



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:18-2603

Agenda Item Number: 3.

Agenda Date: 3/27/2018

In Control: Public Safety Committee

DEPARTMENT: SAFD

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Charles N. Hood

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

2018 Fire Code Amendments

SUMMARY:

The San Antonio Fire Department is in the process of reviewing and amending the 2018 International Fire Code. The code is scheduled for adoption along with all other associated codes in late spring 2018. This memo serves to brief the Committee on the amendment and adoption process of the fire code, with a summary of significant changes to the code for this cycle.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The International Code Council (ICC) publishes new codes every three years. The code package includes Fire, Building, Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing, Existing Building, Residential, and Energy Codes. As the codes are designed to work in conjunction with each other, they are reviewed by Development Services and the SAFD shortly after they are published so that they can be adopted at the same time. The codes are often amended to best serve the needs of our community. The SAFD receives amendment proposals from uniformed staff, DSD plan reviewers, design professionals, Fire Protection Engineers and other stakeholders. We have met and discussed potential amendments with the San Antonio Apartment Association, the San Antonio Restaurant Association, the San Antonio Food Truck Association, night club owners and other stakeholders that are to be affected by the new code or proposed amendments. The SAFD has reviewed over 40 proposed amendments and/or deletions this cycle.

Public hearings on the codes are held via open meetings conducted by the *Building Related and Fire Codes*

Appeals and Advisory Board (BRFCAAB). The board assigns a subcommittee for each of the codes. The SAFD will have presented the fire code and draft “A” of the amendments to the subcommittee over 3 meetings by the end of March. The complete process will take at least 5 meetings to complete before recommendations are made to the full BRFCAAB board. Should the board approve the code and amendments as presented, it will support the recommendation of adoption by City Council.

ISSUE:

There are significant changes to the 2018 International Fire Code that have been of concern for a number of our stakeholders. Chapter 11 of the Fire Code has requirements for existing buildings that are to be applied retroactively, similar to the high-rise fire sprinkler ordinance, only that the modifications are specifically prescribed in the code and not added through an amendment. Also, like the high-rise ordinance, time should be granted for the affected occupancies to come into compliance. The SAFD has made some amendments to these to allow for time to comply and to address the concerns the department believes impact public safety. Minor editorial changes were made to previously adopted amendments to reflect modern terminology while some were deleted because they became obsolete due to newly added sections or improvements in the code.

Examples of new requirements or amendments to previous requirements:

- Requirement for existing R-2 occupancies (apartments) to install carbon monoxide detection under certain conditions.
- Requirement for existing R-2 occupancies (apartments) to install fire alarm systems in certain situations.
- Requirement for existing night clubs to install fire sprinkler systems if the occupant load is greater than 300.
- Requirement for all new schools to provide voice evacuation fire alarm systems.
- Requirement for all new high-rise buildings to have a Firefighter Air Replenishment System installed.
- Requirement for all newly permitted mobile food trucks to have a fan exhaust system with fire protection and all food trucks to have a gas alarm installed.
- New locking arrangements in educational occupancies.
- New requirements for attic fire protection in group “R” (residential) occupancies including an SAFD amendment.

The Public Safety Committee will be briefed again when the final draft has been approved by the BRFCAAB and it makes its recommendations for adoption.

ALTERNATIVES:

This memo is for briefing purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This memo is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends coming back to Public Safety prior to City Council approval in late spring once the stakeholder and review process is complete.