



How Not to Get Into Trouble With The Fire Department

Kenneth Kwong & Lee Kirby



27th California Unified Program
Annual Training Conference
March 24 – 27, 2025

What Not To Do!



"Think of how stupid the average person is, and realize half of them are stupider than that" George Carlin



Course Objectives

1. Understand what fire inspectors are looking for during visits
2. Recognize common situations, circumstances, & violations
3. Understand how violations may impact your business



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Fire Code Violations: Why Are They Important?

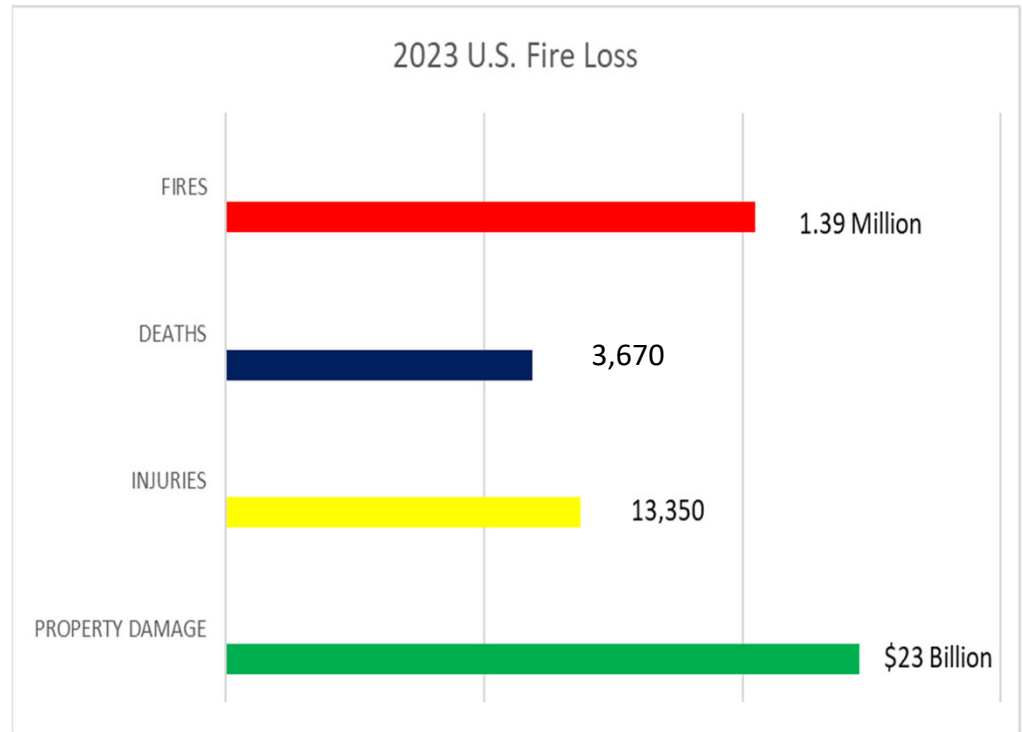
1. Human Cost
2. Financial Impact
3. Legal Consequences



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Human Cost

- 1. Injuries/Loss of Life
- 2. Psychological Impact



Financial Impact

- Property Repairs & Equipment Replacement
- Loss of business continuity = Loss Revenue
- Increase Insurance Costs



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Legal Consequences

- Regulatory Fines
- Imposition of Probation
- Civil & Criminal Lawsuits

Ghost Ship warehouse landlord files bankruptcy to settle lawsuit

The Ng family wasn't criminally charged for the deadly 2016 fire. But they'll pay nearly \$12 million to survivors and families of the 36 victims.

by [David DeBolt](#)
Sept. 2, 2021, 8:45 a.m.

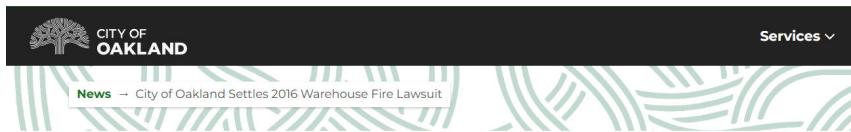


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Legal Consequences

- Liability is a two-way street
- Fire Departments have legal responsibility
- Civil & Criminal Lawsuits



City of Oakland Settles 2016 Warehouse Fire Lawsuit

\$32.7 million settlement brings closure to civil case in tragic incident



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The Mind of a Fire Inspector

1. Is there anything that will cause a fire?
2. If fire starts, is fire protection equipment operable to notify occupants & control fire
3. If fire starts, is there anything to prevent or delay evacuation



