



SAN MATEO CONSOLIDATED FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Prevention & Life Safety

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TO: Owners, Property Managers, and Homeowners Association Boards of Multi-Residential Properties in Belmont, Foster City, and San Mateo

RE: Annual Multi-Residential Fire and Life Safety Inspection

The San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department conducts annual fire and life safety inspections of multi-residential properties in Belmont, Foster City, and San Mateo.

These inspections are conducted pursuant to **California Health and Safety Code Section 13146.2**, which requires the annual inspection of multi-residential occupancies for compliance with the California Fire Code and Title 19 of the California Code of Regulations. This letter is a courtesy notice in advance of your annual inspection. It is not a notice of violation, and no response is required. Our inspectors complete these inspections as time permits. You do not need to schedule an appointment or have a representative on site.

Most inspection findings are routine maintenance and housekeeping items that can be corrected in advance. Correcting them before we arrive avoids a correction notice, a re-inspection, and the staff time both require, for your team and for ours.

This letter does two things. It lists the items most often cited during these inspections so you can address them ahead of time, and it encloses a resident fire safety guide you are welcome to use.

Please Correct the Following Items Before Our Arrival

The items below are the ones most frequently cited during multi-residential inspections. Addressing them in advance will help ensure compliance and a successful inspection. Before our inspection, please verify the following:

- 1. Corridor and stairwell doors.** Self-closing and latching. Never blocked, wedged, or propped open. Report damaged closers for repair.
- 2. Exit paths and stairwells.** Corridors, stairwells, landings, and exit discharges clear of storage, bicycles, strollers, and furniture. Exit signs and emergency lighting illuminated and functional.
- 3. Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in common areas.** We will verify alarms in common areas and at the building level. California law requires owners to ensure each unit has operable, correctly located alarms within their service life before occupancy and throughout the tenancy. We do not inspect private units.
- 4. Fire alarm and sprinkler systems.** Annual inspection, testing, and maintenance current and documented. Certification records are submitted by the contractor to Brycer and reviewed separately by our office.
- 5. Portable fire extinguishers.** Current service tag dated within the past 12 months, mounted in the designated location, fully charged, unobstructed, and clearly marked.
- 6. Electrical and mechanical rooms.** Clear of storage. Panels labeled and accessible with the required working clearance.
- 7. Evacuation information.** Where required, floor diagrams are posted and residents are informed whether the building evacuates or shelters in place.
- 8. Address visibility.** Building and unit numbers visible from the street and in interior corridors.

Access for the Inspection

- **Access to common areas.** Our inspector will need access to corridors, stairwells, laundry and trash rooms, fire alarm panel rooms, electrical and mechanical rooms, basements, and the roof where applicable. We do not require access to private residential units, and keys to private units are not needed. If any of these areas is locked and there is no key in the Knox Box, the property manager must contact the Fire Prevention Division to schedule a time for an inspector to place the key in the Knox Box before the inspection.

If our inspector cannot access a locked area during the inspection, that portion will be rescheduled.

Enclosed Resident Guide

The enclosed guide is provided as a resource, not a requirement. There is no obligation to post or distribute it, and it is not part of the inspection. We provide it because the resident behaviors it covers, unattended cooking, candles, propped fire doors, and obstructed exit paths, are the ones that increase risk and contribute to injuries when fires occur in buildings like yours. How you get it in front of your residents is up to you. It may be reproduced freely and requires no permission from this department. It works well at move-in, with lease renewals, and posted in lobbies, mail rooms, laundry rooms, and community rooms.

No Cost Support Available

Our office will review your building's evacuation plan or answer code questions at no charge. If you are unsure whether a specific practice is permitted in your building, or want a second set of eyes on your evacuation plan before an association meeting, contact us.

Questions

Contact Fire Prevention & Life Safety at 650-522-7940 or prevention@smcfire.ca.gov. If your property has conditions this letter does not address, or you are unsure whether a specific practice is permitted in your building, please call us.

If you are not the person responsible for day-to-day management of this property, please forward this letter to your property manager and contact our Fire Prevention Division at 650-522-7940 or prevention@smcfire.ca.gov to update the contact information we have on file.

We appreciate your partnership in keeping your residents safe.

Sincerely,

Carisa Workman

Fire Marshal

San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department

Enclosure: Resident Fire and Life Safety Guide for Apartments and Condominiums