



**AGENCY:** City Council  
**MEETING DATE:** November 27, 2023  
**DEPARTMENT:** Fort Bragg Fire Protection Authority  
**PRESENTED BY:** Steve Wells, Fire Prevention Officer  
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## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

**TITLE:**

**Direct Staff to Prepare an Ordinance Amending FBMC Chapter 15.06 Automatic Fire Sprinkler and Alarm Systems**

**ISSUE:**

In 2015, when the Fort Bragg Fire Protection Authority proposed changes to the Fort Bragg Municipal Code (FBMC) Chapter 15.06, Automatic Fire Sprinkler and Alarm Systems, a section was altered that fundamentally changed the intent of this ordinance. The altered language actually made it easier to ignore the sprinkler requirements. If remodeling was completed in phases over time, the Applicant could legally bypass City sprinkler requirements.

**ANALYSIS:**

The purpose of FBMC Chapter 15.06, Automatic Fire Sprinkler and Alarm Systems is to ensure that new construction and significant remodels include installation of automatic fire sprinklers. In 2015, the ordinance read as follows:

Existing commercial and multifamily buildings which are remodeled, added to, or altered, including maintenance and repair activities, when the valuation cost of such work **within any 36- month period** exceeds \$75,000, shall have an automatic fire sprinkler system installed.

In June 2015, staff recommended new language that omitted the 36-month period, which inadvertently created a "loophole" that, can allow the Applicant to bypass sprinkler requirements. The current ordinance now reads:

Existing commercial and multifamily buildings which are remodeled, added to, or altered, including maintenance and repair activities, when the building permit valuation cost of such exceeds \$75,000, shall have an automatic fire sprinkler system installed.

As currently written, the following scenario has happened. An Applicant submits plans for a remodel with an estimated cost of \$150,000. The owner is informed that they are required to install fire sprinklers as they exceed the \$75,000 threshold. The Applicant installs the required sprinklers. The alternate scenario is that an Applicant submits six separate plans with an estimated cost of \$50,000 for each plan. The total estimated cost of the entire project is \$300,000 but the Applicant is not required to install fire sprinklers because none of the plans presented meet or exceed the \$75,000 threshold. What makes this an even greater issue is that owners of commercial property that abide by the intent of the ordinance and

install sprinklers as required are seeing projects that cost much more than not being required to do so.

Staff recommends that the City add the 36-month timeframe back into the ordinance so we close the loophole. The proposed changes will be:

Existing commercial and multifamily buildings which are remodeled, added to, or altered, including maintenance and repair activities, when valuation cost of such work within any 36-month period exceeds \$75,000, shall have an automatic fire sprinkler system installed. The sprinkler system shall be connected with water service as determined by the Director of Public Works. Roof replacement costs will not be calculated into the \$75,000 limit.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Direct staff to amend Chapter 15.06 Automatic Fire Sprinkler & Alarm Systems and bring back to City Council for formal action.

**ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):**

None.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Att 1 – Current Chapter 15.06 Automatic Fire Sprinkler & Alarm System

Att 2 - 2015 Version of Automatic Sprinkler

Att 3 - Proposed Sprinkler Updates