

# LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



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FIRE CHIEF

October 5, 2022

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
FILE NO. 22-102R

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM:  Kristin M. Crowley, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: **REVISED** - REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL STAFFING AND PROPOSED  
FEE INCREASE FOR THE FILM UNIT'S SPOT-CHECK INSPECTION  
PROGRAM

FOR FINAL ACTION:

☐ Approved  
☐ Denied

☐ Approved w/Corrections  
☐ Received & Filed

☐ Withdrawn  
☐ Other

## SUMMARY

On October 18, 2022, the Board of Fire Commissioners approved this report, and it is being resubmitted to include additional recommendations.

The Film Unit is a fee-supported unit, staffed with a Captain I, an Inspector II, (4) Inspectors I, a Senior Administrative Clerk, and an Administrative Clerk. The unit cannot meet the workload requirements at its current staffing levels. Furthermore, the unit is not able to fully recover its costs at the current fee amount.

The Department proposes the addition of two Inspectors I to the Film Unit to keep up with the demands of the Film Industry, and an increase of the Spot-Check fee to \$265 would put the Film Unit in line with Mayor's Executive Directive No. 6 by fully funding the Film Unit and its additional Inspector request.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board:

1. Transmit the report to the Mayor and City Council for consideration and approval.

## FISCAL IMPACT

The General Fund subsidizes the Film Unit in the amount of approximately \$1,005,904, annually. The increase of the Spot-Check fee will eliminate the Impact on the General Fund.

## DISCUSSION

The Spot-Check Program was created in 1994 to reduce the cost of fire inspections at filming locations while maintaining high standards of fire and life safety requirements. Specific criteria were established to determine when a filming location required a full-time Fire Inspector or a Spot-Check inspection. Additional personnel were authorized to supervise the Film Unit and perform Spot-Check inspections. A Spot-Check Permit Fee of \$85 was established in 1994. No changes have been made to this fee since 1994. Revenue is based on permits issued, and they average \$816,000 in 2021-22.

FilmLA currently processes approximately 9600 Spot-Checks per year at a rate of \$85 per Spot-Check. Annually we collect approximately \$816,000 from Spot-Check fees. We have an approximate shortfall of \$1,005,904.

Salaries:	\$1,734,754
Overtime:	\$87,150
Total:	\$1,821,904
Revenue:	-\$816,000
<b>Shortfall Funded by General Fund:</b>	<b>\$1,005,904</b>

Salaries are based on full cost recovery for (1) Fire Captain I, (1) Fire Inspector II, (2) Fire Inspectors I, (1) Senior Administrative Clerk and (1) Administrative Clerk.

Overtime covers spot checks that occur outside of regular business hours and is estimated at 1000 hours @ \$87.15 per hour.

The requested increase of the Spot-Check Fee to \$265 for the same 9600 Spot-Checks would increase revenue to \$2,544,000. Fully funding the Film Unit and allowing for the addition of two (2) Inspector I positions, which are necessary to manage the increased workload.

Salaries:	\$2,542,621
Overtime:	\$87,150
Total:	\$2,539,771
Revenue:	\$2,544,000
<b>Revenue Returned to General Fund:</b>	<b>\$4,229</b>

## CONCLUSION

The Film Unit has operated with its current number of Inspector positions since 2008 and the Spot-Check fee has been \$85 since 1994. The cost of living in the City of Los Angeles and other major cities like it has gone up an average of 2.5% each year. All other costs of service fees have gone up, yet the Spot-Check fee remains at \$85. Bringing the new fee to \$145 would put the fee in line with inflation and the Mayor's Executive Directive No. 6. Allowing the unit to better service the Film Industry and provide better fire and life safety oversight. Increasing the fee and staffing would allow the Film Unit to distribute the workload among seven (7) Inspectors and have a more robust Spot-Check program.

This summer the Governor signed into law more cash and tax incentives for filming in California and we are starting to see the effects of that. In the greater LA area, we have 40% more filming occurring. According to a report by FilmLA, we expect a 20% increase in certified sound stages throughout the City of Los Angeles.

The board report was prepared by Felipe Villegas, Captain I, Film Unit.