

Fire Inspection Fraud – General Information

People fraudulently representing the fire department are performing business inspections or improperly repairing or installing equipment. Here is some information that will help you to protect your business:

Fraudulent fire inspectors might dress in dark blue pants and T-shirts that look like the ones firefighters wear, or may state that they have been sent to conduct an inspection of a business by the fire marshal. They may even mention names of actual fire department inspectors in order to seem more legitimate.

Official representatives of the fire department wear badges and shoulder patches, and drive official fire department vehicles; they carry official identification cards with them, and never use private companies to conduct business inspections.

Fraudulent fire inspectors may show up unexpectedly saying that they sent by the fire department to complete routine servicing of the fire extinguishing or suppression equipment. They may insist on installing equipment and/or signage that is actually not required, or charge for servicing fire extinguisher without performing the work properly.

Fire department employees provide inspection services only, and are not authorized to repair or replace fire equipment or to recommend companies that service or sell equipment.

Once the inspection or servicing is finished, fraudulent fire inspectors might request immediate payment in cash or, in some cases, send an invoice to be returned with payment to a post office box.

The fire department does not accept any permit fees while on-site at businesses. Upon invoice, all payment is made payable to the city. Invoices include the name, address and seal of the city.

Fraudulent inspectors may ask you to sign an “inspection form,” but not leave a copy of it, saying that it will be mailed. Some time later, you could receive an invoice for an over-priced inspection in the mail with your signature cut and pasted in.

Fire department correction notices are always left with an on-site representative of the business.

Anyone who offers – or demands – to inspect your business but does not use fire department procedures should not be confronted; instead, call the police department immediately. If the person has left, or leaves before a police officer arrives, be ready to provide a description of the person and any other pertinent

information. If unsure whether or not to contact the police department, err on the side of caution by making the call. If, in the past, your business was contacted by someone who may have been fraudulently misrepresenting him – or herself, the incident should be reported to the fire department at (916) 984-2280. If you can help identify a person or person who may be fraudulently representing the fire department, please contact the police department.