

HIGH-RISE INSPECTION PROGRAM

PILOT TOWN HALL





BACKGROUND

- The Fire Department is implementing a new high-rise inspection program to promote fire and life safety
- High-rise buildings present a particular risk to public safety as they contain large concentrations of people far above the reach of fire department aerial ladders
- The program is being developed in partnership with high-rise building owners, managers, and engineers
- The program is required to be revenue neutral and will be supported by an hourly inspection fee of \$217
- Many jurisdictions in the country have already established fee-based inspection programs for high-rises

CURRENT AND FUTURE STATE



- **Today in Seattle, high-rise building inspections are performed by Operations firefighters while on duty:**
 - Cannot be predictably scheduled due to high run volumes
 - Likely to be interrupted by emergency runs
 - Limited to rapid, cursory inspections checking for common hazards only
- **SFD will have two dedicated firefighter inspectors whose full time job is to perform inspections in high-rise buildings:**
 - Scheduled in advance, with clear inspection expectations and checklist provided, so building has time to prepare to pass the inspection
 - Inspector remains on premises until inspection is complete, saving time for everyone involved
 - Inspector will work in close partnership with building engineers and management
 - Follow up for violations will be timely and predictable



ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

Improved customer service

Better protection of occupant life and preservation of property

- Improved availability and response times for emergency response units
 - High-rise buildings are concentrated in the districts that also have the highest run volumes
- Faster fire ground tactical organization in fire emergencies due to enhanced building information available during dispatch/response
- Firefighter time spent in your building will be focused on developing response tactics



ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

Better partnership with SFD in ensuring building's readiness

- Consistent inspection quality and code interpretation
- Receipt of inspection checklist upon scheduling of inspection
 - allows time to prepare for inspection
 - reduces violations and inspection length
- Receipt of recommendations for improved building fire and life safety (e.g. audit of building emergency plan)
- Feedback loop for communication of fire code changes and the impact of those changes on your building
- Better awareness of the impact of tenant improvements on the building's fire safety systems



PROGRAM TIMELINE

February 2017

- SFD interviewed Operations officers to understand current state and gather recommendations
- SFD performed research on high-rise building inspection programs in other jurisdictions

March – May 2017

- Design of new program – inspector processes, technical design, etc.
- Selection of two firefighters for full time inspector positions
- Stakeholder team design meetings

June 2017

- Beta test inspections

July 2017 – December 2017

- Pilot program runs in downtown districts (Stations 2 and 10)
- Gather feedback, assess, and refine program

2018

- City-wide program launch



INSPECTION SCOPE

- What is a high-rise?
 - A high-rise is a building with an occupied floor located more than 75' above the lowest level of fire department access
 - Generally, buildings with 7 or more stories above ground will be a high-rise
- High-rise inspections will cover the core building (fire and life safety systems, stairwells, rooftops, etc) as well as non-residential tenants
- Your high-rise inspector will choose which non-residential tenants to inspect based on SFD permits, square footage, and life safety risk

2017 PILOT PARTICIPANTS



- The pilot covers most high-rises in downtown Stations 2 and 10.
 - These stations operate from approximately S Royal Brougham Way to Broad St, between Alaskan Way and I-5. They do not cover from Columbia Street to Pine St between Alaskan Way and 3rd Ave.
 - The pilot neighborhoods include SLU, Belltown, Seattle Center, Downtown, and Pioneer Square
- The pilot area was selected because these stations have the busiest run load in the city and the densest concentration of high-rise buildings.
- The pilot will cover 262 buildings in the downtown area.

SCHEDULING INSPECTIONS



- Your inspection will occur in the same month annually.
- You do not need to contact SFD to schedule an inspection. Our staff will track when your annual inspection is due and contact you.
- You will receive a call approximately one month in advance to schedule an inspection date and confirm your building's contact information.
- You will be sent an inspection packet with a checklist of items the inspection will cover. The checklist can be used to ensure your building is prepared for the inspection.
- You will receive a call from your inspector a few days prior to your inspection to set up a start time.
- You should communicate the scheduled inspection date to your tenants (for non-residential buildings).

INSPECTION RESPONSIBILITIES



- Please review the inspection checklist and do a walkthrough of your building before the inspection. This will allow you to resolve issues and reduce the time spent by the inspector in your building.
- A representative from the building will need to meet the inspector at the beginning of the inspection.
- An engineer or someone familiar with the building's systems is encouraged to accompany the inspector during the inspection.
- Your building should have the following items prepared prior to your inspection:
 - Keys for locked building areas
 - Copies of permits issued to the building
 - List of non-residential tenants
- The inspector will provide a Post Inspection Summary with information about any violations cited in the core building or against any of your building's tenants.



QUESTIONS?

Email

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Call

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