

Oceanside Fire Department RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCY INSPECTION PROGRAM

The City of Oceanside has adopted a program to improve our annual fire and life safety inspections at all properties containing three or more dwelling units, hotels, motels, lodging houses, bed and breakfast facilities, and congregate residences. The fire department considers fire and life safety inspections at these types of occupancies to be a benefit to the owners/operators, their tenant and guests. The inspection also addresses unsafe conditions that could result in business interruptions. This brochure has been developed to answer many of the common questions regarding the Residential Occupancy Inspection Program.

How will this program benefit me?

Fire and life safety inspections are done to protect property owners and residents from the devastating effects of fire. By promoting a safe living environment in these types of occupancies, the chance for fire decreases. Fire can kill, disable, destroy property and disrupt lives. According to the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) seventy-nine percent (412,500) of the 524,000 structure fires reported in 2006 occurred in residential properties, including homes, hotels, motels, rooming houses and dormitories; 76% (396,000) occurred in homes. (NFPA uses the term "home" to include one- and two family dwellings, apartments and manufactured housing.) Residential structure fires rose 4% in 2006 from the 381,000 reported in 2005. Four of every five fire deaths resulted from Residential structure fires. Eighty percent (80%) of the 3,245 civilian fire deaths reported in 2006 were caused by residential structure fires.

Are these inspections required?

Yes. These inspections must be conducted annually for all properties containing three or more dwelling units, hotels, motels, lodging houses, bed and breakfast facilities, and congregate residences. The California Health and Safety Code, Section 13146.2 (a) mandates that the inspections be completed annually while the California Health and Safety Code, Section 13146.2 (b) provides the City legal authority to charge property owners to recover reasonable costs for providing these annual inspections.

When will my property be inspected?

Inspections are scheduled to begin in January 2011. Inspections will be conducted by Fire Prevention Inspectors Monday through Friday during the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm. The goal is to have each property inspected at approximately the same time of year. Large occupancies may be contacted to arrange inspection dates and times in an effort to ensure access to fire system components and facility personnel responsible for their maintenance.

What is the inspection process?

An initial inspection will be conducted by a Fire Inspector. At the conclusion of the inspection a report detailing any violations that need correction will be mailed to the property owner. Violations shall be promptly corrected by the property owner or their representative. A 1st re-inspection will be conducted on or after 30 days of the initial inspection. At this time individual violations will be cleared if corrective action has been taken. If violations still exist, a 2nd re-inspection will be required and additional inspection fees will be charged.

Will the Inspector enter individual units?

Generally, inspectors will not examine the interior of units. However, if a renter is home, they may request the inspector check their smoke detector. Inspectors may check smoke detectors in vacant units if the owner or manager is present and gives consent.

How can I prepare for my inspection?

Your property should be maintained in good order. For example, common areas and exit hallways should be clear of stored items; laundry room, machines and filters kept clean; address and unit numbers clearly visible; exit signs well-maintained; hydrants, fire sprinkler systems and utility valves kept clear of vegetation. Fire extinguishers must be serviced and tagged annually by a certified contractor. Smoke detectors and batteries should be checked regularly. Fire sprinkler systems require service every five years and fire alarm systems must be serviced annually.

What will the Inspector look for?

A typical fire and life safety inspection at these type occupancies include checking for fire hazards specific to access, exiting and exit system components, fire protection equipment, fire extinguishers, storage and housekeeping, and utilities (gas and electric).

Access

- Fire lanes obstructions
- Property identification numbers
- Key box access and contents
- Utilities (gas and electrical service) access
- Hydrant access

Exiting

- Exit system components including exit signs and lighting
- Exit access doors including hardware, function and fit
- Staircase and railing condition
- Hallway and/or corridor obstructions
- Security window bars and gates

Utilities (Gas and Electric)

- Utilities identification
- Extension cords
- Wire condition and installation

Storage and Housekeeping in common area

- Excessive storage
- Hazardous materials storage
- Fire hazard clearance
- BBQs on Balconies

Fire Protection equipment

- Smoke detectors
- Fire alarm systems
- Fire sprinkler systems
- Fire extinguishers
- Fire protection system signage

How much does this cost?

The fees vary according to the time required to complete the inspection and reflect the fee needed to recover the costs of the inspection. The current rate used to recover the costs of these inspections is \$119/hr and will be charged in ½ hour increments. The following estimated charges have been prepared for your information but are subject to change based on the number of inspections required to abate any violations. Inspection hours include field time and general office support.

City of Oceanside Fee Schedule

Approximate Inspection		
Occupancy	Hours	Cost
3-10 units	1	\$119
11-30 units	1.5	\$179
31-50 unit	2	\$238
Above 50 units, each additional 10 unit group \$15		

Why not charge fines instead of fees?

The Fire Department's goal is to achieve compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. The purpose is not to penalize property owners, but to educate and gain compliance. The Fire Department's ultimate goal is to have citizens living in safe multi-unit dwelling-properties.

Questions can be directed to 760 435 4101 or inspections@osidefire.com