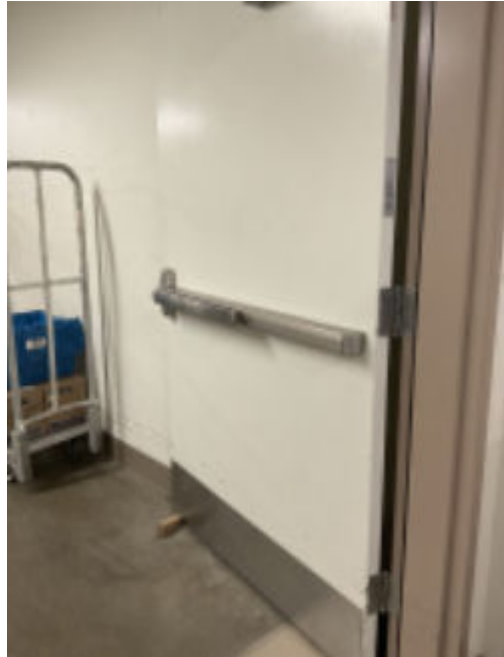
The Mind of a Fire Inspector

4. Will units be able to access the site?
5. Will there be any surprises?
6. How will the site's emergency procedures mesh with our response?



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What Are We Thinking?



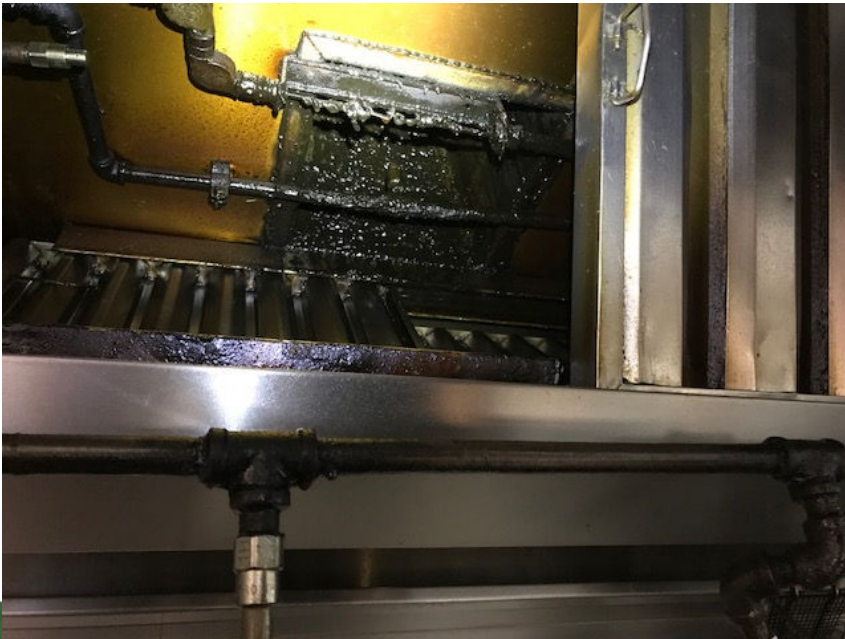
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What Are We Thinking?



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What Are We Thinking?



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Why All the Inspections?

- Multiple regulatory requirements
 - Title 19, Health and Safety Code, Fire Code, etc.
- Not all inspections can be done at once
 - HSC vs. Fire Code

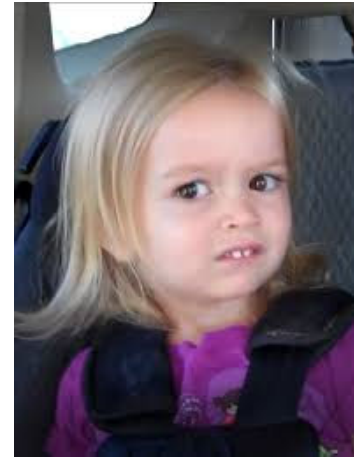


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Things Said to Fire Inspectors

- You're here to pick on me
 - No, really I'm not...
- You were just here
 - Me, no, this is my first time...
- Are you new? No one has written that up before
 - No, I've been around...



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Things Said to Fire Inspectors

- The other dude said quantities didn't matter...
- Honestly, I have no idea how long the red box has been beeping...
- The fire sprinkler system was leaking so I turned it off



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Remember...

- Our inspection is generally friendly
- We're there to make sure **everyone** is safe
- You know your business, we know our regulations
 - Let's work together
- “I'm from the government, I'm here to help”



Remember...

- Fire Prevention follows the 3-E's, generally
 - Education
 - Engineering
 - Enforcement



Open Mic Day

- You've heard us, we want to hear you
- You're here for education, or maybe because of a court order
- What questions do you have for us?



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TAKEAWAYS

1. Unsafe operations have life safety, financial, and legal costs
2. Inspections are performed to ensure everyone is safe
3. The fire inspector seeks to identify things that will:
 - Cause a fire
 - Interfere with fire access, occupant egress, and responder operations
 - Impair the operation of fire protection systems
4. Common violations include: fire nuisances, housekeeping, exit and fire access obstructions, and fire protection system maintenance



Your Presenters

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