully compliant by 2023. The Department is reviewing fire inspection and re-inspection fees to ensure full cost recovery.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Arturo D. Sanchez on August 9, 2021 and by Budget Analysis Officer Greg Sorensen on July 29, 2021.

City Council action is requested on August 24, 2021, to coincide with the discussion of the annual budget.

There is no fiscal or local job impact associated with this recommendation. This recommendation has minimal staffing impact beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is consistent with existing City Council priorities. There is no local job impact associated with this recommendation.

Approve recommendation.

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XAVIER ESPINO
FIRE CHIEF

APPROVED:

THOMAS B. MODICA
CITY MANAGER