

April 23, 2007

About the City's Fire and Life Safety Inspection Program

In 2005, the City of San Luis Obispo adopted a program to improve our annual fire and life safety inspections at apartments with three or more units, hotels, motels, bed and breakfast facilities, hostel facilities, senior living facilities, fraternities, sororities, and other congregate residences.

What are the main components of the program?

A typical fire and life safety inspection at this type of facility includes checking fire alarm systems, fire sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, common areas for fire hazards, exit signs and exit access doors, fire lane access, hydrant access and signage. Additionally, we conduct public education presentation to apartment owners, managers, and residents to educate them about how to prevent fires from occurring as well as how to increase their chances of survival in the event a fire does occur.

How does this program benefit me?

Fire and life safety inspections are done to protect property owners and residents from the devastating effects of fire. By ensuring a safe living environment in these types of facilities, the chance for fire decreases. Fire can kill, disable, destroy property and completely disrupt lives.

How much does it cost?

The fees vary according to the type of property being inspected. Some types of properties have on-site maintenance staff that are immediately available to correct deficiencies, while others require more frequent or in-depth inspections to ensure compliance with state code requirements. The following tables outline our current fee schedule:

Apartments

\$28 per unit per year

\$65 Administrative fee per year per facility

\$10,000 maximum per facility per year (for largest properties)

Hotels, Motels, Lodging Houses, Bed & Breakfast Facilities, Hostel Facilities and Senior Facilities, Sororities, Fraternities and Other Congregate Residences

1 to 30 units \$200 per year per facility

31 to 80 units \$300 per year per facility

More than 80 units \$400 per year per facility

How is the annual fee billed?

These fees are collected on your annual property tax bill. The County charges an additional \$2 per property fee on your property tax bill for their billing service.

How do I prepare for my next inspection?

- Your property should always be maintained in good order. For example, common areas and exit hallways should be clear of stored items; laundry rooms kept clean; water heaters strapped; address and unit numbers clearly visible; exit signs well-maintained; and hydrants, fire sprinkler systems and utility valves kept clear of vegetation.
- Fire extinguishers must be serviced annually.
- Smoke detectors should be checked regularly.
- Any fire sprinkler or fire alarm system must be serviced annually. In addition, fire sprinkler systems must also be certified every five years.

Do Fire Department inspectors enter individual apartment units?

Generally, inspectors will not examine the interior of units. However, if a renter is home, we may ask them if we can check their smoke detector. Inspectors may check smoke detectors in vacant units if the owner or manager is present and gives consent.

What public education materials are available to me?

The Fire Department offers fire safety handbooks and live presentations. If you would like any information regarding educational materials or presentations, please call the Fire Department or check out our website.

When does the Fire Department inspect my property?

Inspections are conducted Monday through Friday during the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm. Properties are inspected at approximately the same time each year. Please call the Fire Department if you want to know when your next annual fire and life safety inspection is due.

Who should I call if I have questions about the program?

Please contact Fire Inspector Molly Brown at (805) 781-7560 or by e-mail at mbrown@slocity.org.

<p>Survival Guide on the Web</p> <p>This practical fire and life safety guide for apartment living is on the City's web site at: www.slocity.org/fire/outreach.asp, then click on "Is Your Apartment Safe?".</p> <p>Other information about the City's fire prevention programs can be found at: www.slocity.org/fire, then click on "Fire Prev/Life Safety".</p>
