

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Discussion of proposed amendments to local fire code for consistency with state codes and local building code.

STAFF CONTACTS

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City Attorney's Office

POLICY CONSIDERATION

Should the City amend the City of Bellevue Fire Code (Chapters 23.11 BCC) to require the installation of Firefighter Rescue Air Systems in high-rise buildings, increase the penalties associated with illegal fireworks and clarify other technical and administrative sections.

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

ACTION



DIRECTION



INFORMATION ONLY



Staff will review technical corrections and proposed amendments to the City of Bellevue Fire Code and seek direction on returning to Council with legislation for adoption at a future meeting.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

On July 1, 2016, the 2015 edition of the International Fire Code together with State of Washington and City of Bellevue amendments became effective.

As our staff and customers have utilized the code, they have identified technical errors that the proposed Ordinance corrects. The corrections are noted via annotation in the attached proposed Ordinance.

In addition to the technical corrections, staff are presenting additional changes for Council consideration and direction. Two proposed additions to the code have been discussed with BOMA/Seattle (Building Owners and Managers Association) who have provided feedback to staff.

1. Requires that all high-rise buildings provide a "Qualified Building Representative" to be available to the Fire Department within ten minutes of the request and onsite within one hour. Due to their unique knowledge, a "Qualified Building Representative" would be an invaluable resource to the fire department in mitigating an emergency response in the building.
2. Requires the installation of a Firefighter Rescue Air systems in all new high-rise buildings. The Rescue Air System provides firefighters the ability to recharge their air bottles without needing to

exit the building or have air bottles brought into the building, both of which use resources that can be better utilized mitigating the fire response directed towards fire suppression efforts.

Staff are seeking direction on whether to include these changes to the Fire Code in the current update.

Additionally, this draft Ordinance provides three substantive changes, which are recommended for adoption:

1. Allows interpretations of the fire code to be appealed to the Hearing Examiner.
2. Provides additional clarification regarding fire alarm system upgrades when fire alarm panels are replaced.
3. Significantly increases the penalties associated with the illegal use of fireworks. The Fire Department, working in cooperation with the Police Department, Utilities Department and the City Manager's Office, has been proactive in communicating the City's fireworks ban. We have also added dedicated staffing for enforcement patrols during the July 4th holiday the past four years in response to citizens growing request for enforcement of the City's fireworks ban. The current penalty associated with illegal fireworks is either a civil penalty of \$100 and/or a misdemeanor, neither of which has served as a deterrent for repeat offenders. The proposal increases fireworks penalties up to \$1,000. This is intended to serve as a strong deterrent and would be used in the messaging prior to the 4th of July.

Please refer to the annotated draft Ordinance document for additional explanation (Attachment A).

OPTIONS

1. Direct staff to bring back proposed legislation for adoption.
2. Provide alternative direction to staff.

RECOMMENDATION

Option 1

ATTACHMENTS

A. Proposed Ordinance with explanatory annotations

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL OFFICE

N/A