



LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT

RALPH M. TERRAZAS
FIRE CHIEF

January 22, 2019

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS FILE NO. 19-007
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TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM:  Ralph M. Terrazas, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: UNWANTED ALARM ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM – THIRD AND
FOURTH 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 Withdrawn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

For the third and fourth quarter of 2018, the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) responded to 18,086 automatic alarms. LAFD resources have arrived on-scene 70% (12,623 incidents) of the time and were canceled prior to arriving on-scene a total of 30% of the time (5,463 incidents). The percentage of those 18,086 automatic alarms that resulted in a fire was .53 %. This equated to 96 actual fires.

For the third and fourth quarter of 2018, the Fire Prevention Bureau (FPB) received 158 automatic alarm referrals from field personnel. These referrals followed a specific criterion of three or more unwanted alarms in a month. Of the 158 referrals, 135 (83%) of these occupancies have repaired their fire alarm systems. There are 23 referrals (17%) that are still pending repair and/or recertification.

In addition, the FPB runs monthly audits on unwanted fire alarms. For the third and fourth quarter of 2018, the FPB recorded 142 occupancies with 3 or more unwanted alarms in a month. The FPB is working closely with these occupancies to remedy the problematic alarms.

RECOMMENDATION

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 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 3rd and 4th quarter of 2018, the FPB received 158 requests from field resources. This equates to a 27% increase from the 1st and 2nd quarter (124 requests) of 2018. The FPB believes this increase is due to the increased outreach program initiated after the 1st quarter UAEP 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, 135 (83 %) occupancies have been repaired and are functioning properly. There are 23 (17 %) occupancies pending repair and/or recertification.

QTRS	TOTAL # REQUESTS	PERCENTAGE	TOTAL # REPAIRED	TOTAL # PENDING REPAIR/RECERTIFICATION
1 ST & 2 ND	124	N/A	124	0
3 RD & 4 TH	158	27% increase	135 (83 %)	23 (17 %)

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:

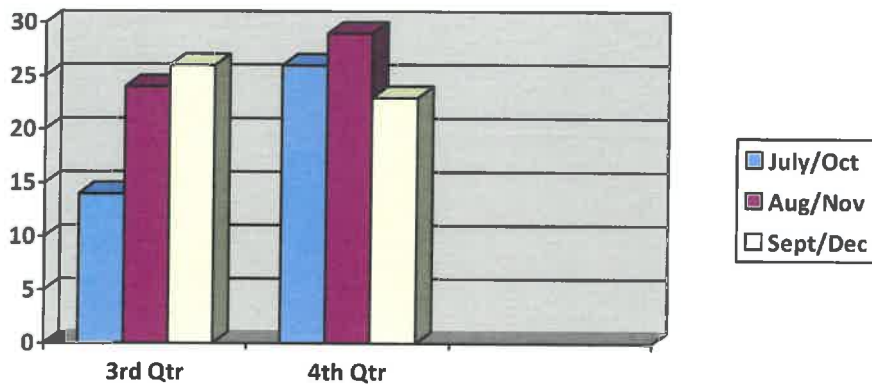
Third Quarter - 2018

- July 2018 - 14 occupancies qualified as unwanted alarm
- August 2018 - 24 occupancies qualified as unwanted alarm
- September 2018 – 26 occupancies qualified as unwanted alarm
 - 64 total occupancies for 3rd quarter (50% decrease from 2nd quarter - 2018)⁴

Fourth Quarter – 2018

- October 2018 – 26 occupancies qualified as unwanted alarm
- November 2018 – 29 occupancies qualified as unwanted alarm
- December 2018 – 23 occupancies qualified as unwanted alarm
 - 78 total occupancies for 4th quarter (21% increase from 3rd quarter - 2018)

The increase in unwanted alarms is directly related to rain events in the City of Los Angeles.



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 3rd quarter of 2018, LAX resources responded to the following automatic alarms:

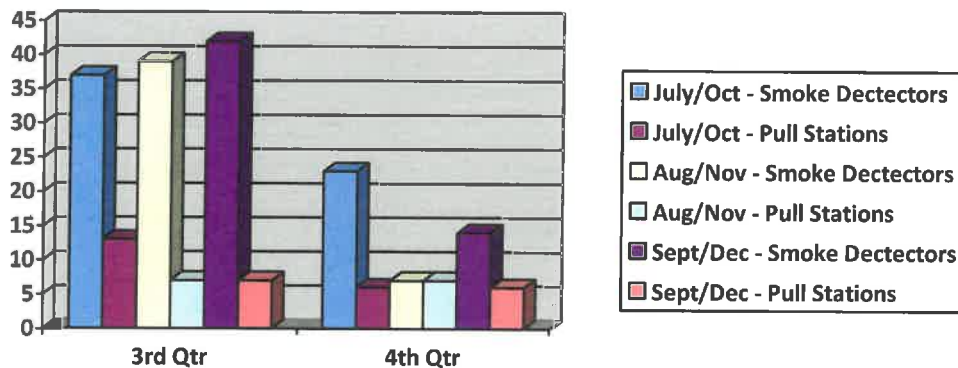
- July 2018 – 50 Automatic Alarms
 - 37 were smoke detectors
 - 13 were pull stations
- August 2018 – 60 Automatic Alarms
 - 39 were smoke detectors
 - 7 were pull stations
- September 2018 – 58 Automatic Alarms
 - 42 were smoke detectors
 - 7 were pull stations
- 168 total Automatic Alarms for 3rd quarter (23 % increase from 2nd quarter - 2018)
- Miscellaneous detectors (heat, duct) make up the balance of automatic alarms at LAX

For the 4th quarter of 2018, LAX resources responded to the following automatic alarms:

- October 2018 – 32 Automatic Alarms
 - 23 were smoke detectors
 - 6 were pull stations
- November 2018 – 53 Automatic Alarms
 - 38 were smoke detectors
 - 7 were pull stations

- December 2018 – 18 Automatic Alarms
 - 14 were smoke detectors
 - 6 were pull stations
- 103 total Automatic Alarms for 4th quarter
(38 % decrease from 3rd quarter - 2018)
- Miscellaneous detectors (heat, duct) make up the balance of automatic alarms at LAX

The decrease of automatic alarms in the 4th quarter is most likely due to the decreased construction activities due to major holidays occurring in that time period.



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. Develop an ordinance (similar to the Los Angeles Police Department's (LAPD) unwanted burglar alarm program) to establish cost recovery through permits and/or penalties associated with unwanted alarms. In partnership with the City Attorney's office, an unwanted fire alarm ordinance has been drafted to support this program. The draft ordinance is currently in its final review process with the City Attorney's office. Once the review process is complete, the draft ordinance will proceed through the various City Council Committees for review and final approval.

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.