

# FAQs for Fire Inspection Billing

## 1. **WHY AM I GETTING A BILL?**

**Multi-Family Dwelling Unit Inspections:** To provide for the safety of our community, and in accordance with California law (Health and Safety Code §13146.2 and §17921), a Fire Life/Safety Inspection of all R-2 Occupancies (Multi-Family Residential with 3 or more units under one roof) must be performed annually by uniformed Manhattan Beach Fire Department personnel. The inspection focuses on exterior areas such as fire lanes, fire protection systems and emergency exiting, and common areas such as community rooms and laundry rooms. There will not be an inspection of the inside of individual apartments or condominiums.

**Annual Fire Life and Safety Inspections for Businesses:** To provide for the safety of our community, an Annual Fire Life/Safety Inspection for all commercial properties must be performed annually by uniformed Manhattan Beach Fire Department personnel. The inspection focuses on retail shops, business offices, salons, restaurants and all other places of business (less than 50 people).

Due to the complexity and requirements for these inspections, the Fire Department charges as a cost recovery mechanism for conducting these mandatory inspections and for the necessary support staff and infrastructure of this program.

***Please note, these inspections are required by the State and have the main purpose of providing protection to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the occupant(s) in the building.***

## 2. **HOW TO READ MY BILL?**

**State Mandate Insp** = State Mandated Inspections for Hotels / Schools / Residential Care Facilities

**Multi-Dwelling Insp** = Multi-Family Dwelling Unit / Apartment Inspections

**Business Insp** = Annual Fire Life and Safety Business Inspections

**Operational Permit** = Places of Assembly with 50+ Persons, Restaurants, Auto Shops, Grocery Stores, Gas Stations, High Pile Storage

**Fire Technology Fee 5 percent** = Automatic technology fee that provides cost recovery and supports the Emergency Reporting software used by the Fire Department to complete the inspections.

**Late Penalty 10 percent** = Automatic late penalty applied to bill if not paid within 30 days of invoice date

## 3. **WHEN DID YOU START BILLING? I NEVER RECEIVED A BILL IN THE PAST.**

Due to the financial impacts from COVID, the City waived/deferred billing for these inspections during 2020 and 2021. Consequently, the City began billing for these inspections starting early 2022.

## 4. **IF I HAVE QUESTIONS, WHO CAN I CONTACT?**

Questions about the bill or payment should be directed to the Manhattan Beach Fire Department's billing vendor, Wittman Enterprises, LLC, by phone at 1 (800) 906-6552 PST – 8:00 am to 4:30 pm

## 5. **CAN I GET A COPY OF THE INSPECTION REPORT?**

Yes, a copy of the inspection report will be emailed to you by the Fire Inspector upon completion of the inspection. Furthermore, you may refer to the contact information above to request a copy of the inspection report.

## 6. **HOW CAN I PAY THE BILL?**

**Pay by Phone:** 1 (800) 906-6552 PST – 8:00 am to 4:30 pm

**Pay by Credit Card Online:** <https://www.webillems.com/creditcard/>

**Pay by Mail-in Check:** PO Box 269110, Sacramento, CA 95826-9110

**Pay in Person:** Visit City Hall Drop Box or Revenue Counter located at: **1400 Highland Avenue, Manhattan Beach, 90266**

## 7. **HOW IS THE BILL CALCULATED?**

The City of Manhattan Beach, in compliance with best management practices, conducts a comprehensive fee analysis every 4-5 years. The purpose of a fee study is to understand the gap between the City's current fee amount and the cost of service. Matrix Consulting Group was hired by the City of Manhattan Beach to analyze the cost of service relationships that exist between fees for service activities for all departments within the City. The results of this Study address current service levels, the cost and demand for those services, and what fees for service can and should be charged.

Activity associated with the inspection is billed and includes actual on-site inspection time, travel, and some administrative work performed in our office for filing, reviewing reports, and other related duties. Each year fees are reviewed and are subject to change. The current rate is listed as a line fee item in the Fire Department fees of the City's fee schedule.

## 8. **I DIDN'T SEE ANY FIRE INSPECTORS IN MY BUILDING. HOW DO I KNOW THIS INVOICE IS LEGITIMATE?**

We posted a sample bill on our website so you can verify if the bill you received is legitimate. If any of the key information does not match, such as how to make payments (which is also listed below), then it is not legitimate.

## 9. **HOW DO I KNOW IF AN INSPECTOR IS LEGITIMATE?**

Manhattan Beach Fire Department inspectors wear Fire Department uniforms and badges. Do not be shy to ask for identification and if in doubt, you may call our office at 310-802-5203. MBFD inspectors will never ask you for money, financial information, or issue bills or invoices on-site. We may ask for contact information (name, address, phone, email) for the correct point of contact.

## 10. **WHAT ARE INSPECTORS LOOKING FOR?**

During an inspection, Fire Inspectors are looking for fire hazards in all public spaces, which include areas like stair shafts, hallways, corridors, exit balconies, assembly rooms, utility and laundry rooms, storage areas, and garages. If buildings are equipped with fire alarms or automatic sprinkler systems, records of service/certification will be required to ensure these systems are being professionally serviced/certified, and are maintained in proper working order.

## 11. **IF I DID NOT PASS MY INSPECTION, HOW MUCH TIME DO I HAVE TO MAKE THE CORRECTIONS? CAN I REQUEST AN EXTENSION?** Corrective actions must be addressed within 30 days of the inspection. If an extension request is necessary, please contact your Fire Inspector or call our office at 310-802-5203.