

March 20, 2018

# LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



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FIRE CHIEF

March 6, 2018

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
FILE NO. 18-025

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: *RMT* Ralph M. Terrazas, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: UNWANTED ALARM ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

FINAL ACTION:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved w/Corrections	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn
	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied	<input type="checkbox"/> Received & Filed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

## SUMMARY

Since 1997, the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) has had a False Alarm Program as stated in Department Bulletin 97-17. The focus of the program in 1997 was to reduce the number of fire companies responding to burglar alarms, better track false alarms, distribute public education materials and evaluate additional proposals.

In 2017/2018, the Fire Prevention Bureau (FPB) developed the Unwanted Alarm Enforcement Program (UAEP) to further expand the false alarm program. The UAEP will increase enforcement, recuperate cost and reduce the number of automatic alarms, bells, smoke detectors and water flow alarms in the City of Los Angeles.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board:  
Receive and File.

## FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact is unknown until an unwanted fire alarm ordinance is drafted and approved.

## DISCUSSION

In the calendar year 2017, the LAFD responded to 34,684 automatic alarms. LAFD resources arrived on scene 71.13 % (24,669 incidents). LAFD resources were canceled prior to arriving on scene for a total of 10,015 incidents. The percentage of those 34,684 automatic alarms that resulted in fires was 0.63%. This equates to 214 actual fires.

Goals of the Unwanted Alarm Enforcement Program:

1. Enforce the current fire code to reduce Unwanted Fire Alarms.
2. Improve overall public safety by increasing the availability of fire resources.
3. Support Regulation No. 4 by ensuring compliance with inspection, testing and maintenance of fire protection systems.
4. Recuperate cost recovery efforts.

Specific Program Components:

1. **Fire Watch Trial Program:** The FPB initiated a 3-month trial program in Battalion 1, Battalion 17 and Battalion 18. There was a total of six fire stations (two per Battalion) enrolled in the trial program. The trial period began November 1, 2017 and ended January 31, 2018. During the trial period, the FPB received 14 fire watch notices from field resources. The results of the trial program are listed as follows:
  - Six buildings were sent to a Regulation No. 4 Hearing Officer in the City Attorney's Office. All six of the buildings have been repaired and are functioning correctly
  - Four buildings have been repaired by completing a new Regulation No. 4 test on their systems and are functioning correctly
  - Four buildings are still undergoing repair
2. **City-wide Referral Program:** Unwanted Alarms: Effective 02/19/18. Field resources will utilize the FPB Referral Form whenever they are dispatched to an automatic alarm to the same building three times in one 24-hour shift or more than three times in a 30-day period. It will be expected that the field resources place the buildings on fire watch if they are unable to achieve a reset. The FPB will initiate an investigation and bring the building into compliance.
3. **Using CAD and NFIRS data, run a monthly audit on Automatic Alarms, Water Flows, Smoke Detectors and Bells:** The FPB will utilize the same criteria as Item #2. The FPB will determine the best course of action to reduce the automatic alarms. Actions taken are as listed as follows:
  - Brycer – Review for compliance
  - City Attorney Hearings
  - Previous Life/ Safety Notices-Review the history
  - New Notice Written - Building to comply with all fire/life safety requirements

4. **Unwanted Fire Alarm Program Implementation Plan:** The LAFD has prepared a working draft ordinance to amend applicable provisions of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (L.A.M.C) that would incorporate the characteristics of fire alarm systems, fire code provisions, fee schedule and administrative processes. This draft, providing a very basic structure, will be transmitted to the City Attorney to initiate discussion toward development of a comprehensive unwanted fire alarm ordinance.

#### **CONCLUSION**

By implementing these recommendations, the Department will be able to increase public safety, firefighter safety and ensure compliance with the fire code. In addition, the Department will establish a new City ordinance that will provide cost recovery of the resources associated with responding to recurring unwanted alarms.

Board report prepared by Kristin M. Crowley, Deputy Chief, Fire Prevention and Public Safety Bureau.