



# Burlington Fire Department



BUSINESS OFFICE

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TO: BOARD OF FINANCE

FROM: Lise E. Veronneau, Business Manager  
BURLINGTON FIRE & POLICE DEPARTMENTS

DATE: March 1, 2012

RE: ***Time of Sale Inspection Fee***

The Fire Department has been delegated the responsibility for the City and authorized to establish and collect reasonable fees for the plan review and inspection functions. The Fire Department receives approximately **325** requests for special “time of sale” inspections of residential buildings in order to facilitate the private sale of these properties; and although “time of sale” inspections of residential properties are not required by the adopted state or city codes, both City and State fire inspection officials have initiated and currently perform time of sale inspections in order to reduce the number of fatalities, injuries and property losses due to residential fires.

The Fire Marshal’s Office review of its time of sale inspections for the calendar year 2011 revealed the following:

- (1) 99% of all inspections found at least two violations,
- (2) orders to correct and re-inspections were thereby necessitated,
- (3) some 30% of time of sale inspections involved multiunit properties, and
- (4) the average initial inspection takes 2.5 hours of staff time when all the work associated with the inspection is considered (intake, scheduling, transportation, inspection, documentation, data entry, post-inspection communications) and the average re-inspection takes 1.5 hours of staff time.

Requests for time of sale inspections are not predictable and cause scheduling challenges for the fire department’s inspection service, especially because 25% of these inspections were requested to be conducted less than 5 days after the initial contact with the Fire Marshal’s Office; and the cost to the Fire Department of these inspections, which is not currently built into its budget, is best borne by the person requesting the inspection who is benefiting from the service paid through a fee for service.

The Fire Department, based on the cost associated with these inspections, a comparison with the inspection fee charged by the Vermont Division of Fire Safety for these inspections, and consultations with the Chief Administrative Officer and City Attorney’s Office, has proposed a fee of \$125.00 for the service of providing time of sale inspections/

Suggest: \$125 covers 1-2 dwelling units, Additional \$50/ ea. charge of additional units after 2 dwelling units.

The Burlington Fire Department, hereby, respectfully request approval to establish this fee for the City’s time of sale inspection program.

Attached is a draft of the resolution worked on with the City Attorney to effect the fee effective April 1, 2012.

CC: Seth Lasker, Fire Chief  
Bruce Bourgeois, Fire Administrative Deputy Chief  
Terry Francis, Fire Marshal



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Scott Schrader, Interim CAO  
Rich Goodwin, Assistant CAO

*Draft*

Initiator: BFD, CAO, Mayor

Sponsor: Board of Finance

Process: BOF Review 3/125, CC Review & Adoption 3/26

WHEREAS, the City of Burlington and the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Public Safety has entered into an agreement delegating responsibility to the City's Departments of Public Works and Fire for plan review, permitting, inspection, and enforcement of the Vermont Fire and Building Safety Code; and

WHEREAS, the Fire Department has been delegated the responsibility for the plan review, permitting, inspection and enforcement of the Vermont Fire and Building Safety Code for all fire protection systems in new and existing public buildings and the inspection and enforcement of the Vermont Fire and Building Safety Code for all existing public buildings as that term is defined in 20 V.S.A. § 2730, with certain delineated exceptions; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 2736(b) and this state delegation agreement, the City has also been authorized to establish and collect reasonable fees for the plan review and inspection functions assigned by the Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Fire Department receives approximately 325 requests for special "time of sale" inspections of residential buildings in order to facilitate the private sale of these properties; and

WHEREAS, although "time of sale" inspections of residential properties are not required by the adopted state or city codes, both City and State fire inspection officials have initiated and currently perform time of sale inspections in order to reduce the number of fatalities, injuries and property losses due to residential fires; and

WHEREAS, the Fire Marshal's Office review of its time of sale inspections for the calendar year 2011 revealed the following: (1) 99% of all inspections found at least two violations, (2) orders to correct and re-inspections were thereby necessitated, (3) some 30% of time of sale inspections involved multiunit properties, and (4) the average initial inspection takes 2.5 hours of staff time when all the work associated with the inspection is considered (intake, scheduling, transportation, inspection, documentation, data entry, post-inspection communications) and the average re-inspection takes 1.5 hours of staff time; and

WHEREAS, requests for time of sale inspections are not predictable and cause scheduling challenges for the fire department's inspection service, especially because 25% of these inspections were requested to be conducted less than 5 days after the initial contact with the Fire Marshal's Office; and

WHEREAS, the cost to the Fire Department of these inspections, which is not currently built into its budget, is best borne by the person requesting the inspection who is benefiting from the service paid through a fee for service; and

*Draft*

WHEREAS, the Fire Department, based on the cost associated with these inspections, a comparison with the inspection fee charged by the Vermont Division of Fire Safety for these inspections, and consultations with the Chief Administrative Officer and City Attorney's Office, has proposed a fee of \$125 for the time of sale inspection of buildings containing one or two dwelling units with an additional charge of \$50 for each unit over the second unit in the building for the service of providing time of sale inspections; and

WHEREAS, on March 12, 2012, the Mayor recommended and Board of Finance considered and approved the establishment of this fee for the City's time of sale inspection program;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT as proposed by the Fire Department, Chief Administrative Officer, and Mayor at the March 12, 2012 Board of Finance meeting the City Council approves of the establishment of the recommended service fee of \$125 for the time of sale inspection of buildings containing one or two dwelling units with an additional charge of \$50 for each unit over the second unit in the building to be charged to and paid by the person requesting the inspection prior to or at the commencement of the inspection.