

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE January 11, 2019

TO Honorable Members of the Public Safety and Criminal Justice Committee

SUBJECT **Fire Watch Procedures**

Dallas Fire-Rescue will be addressing the Public Safety and Criminal Justice Committee on January 14, 2019 to present an amendment change proposal for Fire Watch Procedures. This amendment change is being proposed to address concerns from fees incurred from fire watches with residential/multifamily properties. The amendment change will also give a structured approach towards fire watches going forward.

A proposal for a reduced hourly fee for Standby/Fire Watch personnel and an Alternative Personnel (non-DFR) option for residential/ multifamily Fire Watches will be presented. The presentation will also address the details of implementing this change with these properties and the subsequent impact. Deputy Chief and Fire Marshal Christopher Martinez will be presenting the proposal for Dallas Fire-Rescue.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Fortune".

Jon Fortune
Assistant City Manager

cc: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Chris Caso, City Attorney (I)
Carol A. Smith, City Auditor (I)
Biliera Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Kimberly Bizer Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager

Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager
Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager
Nadia Chandler Hardy, Assistant City Manager and Chief Resilience Officer
M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer
Directors and Assistant Directors

Fire Watch Procedures

Public Safety Committee

January 14, 2019

Christopher Martinez, Fire Marshal
Dallas Fire-Rescue Department
Inspections and Life Safety
Education Division



Presentation Overview

- Summary of PSC meeting from November, 2018
- Reduced Cost Recovery Fee Proposal
- Alternative Fire Watch Personnel Proposal
- Requirements
- Next Steps
- Impact to Dallas Fire-Rescue

Review of Public Safety Committee Meeting

- During the Public Safety Committee meeting on November 26, 2018, a request was brought forward to Dallas Fire-Rescue to explore options for conducting multifamily residential fire watches with alternative personnel (non-DFR).
- This option was requested as a result of concerns brought forward to the committee from private multifamily residential entities due to fees incurred from fire watches.

Reduced Cost Recovery Fee Proposal

- Reduce the hourly Fire Watch fee based on a reduced level of cost recovery.
- A 2015 Cost of Service Study determined that full cost recover is equal to \$222/hr.
- 50% of cost recovery recommended with a new fee proposed at \$110.00

Alternative Fire Watch Personnel Proposal

- Upon notification of an impaired life safety system, DFR personnel will arrive on scene to evaluate the need for a fire watch.
- DFR will make attempts to contact property management as soon as possible if a fire watch is warranted.
- DFR will provide a fire watch until such time as qualified alternative fire watch personnel can arrive on location.
- DFR will define the parameters of fire watch to include areas to be walked, frequency of rounds, and utilization of functioning life safety equipment to facilitate evacuation.

Qualified Alternative Fire Watch Personnel Criteria

- Must be at least 21 years of age.
- Must be an existing employee of the property who is familiar with the layout of the facility.
- Must be physically capable of performing the fire watch duties, to include walking and climbing stairs.
- Must be capable of performing continuous intervals of monitoring.
- Must be equipped with at least two means of notifying 911.
- Must be familiar with functionality of the life safety systems onsite, both operational and non-operational.
- Must be familiar with and trained in the use of portable fire extinguishers.

Alternative Fire Watch Personnel Duties

- Shall have the sole duty of providing a Fire Watch and capable of performing such duties;
- Shall provide a schedule of personnel shifts to the fire official 24-hours in advance for each day of Fire Watch operations.
- DFR to give final approval onsite of the functionality of life safety systems repaired or replaced before a Fire Watch can be terminated.

Alternative Fire Watch Personnel

- Dallas Fire-Rescue will provide a letter of responsibility for person in control, to include applicable fire code sections, specific fire watch duties to be followed, responsibilities of ownership/management, as well as penalties and consequences of failure to comply with the fire code.
- Letter must be signed by person in control before transfer of fire watch personnel occurs.

Alternative Fire Watch Personnel

- Dallas Fire-Rescue will provide oversight for fire watches by providing random, unannounced monitoring to ensure fire code requirements are being followed.
- DFR will issue citations upon discovery of fire watch procedures not being followed.
- Subsequent occurrence will result in DFR taking over the fire watch until systems are restored.

Alternative Fire Watch Personnel

- Dallas Fire-Rescue reserves the right to staff DFR Fire Inspection personnel at any event / system impairment where a higher degree of risk is present in the opinion of the Fire Chief or Fire Code Official, to include, but not limited to, large public assemblies or venues.

Alternative Fire Watch Personnel: Next Steps

- With acceptance and approval of a reduced hourly standby personnel fee of \$110 and the Alternative Fire Watch personnel proposal from the Public Safety Committee, DFR will craft a formal amendment modification to the existing Dallas Fire Code with the assistance of the Dallas City Attorney's Office.
- Upon completion of the ordinance modification, the amendment will be presented to the Dallas City Council for formal approval.

Alternative Fire Watch Personnel: Timeline

- January 14, 2019
 - Presentation to the Public Safety Committee
- March, 2019
 - Amendment language completed and presented to PSC
- April/June, 2019
 - Placed on agenda for Dallas City Council approval

Tentative Dates

Impact to Dallas Fire-Rescue

- The change in policy will translate to fewer hours assigned to fire watch activities by Dallas Fire-Rescue's Fire Inspection personnel.
- DFR will capitalize on this change in policy by placing a more concentrated effort towards increased annual inspections of high risk properties, to include multifamily residential properties. This will specifically enhance the Home Fire Safety Inspection program and benefit the citizens of Dallas.

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**Christopher Martinez, Fire Marshal
Inspections and Life Safety
Education Division
Dallas Fire-Rescue Department**

