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February 25, 2022

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Sheldon Kalani Hao, Chief  
Honolulu Fire Department

**ATTN:** Reid Yoshida, Battalion Chief  
Honolulu Fire Department

**FROM:** Councilmember Carol Fukunaga, Chair  
Committee on Public Infrastructure and Technology (PIT)

**RE:** Follow Up Questions relating to Implementation of Ordinance 19-4 – Special PIT  
Committee Meeting – February 24, 2022

Thank you for participating in the February 24, 2022 PIT Committee meeting to respond to questions regarding implementation of Ordinance 19-4 fire safety requirements. I would appreciate your department's responses to follow-up questions resulting from discussions at yesterday's committee meeting:

- 1) Resolution 18-157 and CR-262 (2018) requires the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD) to conduct outreach, education and training for condo associations, property owners and Licensed Design Professionals (LDP) to assist in compliance with Ordinance 18-14, superseded by 19-4. As noted by Battalion Chief Yoshida during the PIT meeting, HFD has conducted numerous outreach/training efforts involving the Life Safety Evaluation (LSE) process.

However, in light of the large number of residential high-rise properties that have not obtained an 'acceptable' score to date, we are seeking to quantify the department's efforts to help identify gaps and areas in which the City Council and condo/co-op management organizations can assist in further education and outreach efforts.

I would therefore appreciate your department's written responses on the following:

- a. Please provide the following information relating to HFD's outreach efforts:
  - i. Please identify dates of meetings and identify whether meeting was in-person or virtual
  - ii. Please quantify the number of attendees at each of the meetings, and the composition of the participants (e.g., design professionals, AOA)

- management company representatives, AOA board members and AOA associations, AOA insurance and legal representatives, etc.).
  - iii. Please outline the main concerns and issues raised by stakeholders, owners, condo associations, property owners, insurance companies and design professionals at these meetings.
  - iv. Was feedback and information on the issues, questions and concerns that were brought up shared with each of the stakeholder groups?
  - b. As of January 31, 2022, approximately 145 buildings have not submitted their Life Safety Evaluation (LSE), please outline HFD's plans to assist those buildings needing comply with Ordinance 19-4? What new outreach efforts have been planned? How will information be shared and disseminated?
- 2) The Permitted Interaction Group established by the Committee of Public Infrastructure and Technology received feedback from condo associations and property management companies regarding the inconsistent application of the evaluation criteria of the LSE by LDP and the inability to get clarity on what needs to be completed and how best a building can achieve a pass score.
- a. With the receipt of 178 LSE of which only 12 building receiving a passing score, has the department reviewed and evaluated the 'non-passing' 166 properties to determine how best to address their common factors and challenges?
  - b. After an LSE is received by HFD, what does the department do with each LSE evaluation? If areas in the LSE are identified that warrant inspection by HFD inspectors (e.g., storage in stairwells and other Fire Code violations), what actions does HFD pursue?
  - c. Does HFD initiate dialogue with individual condo associations, building managers and their design professionals to provide guidance on those categories in which the low scores were identified?
  - d. Does HPD assign staff or have a specific process that is used to assist the condo association and building owners to achieve a passing score?
  - e. How does the department address buildings that have not passed LSE?
- 3) In addition to concerns raised about inconsistent application of the LSE evaluation criteria, the PIT group received feedback regarding the interpretations of how two categories of the LSE criteria are used in the evaluation process which have contributed to a large number of buildings receiving with low scores: 1) vertical openings; and 2) upgraded fire alarms systems, specifically the ability for residents to hear alarms in their bedrooms/interior spaces.
- a. Does the department support facilitating discussions between design professionals, building owners and property management companies to ensure that LSE criteria for the fire alarm system category is applied in a consistent manner?
  - b. Is HFD willing to meet with PIT Committee members, design professionals, property management companies and high-rise legal/insurance stakeholders to develop a consensus on how criteria on the the vertical openings and fire alarm system categories are applied?
  - c. It appears from feedback and comments received from high-rise unit owners and property management companies that conflict of interests of interest are inherent in the LSE process, because the design professionals affiliated with specific engineering specialties invariably encourage upgrades in their areas of specialization. Would the department support an advisory group that can monitor

potential areas of abuse and report such areas to appropriate state regulatory authorities?

- d. Is HFD the appropriate entity to resolve potential conflicts involving different ratings obtained from two Life Safety Evaluations conducted by two sets of design professionals? More specifically, is an appeal of an LSE to the HFD an appropriate means of challenging an LSE when the department's position is that the design professionals are the experts, and HFD will defer to their areas of expertise?
- e. Is the department willing to consider revisions to the LSE worksheet criteria in order to provide clarity as to the appropriate safety level which is being evaluated?
- f. Does the department support establishing a 'Standardized Report Card' that it could issue to building owners, condo associations and building management companies so that there is a clear understanding of the LSE findings?

Thank you for your assistance in assisting the PIT Committee in its review of the best means of implementing residential high-rise fire safety improvements and providing your written responses by Wednesday, March 2, 2022.

Please contact Senior Advisor Kimberly Ribellia at [kribellia-collins@honolulu.gov](mailto:kribellia-collins@honolulu.gov) or at (808) 768-5045 if you have additional questions.