



Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District

Community Risk Reduction Division

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Proposed Revisions to Metro Fire's Fire Inspection Program and Fee Schedule For Buildings That Require Fire Code Permits to Operate, High-Hazard Occupancies, and Plan Review and Inspection of New Construction

By state law and Board policy, fire districts conduct fire inspections to identify and correct any potential fire and life safety violations, and to educate businesses and multi-unit residential owners about proper fire prevention practices. Fire districts may charge a fee for these inspections that can recover all or a percentage of the internal costs incurred by district staff to conduct them.

Current Fire Inspection Program (2012-13)

In June 2012, Metro Fire established a new program for conducting these inspections under its Community Risk Reduction Division:

- Annual inspections by District staff for schools, skilled nursing facilities, high-rise commercial buildings and multi-family dwellings
- Annual inspections conducted by District staff for high-hazard occupancies, as well as buildings that are 5,000 or more sq. ft. in size
- Annual inspections conducted by the business owners themselves (self-inspections), with inspections conducted by District staff once during every three-year period, for businesses under 5,000 sq. ft. in size

Proposed Revisions to Fire Inspection Program (2013-14)

During the past year, many business owners communicated they would prefer to receive a professional inspection rather than pay for an inspection they have to conduct themselves. In addition, Metro Fire found during inspection audits that a very high percentage of these self-inspected buildings still had significant uncorrected violations. Based on these findings, Metro Fire is proposing to eliminate the self-inspection program and fee and replace it with biennial fire inspections for businesses under 5,000 sq. ft.

Proposed Revisions to Fee Schedule

Metro Fire commissioned a consulting firm (NBS) to study the current fee schedule and make recommendations on how to make it more equitable. Based on this analysis, the Metro Fire Board of Directors in December will consider revising the fee schedule as follows:

- Charge fees that are more reflective of the amount of time it takes district staff to conduct an inspection
- Base fees on recovering 80% of internal costs incurred by district staff

The impact of these proposed revisions is estimated to:

- Fees for approximately 60% of all businesses will decrease.
- Fees for businesses 5,000 sq. ft. or less will decrease; fees for businesses larger than 5,000 sq. ft. will increase based on time spent for inspection.
- The initial fee for high hazard occupancies will increase; however, the total cost will decrease based on the calculation of additional fees. *Note:* Occupancies typically have multiple hazards and, therefore, require multiple permits. Currently, additional permit fees are calculated at ½ the initial permit cost. Under the proposed revisions, additional permits will be calculated at ¼ hour rate.
- Fees for “places of assembly” will decrease based on time spent for inspection.
- Fees for multi-unit residential up to 25 units will decrease, and fees for larger complexes will increase based on time spent for inspection.
- Fees to conduct plan reviews and inspections for larger development projects will decrease.

Examples Under Proposed Fee Schedule

Occupancy Type	Current Fee			Current Inspection Cycle	Proposed Fee	Proposed Inspection Cycle	Fee Goes Up or Down?	Why?
Self-Inspection Program	\$91			Self inspect 2 out of 3 years	Eliminate	Eliminate	Eliminate	Eliminate self-inspection program
Low-Rises (1-3 Stories)								
Business 2,000 or <	1 YR \$182	2 YR \$91	3 YR \$91	District to inspect 1 out of 3 years	\$114	Biennial Inspection	Down	Current annual fee is \$91 or biennial cost of \$181; proposed biennial fee is \$114
Business 2,001 to 5,000	1 YR \$182	2 YR \$91	3 YR \$91	District to inspect 1 out of 3 years	\$228	Biennial Inspection	Down	Biennial cost to business owner is \$273; proposed biennial fee is \$228
Business 5,001 to 10,000	\$182 - \$364			Annual Inspection	\$343	Annual Inspection	Up	Cost recovery for time spent for inspection- larger business
Business 10,001 to 20,000	\$182 - \$364			Annual Inspection	\$457	Annual Inspection	Up	Cost recovery for time spent for inspection- larger business
Business 20,001 to 150,000	\$182 - \$364			Annual Inspection	\$571 to \$1,028	Annual Inspection	Up	Cost recovery for time spent for inspection- larger business
Mid-Rises (4-6 Stories)	\$910			Annual Inspection	\$1,142	Annual Inspection	Up	Cost recovery for time spent for inspection- larger business
Wholesale Business with High Pile Stock	\$455			Annual Inspection	\$570	Annual Inspection	Up	Initial fee increases but overall cost to business will likely decrease based on how fee is calculated
Repair Garage	\$364			Annual Inspection	\$457	Annual Inspection	Up	Initial fee increases but overall cost to business will likely decrease based on how fee is calculated
Dry Cleaners	\$364			Annual Inspection	\$457	Annual Inspection	Up	Initial fee increases but overall cost to business will likely decrease based on how fee is calculated
Lumberyard	\$455			Annual Inspection	\$571	Annual Inspection	Up	Initial fee increases but overall cost to business will decrease based on calculation of fee

Occupancy Type	Current Fee	Current Inspection Cycle	Proposed Fee	Proposed Inspection Cycle	Fee Goes Up or Down?	Why?
Places of Assembly 50-99	\$364	Annual Inspection	\$228	Annual Inspection	Down	Cost recovery to decrease based on time spent for inspection
Places of Assembly 100-299	\$455-\$546	Annual Inspection	\$457	Annual Inspection	Down	Cost recovery to decrease based on time spent for inspection
Places of Assembly 300+	\$637	Annual Inspection	\$571	Annual Inspection	Down	Cost recovery to decrease based on time spent for inspection
Multi-Unit Residential <4	\$182	Annual Inspection	\$114	Annual Inspection	Down	Cost recovery to decrease based on time spent for inspection- smaller complex
Multi-Unit Residential 5 to 25	\$364	Annual Inspection	\$343	Annual Inspection	Down	Cost recovery to decrease based on time spent for inspection- smaller complex
Multi-Unit Residential 26 to 100	\$455	Annual Inspection	\$513	Annual Inspection	Up	Cost recovery to increase based on time spent for inspection- larger complex
Multi-Unit Residential 101 to 300	\$455	Annual Inspection	\$564	Annual Inspection	Up	Cost recovery to increase based on time spent for inspection- larger complex
Multi-Unit Residential 301+	\$455	Annual Inspection	\$805	Annual Inspection	Up	Cost recovery to increase based on time spent for inspection- larger complex