



Fire Department

2020 Fire Inspection Fee Program

Currently, fire personnel inspect multifamily and commercial buildings every other year, ensuring there are working sprinklers, alarms and other provisions that prevent fires. Multifamily buildings, such as apartments without fire alarm or fire sprinkler systems, are inspected annually.

To support the fire inspection program, **fire inspection fees will be charged starting in 2020.**

The fees will start at \$180 for tenant spaces larger than 1,000 square feet, with the precise fee depending on the square footage and complexity of the tenant space.

To ensure a smooth transition to the fee implementation, we will work with building owners and managers throughout 2019 to answer any questions you may have and to collect building and tenant information.

Why the change?

Fire inspections are a best practice for the safety of the occupant. In order to maintain the current service level given the increase in growth in square footage of building space, the fire prevention program needs to add additional fire prevention officers. Starting in 2020 the Fire Inspection Program will become a fee for service.

How will information be gathered?

The Fire Marshal is in the process of sending an informational sheet to all building owners. These forms can also be found and completed at <https://fire.BellevueWA.gov/fire-prevention/fire-inspection-fees>.

Who is responsible for the costs?

For a single tenant building, the occupant would be responsible. In a multi-tenant building the building owner would be responsible for common areas and each tenant for their own areas.

What factors will be used in determining the fee?

The fire inspection fee is a function of three factors:

1. Base rate
2. The square footage of the area to be inspected
3. The degree of knowledge required to conduct the inspection (degree of difficulty factor)

Inspection Fee = base rate X square footage factor X degree of difficulty factor

What is the base rate?

The base rate is currently set at \$180. The base rate used in Bellevue City Code 23.11.113.6.8 shall be set by City Council and reviewed every two years, or as otherwise necessary, to accomplish cost recovery for the fire inspection program. The base rate shall be adjusted to account for inflation, additional commercial and multifamily square footage subject to fire inspection which has been added within the City, and additional fire inspection resources or personnel necessary to perform fire inspections on a regular basis.

How is the square footage factor determined?

The tenant's square footage receives a number which is based on the following:

- 0 = Under 1,000 Sq. Ft. #
- 1 = 1,000 Sq. Ft. or larger up to;
- 2 = 3,000 Sq. Ft. or larger up to;
- 3 = 10,000 Sq. Ft. or larger up to;
- 4 = 40,000 Sq. Ft. or larger up to;
- 5 = 80,000 Sq. Ft. or larger up to;
- 6 = 100,000 Sq. Ft. or larger.

How is the degree of difficulty determined?

The degree of difficulty is determined by the building's occupancy type. All occupancy classifications are in accordance with the International Building Code (IBC) as amended by Washington State Administrative Code Chapter 51-50. Accessory occupancies ancillary to the main occupancy or incidental uses shall be classified for the purpose of the degree of difficulty factor as the main occupancy:

1. Low. All buildings or portions of buildings classified as Group B, M, R (not to include Group R Division 3) and U occupancies.
2. Medium. All buildings or portions of buildings classified as Group A, E, S or LC occupancies
3. High. All buildings classified as high-rise buildings; all buildings or portions of buildings classified as Group F, H or I occupancies.

Are there any exemptions?

There are three exemptions to fees:

1. Nonprofit organizations exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code
2. Buildings or occupancies less than 1,000 square feet
3. Recognized federal, state, and county buildings/tenants

Can I expect the same costs every year?

The City of Bellevue will be using the information we gather throughout 2019 to determine if the fee scale is at an appropriate rate to support the Fire Inspection Program. If it is determined through data collection that the rate needs to be adjusted, the change will occur for implementation in 2020. Additionally, the ordinance requires the Fire Marshal to review the program with council ever two years to adjust if necessary.

What if there is a re-inspection?

The fire inspection fee covers the initial inspection and one re-inspection visit, if necessary. Any additional follow-up inspections will be charged at an hourly rate.

Where can I go for more information?

The City of Bellevue Website: <https://fire.BellevueWA.gov/fire-prevention/fire-inspection-fees>

Ken Carlson, Fire Marshal, 425-452-6874

Email questions to: Fire_Prevention@BellevueWA.gov