

Spokane Fire Department

Fire Prevention Bureau

Michael Miller, Fire Marshal

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Prevention Bureau Mission

- To improve the quality of life for the City of Spokane through risk assessment, code enforcement, fire investigation, and public education.
 - Provide a minimum level of life safety.
 - Reduce the number of accidental fires.
 - Reduce injuries and fatalities from fire.
 - Reduce the amount of property loss from fire.
 - Provide safety to firefighters and emergency responders during emergency operations.

Methods

- Community Outreach/Public Education
- School Fire Drill program
- Special inspections
- Plan review
 - New and remodel construction plans for conformance to Spokane Municipal and International Fire Code requirements.

- Fire Protection System Maintenance and Records Management
 - Service records for fire sprinkler systems, fire alarm, kitchen range hood suppression systems, private hydrants, above and below ground storage tanks, etc.
- Special Event permit
- Site inspections
- Education/behavior modification
 - Onsite explanations/civil infractions

Deputy Fire Marshals

- Spokane Fire currently has 5 Deputy Fire Marshals.
- Four Certified as Level I and II Fire Inspectors by the International Code Council.
- Limited commission officers. Ability to write civil infractions.

- Conduct site inspections for ***operating permit*** renewals to ensure code/safety requirements are maintained.
- Conduct site inspections for new construction and existing building remodels for Fire Code compliance.
- Review service reports from third party independent service companies for required life safety systems, known as ***renewable activities***.
- Respond to complaints about building safety.
- Issue Notices of Violation (NOV) for fire code deficiencies to responsible party. Verifies corrections are completed.

Long Term Rentals

- Would fall into the classification of a residential occupancy (R2) in the Fire Code, primarily permanent in nature. Not all R2 occupancies are rentals and includes Convents, Monasteries, Dormitories, etc. Fire does not track whether the activity is a rental or not.
- Would not include single family residential, duplexes or other units that have less than five units/guest rooms (Spokane Municipal Code, 17F.080.110).

Concerns

- Site Access (can we get to all parts of the building we need to) and site fire flow (do we have enough water at the site for the size of the building).
- Egress pathways and exits, extinguishers, Premise and Unit I.D.
- Maintenance of any required life safety systems such as sprinkler or smoke detection systems, which are called renewable activities in our permit management system.

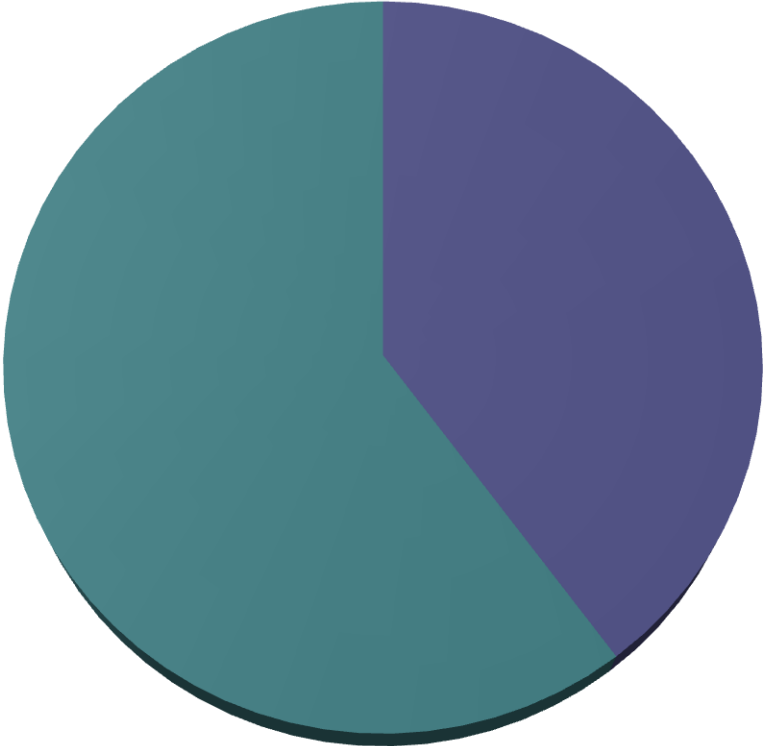
Usually no *operating permits* associated with this type occupancy.

Spokane Fire Department (SFD) does not currently conduct routine annual building inspections. Site building inspections are held on a complaint based system unless there is an operating permit for the location.

SFD reviews service reports for required life safety systems (sprinkler systems, fire alarms, range hoods) from third party independent contractors.

- Approximately 820 sites identified as possible long term rentals or apartments in Fire's permit system.
- 327 of those sites, or 39.8% had one or more NOVs issued to them in 2014.

