



## MEMORANDUM

Late Backup

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Rhoda Mae Kerr, Fire Chief *RMK*

DATE: June 23, 2010

SUBJECT: 2009 International Fire Code (IFC) Requirements for Daycare Centers

On June 18, 2010, the Austin Fire Department's (AFD) Emergency Prevention section met with Council Member Laura Morrison to discuss new requirements outlined in the 2009 International Fire Code (IFC) for daycare centers.

The main concern with the new code requirements is the fiscal impact it could have on daycare centers. Council Member Morrison expressed her concerns that some daycare centers could experience undue hardships if they were required to update their existing fire alarm systems.

A follow-up meeting was conducted on June 22, 2010 to continue discussing the intricacies of the fire inspection process. It was reiterated that AFD's goal is not to put businesses out of service, but rather to assist with life safety issues and to ensure businesses are compliant with the fire code.

The following items are required according to the **2009 IFC**:

**All Daycares—**

- Emergency Lighting- where more than one exit is required, emergency lighting is required in interior stairs, corridors, windowless areas with student occupancy, shops and laboratories. (2009 IFC, 4604.5)
- Exit Sign Illumination- with Power Backup is required; if more than, one exit is required. (2009 IFC, 4604.3)

**Daycares Licensed for over 49—(main reason for the expense.)**

- Manual fire alarm system is required. (2009 IFC, 4603.6) Monitoring is not required for retroactively required systems.
- A Manual Fire Alarm System shall consist of pull stations by each exit, Audio visuals (AV) in each space (where they can be seen and heard in all spaces), and all smoke detectors tied into the system. (4603.6, 907.3, 907.4, 907.5, and 907.6)
- According to the 2009 IFC, we must make all Day Cares with more than 49 children comply with the retroactive requirements of having manual fire alarm systems.

In order for some daycare centers to be in compliance with the new code without risking life safety, a timetable was discussed to alleviate any undue hardships. The following remedies were proposed:

- 1) Daycare centers that are inspected before the official adoption date of the 2009 IFC will remain in compliance until their next annual inspection date.
- 2) Initial inspections under the 2009 IFC guidelines will require some daycare centers to provide a detailed plan on how they will comply with the new fire code.
- 3) Daycare Centers will provide AFD with a set of fire alarm plans that are drawn up by a fire alarm company. The plans will be stamped and approved by AFD Engineers within the first **6 months** of their initial inspection.
- 4) Businesses must begin installing the fire alarm devices soon after the fire alarm plans are approved.
- 5) The fire alarm system must be **100%** installed, tested, and approved by AFD within an **18-month period**.
- 6) Communication must be ongoing between businesses and the AFD Prevention Office.

Below is the Section in the 2009 International Fire Code that allows AFD to extend the timetable for compliance.

**Chapter 46 Construction requirements for Existing Buildings**

**4601.4.3 Extension of time.**

The fire code official is authorized to grant necessary extensions of time when it can be shown that the specified times are not physically practical or pose an undue hardship. The granting of an extension of time for compliance shall be based on the showing of good cause and subject to the filing of an acceptable systematic plan of correction with the fire code official.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

cc: Marc A. Ott, City Manager  
Michael McDonald, Assistant City Manager  
Harry Evans, Assistant Chief/Chief of Staff  
Richard Davis, Assistant Chief  
Joe Limon, Battalion Chief/Interim Fire Chief