



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

INSPECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT 831 MASS. AVE.
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139 (617) 349-6100

ROBERT R. BERSANI

Commissioner

September 13, 2000

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

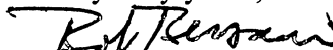
From: Bob Bersani, Inspectional Services

Subject: City Council Order No.2 of September 11, 2000; RE: INVESTIGATE AND REPORT ON FIRE PREVENTION EFFORTS IN THE CITY.

In response to this Council Order, the following information as pertains to multi-family buildings(3 or more dwelling units) is forwarded:

1. As concerns fire prevention devices/systems in multi-family buildings, following are requirements of the Building Code and Massachusetts General Laws: a) smoke detectors are required in all residential structures; b) fire alarm systems are required for all existing multi-family buildings of 6 dwelling units or more by MGL 148, s.26c(Fire Department jurisdiction) and for new construction multi-family buildings of three units or more by the current Building Code(**existing multi-family buildings of 5 units or less are not required to have a fire alarm system**); c) sprinkler systems are required by the Building Code for new construction multi-family buildings and for **existing multi-family buildings only when they undergo substantial rehabilitation**.
2. The Building Code requires that multi-family buildings be inspected every 5 years and issued a certificate of inspection(CI). ISD hired a building inspector and initiated this program in February of this year. It is expected that it will take 5 years to complete the initial inspection cycle. The inspection focuses particularly on life safety items such as fire protection systems/devices, means of egress, safety of porches, fire escapes, etc. The inspector insures that required fire protection systems/devices in the common areas are in place and are being properly maintained. The inspector coordinates closely with the Fire Department Fire Prevention Division in matters concerning fire protection.
3. Concerning fire escapes, the Building Code does not allow fire escapes to be installed as a required means of egress in new construction. However, fire escapes that are a required means of egress in existing buildings are allowed to remain provided they are properly maintained. As noted previously, the safety of fire escapes are an item of special interest during the multi-family inspection.

Very truly yours,


R. R. Bersani

Copy:

Cambridge Fire Dept.(Acting Chief Reardon, Deputy Chief Bokuniewicz)



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
FIRE DEPARTMENT
ISO Class 1 Fire Department
HEADQUARTERS
491 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA. 02138



GERALD R. REARDON
CHIEF OF DEPARTMENT

FRANCIS E. MURPHY III
ASSISTANT CHIEF

(617) 349-4921
FAX (617) 349-4912

To: Mr. Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: Gerald R. Reardon, Acting Fire Chief

Date: September 22, 2000

Subject: City Council Order No. 2

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OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

In response to City Council Order No. 2 "Investigate and report on Fire Prevention efforts in the City", the following information is provided regarding fire alarm systems and smoke detectors.

The Cambridge Fire Department has various programs regarding the testing and inspecting of fire detection and smoke alarm systems throughout the city. The weekly in-service inspections program conducted by fire suppression personnel focuses on various types of occupancies each year. These are non-mandated inspections and range from residential buildings to hazardous/industrial buildings. These inspections are done on a cyclical basis. From 1992 to 1994, the fire department launched a citywide inspection program for fire detection/smoke alarm systems in residential units. These inspections were conducted by fire suppression forces and focused on one to five unit buildings. These inspections were instituted to ensure code compliance with state law for the installation of fire detection/smoke alarm devices.

At the beginning of this year, the Cambridge Fire Department, in cooperation with the Inspectional Services Department, launched a citywide inspection program for multi-unit residential buildings (six units or more). These inspections concentrate on the existence and current operating condition of fire alarm systems. Fire suppression and inspectional service personnel conduct these inspections. If a building fire protection system is found to be non-compliant or malfunctioning, a report is submitted to the Bureau of Fire Prevention and action is taken to correct the situation.

Other residential inspection programs include the inspection and testing of fire detection/smoke alarm systems when a unit is sold. MGL Chapter 148 Sec. 26F (Residential Buildings Or Structures, Equipping With Smoke Detectors Upon Sale Or Transfer) requires that fire detection devices are installed and operating whenever ownership of a residential unit changes. Fire suppression personnel conduct these inspections to ensure that the fire detection/smoke alarm systems are properly installed and functioning before a residential unit is sold. Fire Prevention personnel also conduct inspections of residential fire detection/smoke alarm systems when a Certificate of Occupancy is required. These inspections are conducted to ensure code compliance and proper operation of fire detection/smoke alarm systems for new construction or alterations to existing buildings. *These are the only mandated inspection programs for residential buildings.*

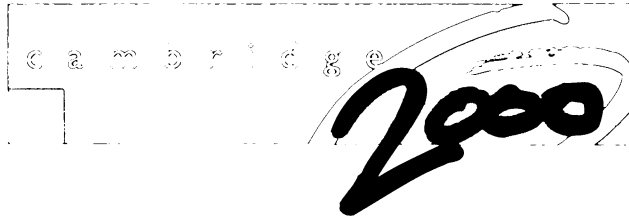
The Cambridge Fire Department also has a comprehensive program of inspecting and testing fire protection systems for schools, hospitals, nursing homes, hotels, clinics, day care centers, theaters, elderly housing and group homes. State law mandates these inspections. The fire suppression forces conduct these inspections year-round. In addition, Fire Prevention personnel conduct inspections of dormitories, fraternity houses and rooming houses for city licensing requirements.

MGL Chapter 148, 527 CMR Fire Prevention Regulations and 780CMR State Building Code set forth the regulations requiring the installation and inspection of fire safety systems in residential buildings. While the regulations vary according to number of residential units, *'The owner, tenant, or lessee of every building or structure shall be responsible for the care and maintenance of all fire protection systems, including equipment and devices, to ensure the safety and welfare of the occupants.'* Fire protection systems are required to be inspected by the owner, tenant or lessee once a year. The CFD/ISD residential inspection program currently in progress is focusing on obtaining the proper owner information for these systems.

Respectfully submitted,



Gerald R. Reardon
Acting Chief of Department



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CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager

Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

October 16, 2000

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 00-64, regarding a report on fire prevention efforts in the City, received from Inspectional Services Commissioner Robert Bersani and Acting Fire Chief Gerald Reardon.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy".

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachment



2000 Things 2 Do in 2000

S 327

Consent Agenda # 8

Relative to Awaiting Report Item Number
00-64, regarding a report on fire
preventions efforts

In the City Council October 16, 2000

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