

COUNCIL POLICY: FREQUENCY OF FIRE INSPECTIONS

Council Approval
Date:

December 18, 2019

Department: Fire and Bylaw Services

Amended:

1. PURPOSE

For Council to approve a policy and establish a regular system of fire and life safety inspections of hotels and public buildings in which the frequency and method are to follow the Fire Services Act legislation.

2. SCOPE

- a. On a Provincial level, the Province of British Columbia (BC) operates under the *British Columbia Building and Fire Codes* and the *Fire Services Act (FSA)* to establish fire inspections, prevention and safety. The *Codes* are enforced during the construction, renovation, and demolition of structures prior to occupancy and final inspections. Post-occupancy, the *Fire Code* and the *Fire Protection Bylaw and Fire Services Act* are used in conjunction for Fire Inspections and it is incumbent on Fire Chief or his designate (Local Assistant to the Fire Commissioner, (L AFC)) to conduct fire and life safety inspections.
- b. In the District of North Cowichan the L AFC is delegated the authority on behalf of council thru the Fire Commissioner to perform the function of Fire Inspector. The L AFC is the Manager of Fire and Bylaw Services and Bylaw Compliance Officer/Fire Inspector and is responsible for enforcing "Fire Protection Bylaw 3340" and to ensure compliance with the *Codes* by undertaking fire safety inspections of buildings in the District of North Cowichan.
- c. Part 1, Section 26 (1) of the *FSA* mandates Council to provide for a regular system of inspection of hotels and public buildings in the Municipality.

3. DEFINITIONS

Under Section 1, Definitions in the *FSA*:

- a. "public building" includes a factory, a warehouse, store, mill, school, hospital, theatre, public hall, office building and any building other than a private dwelling house; and,
- b. "hotel" includes an apartment house, a residential building that has two (2) or more levels of strata lots as defined in the *Strata Property Act*, and a boarding house, lodging house, club or any other building, except a private dwelling, where lodging is provided.
- c. A boarding house, lodging house, club or any other building, except a private dwelling, where lodging is provided.

Under Section 36 of the *FSA* for inspection of buildings:

- a. "building" includes a hotel, public building, church, theatre, hall or other building used as a place of public resort;

- b. "Local Assistant" (LAFC) means a municipality that maintains a fire department, the fire chief and persons authorized in writing by the fire chief to exercise the powers of a local assistant;
- c. in a municipality that does not maintain a fire department, the mayor of the municipality or another person appointed as a local assistant by the fire commissioner;
- d. in any other part of British Columbia, a person appointed as a local assistant by the fire commissioner.
- e. and, in a municipality, the chief police officer and any other person authorized by the municipal council to exercise some or all of the LAFC's powers under this Part, and
- f. an officer has power at any time to enter a building to inspect it and ascertain whether a fire has occurred or occurred close to that area, and
- g. A municipal council must provide for a regular system of inspections and may authorize someone other than the LAFC to exercise some or all powers under section 21 to 23 of the Fire Services Act, within the Municipality.

4. POLICY

Procedure for the Regular System of the Inspection of Buildings

OCCUPANCY*	GROUP	MINIMUM FREQUENCY/ BY WHO
Residential – Hotels, Motels and Apartments	C	12 Months/ with a record of yearly compliance inspections could be extended to 24 months
Public assembly – Gathering of people for civic, religious, social, educational, recreational or like purposes of for food and drink consumption	A1-A4	12 Months extended if history of compliance and completed by North Cowichan Fire Inspector
Institutional – Treatment care or detention facilities	B1-B3	12 Months and completed by North Cowichan Fire Inspector
Service industry / Office – Business use, professional and personal services	D	12 Months self-inspection by owner and yearly verification of compliance report filed with Municipality, with a record of yearly compliance inspections could be extended to 24 or 36 months
Mercantile / Retail – Display / selling retail goods	E	12 Months self-inspection by owner and yearly verification of compliance report filed with Municipality
Low industrial hazard	F2-F3	24 Months 3 rd party inspection
High industrial hazard	F1	12 Months 3 rd party inspection

*** Group designations as per the applicable addition of the BC Building Code (BCBC)**

All owners and occupiers of buildings or premises in the District of North Cowichan must cooperate fully with the LAFC or their designate in connection with completion of scheduled inspections.

Where the *BC Fire Code (BCFC)* requires the owner(s) of real property or a building to establish fire emergency procedures and prepare and maintain a building fire safety plan, the property owner must submit to the fire department a detailed fire safety plan and record of emergency systems installed within a building for review and approval prior to implementation of such a plan.

Fire inspections are arranged and maintained through the District of North Cowichan Fire Department.