



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Teresa Green, Fire Department Manager, Finance and Planning/Fire
James P. Duggan, Fire Chief
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Ordinance – Proposed Amendment to Chapter 6B.50 TMC – November 13, 2018
DATE: October 26, 2018

SUMMARY:

An ordinance amending Chapter 6B.50 of the Municipal Code, by adding a new Section 6B.50.070 authorizing the assessment of penalties for non-emergent patient lift assistance performed by the Tacoma Fire Department or its contractors at licensed care facilities to be effective on February 1, 2019.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

- Strengthen and support a safe city with healthy residents.
- Ensure all Tacoma residents are valued and have access to resources to meet their needs.
- Encourage and promote an efficient and effective government, which is fiscally sustainable and guided by engaged residents.

The proposed amendment is intended to preserve emergency resources for true emergencies by discouraging use of the 9-1-1 system to dispatch emergency medical personnel to licensed care facilities only to lift patients lacking an emergent medical condition.

BACKGROUND:

For the past several years, the Tacoma Fire Department (TFD) worked to communicate proper use of the 9-1-1 system to the management and staff of local licensed care facilities to reduce their reliance upon the 9-1-1 system for non-emergent lift assistance, which is not a traditional government function or an offered TFD service. In 2014, TFD's Medical Services Officer and staff of the FD CARES program began attending monthly meetings of the local licensed care industry, currently called the Pierce County Care Transitions Consortium, to share information about the proper use of 9-1-1. We also shared with them documents from the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services and from TFD that provide clear guidelines about when to call 9-1-1. In addition, TFD staff has had many one-on-one meetings with supervisors and staff of the facilities educating them about proper 9-1-1 use and emphasizing non-emergent lift assists are the responsibility of facilities staff.

Despite this ongoing effort, some local facilities continue to use the 9-1-1 system to provide TFD personnel for non-emergent lift assists in their facilities. TFD staff estimates we will be dispatched to about 365 non-emergent lift assists in 2018. Consequently, TFD is now proposing that a penalty charge of \$850 will be assessed whenever a lift assist is performed for non-emergent medical aid in these facilities.

The penalty charge will not be applied to assistance provided in private residences. It will only be applied to non-emergent lift assists in registered adult family homes, skilled nursing facilities and assisted living facilities. Such facilities are required by State law to provide adequate staffing to meet the needs of their residents, including assessing a resident's condition after a fall and assisting the resident back into a pre-fall position.



ISSUE:

Shall Chapter 6B.50 of the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) be amended to authorize the assessment of penalties for non-emergent patient lift assistance performed by the Tacoma Fire Department or its contractors at licensed care facilities?

ALTERNATIVES:

TFD made considerable effort to educate the staffs of local licensed care facilities of their legal requirement to staff for non-emergent lift assists. Despite those efforts, some facilities have not changed their conduct. TFD could try to continue to provide non-emergent services to the facilities, but as TFD's workload has increased, it has become more critical that public safety resources not be expended for non-emergent work.

RECOMMENDATION:

TFD recommends that Chapter 6B.50 of the TMC be amended to authorize the assessment of penalties for non-emergent patient lift assistance performed by TFD or its contractors at licensed care facilities.

FISCAL IMPACT:

REVENUES:

FUNDING SOURCE	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	COST ELEMENT	TOTAL AMOUNT
0010 – General Fund / Fire	253000	4342200	\$508,725
TOTAL			\$508,725

FISCAL IMPACT TO CURRENT BIENNIAL BUDGET: N/A; penalty does not begin until February 1, 2019.

ARE THE EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES PLANNED AND BUDGETED? Revenues are included in the 2019-2020 Proposed Budget.