



LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT

RALPH M. TERRAZAS
FIRE CHIEF

October 2, 2019

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS FILE NO. 19-126
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TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

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

SUBJECT: UNWANTED ALARM ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM – FIRST AND
SECOND QUARTER OF CALENDAR YEAR 2019

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 Withdrawn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 first and second quarters of 2019, the Los Angeles Fire Department (LAFD) responded to **17,486** automatic alarms. LAFD resources have arrived on-scene of **15,228 responses (87%)** of the time. Resources were canceled prior to arrival on **5463 responses (30%)**. **The percentage of those 17,486 automatic alarms that resulted in a fire was .58%. This equated to 102 actual fires but none of any significance.**

For the first and second quarters of 2019, the Fire Prevention Bureau (FPB) received **254** automatic alarm referrals from field personnel. These referrals followed the specific criterion of three or more unwanted alarms in a month. Of the **245 referrals, 215 (88%)** of these occupancies have repaired their fire alarm systems. There are **30 referrals (12%)** that are still pending repair and/or recertification.

In addition, the FPB runs monthly audits on unwanted fire alarms. For the first and second quarters of 2019, the FPB recorded 641 occupancies with three or more unwanted alarms in a month. The FPB is working closely with these occupancies to remedy the problematic alarms.

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 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:

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 first and second quarters of 2019, the FPB received **245** requests from field resources. This equates to a **55% increase from the third and fourth quarter (158 requests) in 2018**. The two areas responsible for this increase are:

- Consistent messaging at Chiefs meeting at the geographic bureau level.
- The increased adoption of the referral process by field resources.

QUARTERS	TOTAL # REQUESTS	PERCENTAGE	TOTAL # REPAIRED	TOTAL # PENDING REPAIR/RECERTIFICATION
Third and Fourth - 2018	158	N/A	158	0
First and Second - 2019	245	55% increase	215 (88 %)	30 (12 %)

1. 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:

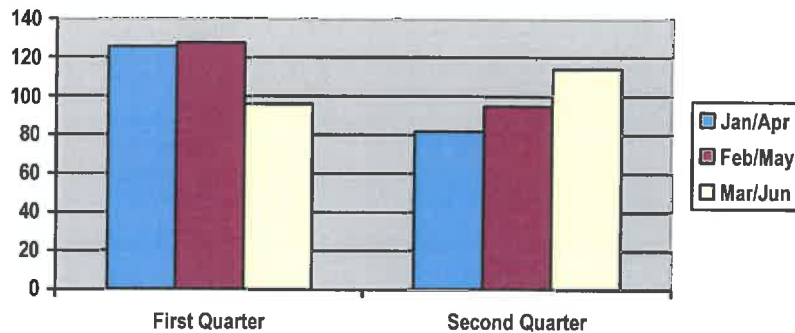
First Quarter - 2019

- January 2019 - 126 occupancies qualified as unwanted alarm
 - February 2019 - 128 occupancies qualified as unwanted alarm
 - March 2019 – 96 occupancies qualified as an unwanted alarm
- 250 total occupancies for first quarter (290% increase from 3rd quarter - 2018)

Second Quarter – 2019

- April 2019 – 82 occupancies qualified as unwanted alarm
 - May 2019 – 95 occupancies qualified as unwanted alarm
 - Jun 2019 – 114 occupancies qualified as unwanted alarm
- 291 total occupancies for second quarter (273% increase from fourth quarter - 2018)

The increase in unwanted alarms is directly related to utilizing FireStat data as the sole source of statistical information for a more accurate capture of unwanted alarm data.



2. The FPB continues to work 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.

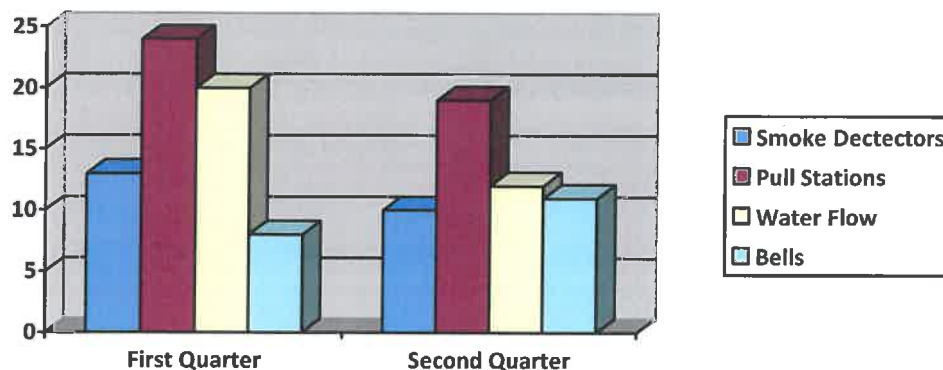
For the first quarter of 2019, LAWA resources responded to the following automatic alarms:

- **January 2019 – 31 Automatic Alarms**
 - 7 smoke/heat detectors
 - 13 pull stations
 - 11 water flow
 - 3 bells
 - **February 2019 – 26 Automatic Alarms**
 - 4 smoke detectors
 - 4 pull stations
 - 3 water flow
 - 3 bells
 - **March 2019 – 23 Automatic Alarms**
 - 6 smoke detectors
 - 7 pull stations
 - 6 water flow
 - 2 bells
- **80 total Automatic Alarms first quarter - 2019**
(55 % decrease from third quarter - 2018)
- **Miscellaneous detectors (heat, duct) make up the balance of automatic alarms at LAWA**

For the 2nd quarter of 2019, LAWA resources responded to the following automatic alarms:

- **April 2019 – 21 Automatic Alarms**
 - 1 smoke detectors
 - 6 pull stations
 - 3 water flow
 - 2 bells
 - **May 2019 – 21 Automatic Alarms**
 - 7 smoke detectors
 - 7 pull stations
 - 6 water flow
 - 5 bells
 - **June 2019 – 29 Automatic Alarms**
 - 2 smoke detectors
 - 6 pull stations
 - 3 water flow
 - 4 bells
- **71 total Automatic Alarms for second quarter - 2019**
(32 % decrease from fourth quarter - 2018)
- **Miscellaneous detectors (heat, duct) make up the balance of automatic alarms at LAWA**

The decrease of automatic alarms in the first half of the year is due to protocol changes, including reducing audible alarms in the terminals.



3. The FPB has opened dialogue with alarm companies to receive their input on how to reduce automatic alarms.

4. Finalizing the unwanted alarm enforcement program which will establish cost recovery through penalties associated with unwanted alarms. In partnership with the City Attorney's office, the unwanted fire alarm ordinance has been drafted to support this program. The draft ordinance is currently in its final review, specifically working to define the difference between a "false" and an "unwanted" alarm. This will allow for completion of the scope of work for the billing process and help define the associated workflow for field resources who will ultimately define the alarm type and disposition.

CONCLUSION

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

Board report prepared by Richard Fields IV, Battalion Chief, Fire Prevention and Public Safety Bureau.