



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: James P. Duggan, Fire Chief
COPY: Government Performance & Finance Committee (GPFC); Andy Cherullo, Committee Executive Liaison
PRESENTER: Michael Newhouse, Assistant Chief of Operations, Emergency Medical Services
SUBJECT: Non-Emergent Lift Assistance Penalty Charge Implementation & Education Update
DATE: April 16, 2019

PRESENTATION TYPE:
Informational Briefing

SUMMARY:

A new penalty charge became effective on February 1, 2019, for licensed care facilities who request non-emergent lift assistance from the Tacoma Fire Department (TFD). This presentation will brief GPFC on the education and outreach to these facilities since the new penalty charge became effective, as well as an update on the plan for continuing the education and partnership with these facilities and local colleges for the proper use of 9-1-1 and the care of the residents at these facilities.

BACKGROUND:

Amended Ordinance No. 28550, passed by the City Council on November 20, 2018, added a new section 6B.50.070 to the Tacoma Municipal Code, "Penalty for non-emergent lift assistance at licensed care facilities," which became effective on February 1, 2019. The ordinance provides, in part, for a penalty charge of \$350 for the first incident of a non-emergent lift assist, \$500 for the second incident, and \$850 for each incident thereafter in 2019. As of January 1, 2020, the authorized penalty charge shall be \$850 per incident without regard to the number of prior incidents. Licensed care facilities are defined in the TMC as "a Washington State licensed care or nursing facility, such as a skilled nursing facility or an assisted living facility ..."

At the January 15, 2019 GPFC meeting, TFD provided information pertaining to the work done in advance of the penalty implementation. GPFC requested an update of those efforts and lessons from the implementation as well as requested education efforts with local colleges that provide nursing degrees.

ISSUE:

For the past several years, TFD has 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. TFD's efforts have included visiting facilities to review case studies; attendance at monthly meetings of the local licensed care industry, currently called the Pierce County Care Transitions Consortium, to share these concerns and provide education on the proper use of 9-1-1; and timely on scene education by our fire officers to facility staff, after providing assistance to the citizen, when responding to non-emergent incidents. Despite this ongoing effort, some local facilities continue to use the 9-1-1 system to utilize TFD personnel for non-emergent lift assists in their facilities.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.



FISCAL IMPACT:

This is an information briefing only. There is no fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an information briefing only. There is no recommendation.