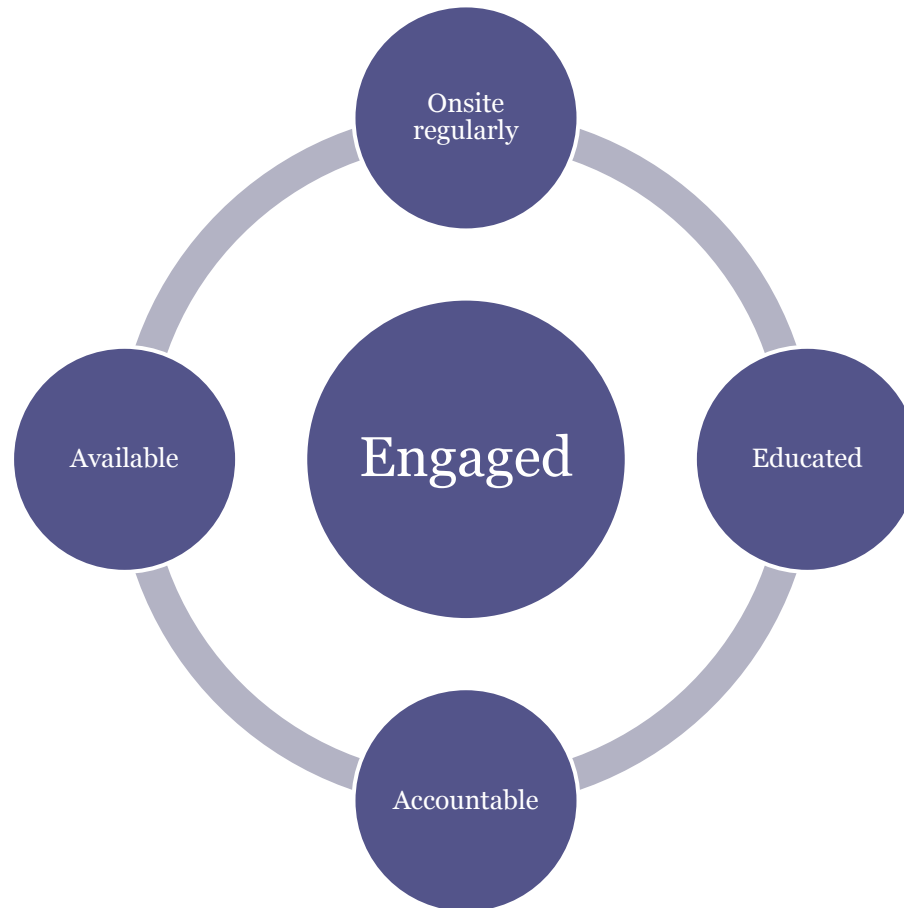
Long term Rentals Sites



- Rentals with NOV's
- Rentals without NOV's

Management/Owners

Who's in charge and where are they?





Large Complex,
Probably professional management.



Could be
professionally
managed, could be
managed by the
building owner.

Out of City/State Owners

- Not always active in the property.
- Can be difficult to contact.
- Don't always have an onsite manager, or if they do, the individual is not always trained in his or her responsibilities.
- Of the 820 sites identified as Apartments in Fire's permit system, about 42% of the owners do not live in the City.

Locations matched to County Assessor info
for owner addresses.

Not the result of an engaged manager!



Damaged horn/strobe



Missing FDC caps



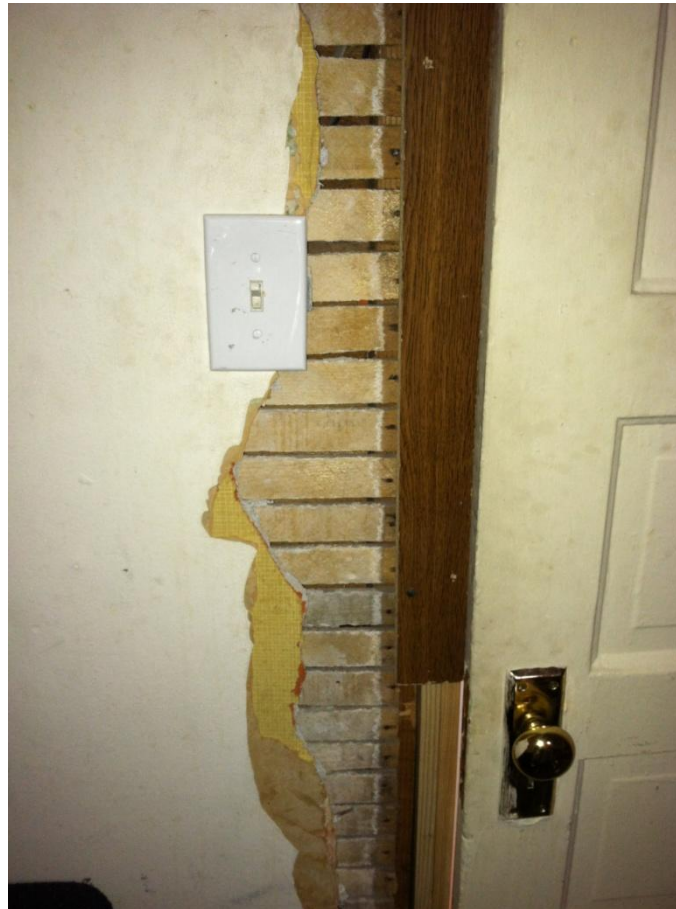
Damaged Exit Sign



Heat Detector



Maintenance Issues?



Compliance Based Enforcement System

- Accela permit system or Fire Inspector issues NOV with compliance date.
- Compliance date depends on the number and severity of the deficiencies.
- Civil infraction may be issued, but if repairs are made 48 hours prior to the Court date, a certificate of correction must be issued if requested.
- No frequent flyer points. Starts again with a clean slate.

No Harm, No Foul?

- In 2013 one apartment complex was issued 11 Notices of Violation dealing with fire alarm and sprinkler service reports.
- The same complex was also issued 11 Notices of Violation in 2014 for fire alarm and sprinkler service reports.
- A similar sized complex on the opposite side of town was issued zero Notices of Violation in 2013 or 2014.

So, What is missing?

- A system that provides inspections other than those based on complaints.
 - Required third party inspections?
- A training program that educates property owners, managers and renters.
 - Housing standards, code requirements, landlord/tenant laws, etc.
- A program that rewards clean records and penalizes repeat and consistent offenders.

Solutions?

- A possible solution could be found in a properly structured Rental Registration Program for all rentals.
 - Or a registration program for owners that are consistently found to own substandard units.
- Performance bonds for recognized frequent fliers?
- Automatic late charges for report submittals?
- Changing Municipal Code language so that Certificates of Correction are not required but left to the discretion of the issuing officer.