


LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT

RALPH M. TERRAZAS
FIRE CHIEF

October 2, 2018

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS FILE NO. 18-110
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TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM:  Ralph M. Terrazas, Fire ChiefSUBJECT: UNWANTED ALARM ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM - SECOND
QUARTER OF CALENDAR YEAR 2018

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 Withdrawn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

This is the second quarter board report for the Unwanted Alarm Enforcement Program (UAEP). It covers the months of April, May and June of 2018.

From January 1, 2018 to September 24, 2018, the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) responded to 27,111 dispatched automatic alarms. The percentage of those 27,111 automatic alarms that resulted in fires was .586%. This equated to 159 actual fires. For the second quarter of 2018, the LAFD responded to 8,019 automatic alarms. LAFD resources arrived on-scene 70% (5,591 incidents) of the time and were canceled prior to arriving on-scene a total of 30% (2,428 incidents).

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

The Fire Prevention Bureau (FPB) is continuing to develop the Unwanted Alarm Enforcement Program (UAEP). 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. The UAEP consists of the following steps:

1. The FPB instituted a City-wide policy whereas field resources utilize the FPB referral form to notify the FPB when they encounter a faulty fire alarm system. The criterion to utilize the form is a fire alarm occurring three times in one 24-hour shift and/or three similar alarms to the same occupancy in a 30-day period. During the second quarter of 2018, the FPB received 91 requests from field resources. This equates to a 64% increase from the first quarter (33 requests) of 2018. The FPB believes this increase is due to the increased outreach program initiated after the first quarter board report. The referrals were vetted by members assigned to the Research and Legal Units and forwarded to the most appropriate Section within the FPB. To date, all occupancies have been repaired and are functioning properly.
2. The FPB runs monthly audits on unwanted fire alarms City-wide. Using the criteria of three or more automatic fire alarms dispatched in a one-month period, the following statistics were identified:
 - April 2018 - 32 occupancies qualified as unwanted alarm - 84% decrease from January, 2018 (196 occupancies)
 - May 2018 - 42 occupancies qualified as unwanted alarm - 76% decrease from February, 2018 (173 occupancies)
 - June 2018 - 55 occupancies qualified as an unwanted alarm – 69% decrease from March, 2018 (175 occupancies)
3. The FPB is working with our Los Angeles World Airport (LAWA) partners to decrease automatic alarms at the airport. A majority of these alarms occur between 0000 to 0700 hours. This is during the peak hours of construction. For the second quarter of 2018, LAX resources responded to the following automatic alarms
 - April 2018 – 46 Automatic Alarms
 - May 2018 – 54 Automatic Alarms
 - June 2018 – 29 Automatic Alarms
4. The FPB has opened dialogue with alarm companies to receive their input on how to reduce automatic alarms. This is especially prevalent on rainy days.
5. For the second quarter of 2018, the FPB conducted an audit to inquire how many burglar alarms are sent to LAFD dispatch and dispatched as an automatic alarm. The results were inconclusive, as MFC does not track that data.
6. Develop an ordinance (inconclusive to the Los Angeles Police Department's unwanted burglar alarm program) to establish cost recovery through permits and/or penalties associated with unwanted alarms.

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.