




April 2, 2025

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

TO: Jennifer A. Jenkins
Council Administrator

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Deputy Council Administrator

THRU: Josh Hamlin 
Director of Budget and Policy Analysis

FROM: Malcolm Moody - *MM*
Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst

RE: Policy Analysis and Fiscal Impact Statement
CB-020-2025 Fire Safety

CB-020-2025 (*Proposed and Presented by: The Chair by request of the County Executive*)

Assigned to the Health, Human Services, and Public Safety (HHSPS) Committee

AN ACT CONCERNING FIRE SAFETY for the purpose of amending the Prince George's County Fire Safety Code and Specific Civil Penalties to increase the fire inspection fees and civil monetary fine and amend language generally relating to Fire Safety.

Fiscal Summary

Direct Impact

Expenditures: No anticipated expenditure impact.

Revenue: Potential increase in revenue due to increases in fire inspection fees and civil monetary fines.

Indirect Impact

Potentially favorable.

Legislative Summary:

CB-020-2025, proposed and sponsored by the Chair at request of the County Executive was presented on March 18, 2025, and was referred to the Health, Human Services, and Public Safety (HHSPS) Committee. The Bill would amend the County's Fire Safety code to increase the fire inspection fees that can be applied. The civil fine associate with the reckless endangerment of group of people would also be increased. Language in the Bill addresses fire prevention methods in dwellings that targets the use, storage, and requirements of equipment that can pose fire hazards in dwellings throughout the County.

Current Law/Background:

Currently the Public Safety Code¹ within the Annotated Code of Maryland provides provisions that allows a local governing body in each county and the legislative body of each municipal corporation in the State to adopt by ordinance or resolution a fire prevention code to: 1) provide for protection against fires and the removal of fire hazards; 2) provide for the appointment of inspectors to enforce the fire prevention code; and 3) establish penalties for violation of the fire prevention code or an ordinance, resolution, or regulation for the prevention of fires or removal of fire hazards.

Subtitle 11 of the County Code² regulates fire safety throughout the County. Section 11-106³ of the Code lists a provision addressing false emergency alarms that are intentionally activated despite a person knowing there is not an emergency. Specifically, the sections make it unlawful to “deliberately, recklessly or maliciously give, signal or transmit, or to cause or permit to be given, signaled or transmitted, an emergency alarm when in fact that person knows that no such emergency exists”. Section 11-163⁴ establishes the fire inspection fees⁵, which includes eighteen factors that can impact the cost of the inspection such as the number of individuals in the building.

Section 11-269⁶ of the Code regulates the use of cooking equipment that is adjacent to multifamily dwellings. Currently the section requires certain cooking equipment⁷ outside any multifamily dwelling to be at least thirty (30) feet from every part of the building. The proposed Bill would seek to expand the scope of the individual(s) that can be unintentionally triggering fire alarms,

¹ [MD Public Safety Code § 9-701 \(2024\)](#)

² Prince George's County Code - [Subtitle 11. Fire Safety](#)

³ [§ 11-106. Same; false emergency alarms.](#)

⁴ [§ 11-163. Fire Inspection Fees.](#)

⁵ Fees associated with inspections are used to cover administrative costs associated with the inspections.

⁶ [§ 11-269. Use of certain cooking equipment adjacent to multifamily dwellings.](#)

⁷ Includes charcoal burning, other fuel-burning, or electric-cooking equipment.

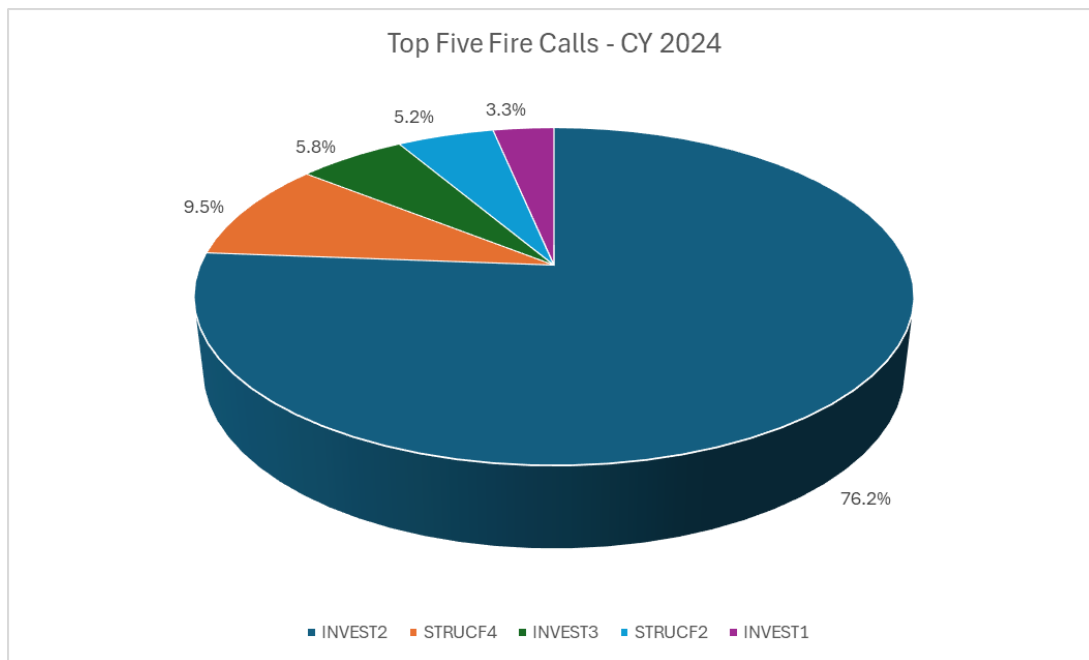
increase fire inspection fees, increase the civil monetary fine for fire code violations, and specifies language centered around fire prevention provisions in Subtitle 11. Division 4⁸ of the County Code.

Resource Personnel:

- Tiffany Green, Fire Chief

Discussion/Policy Analysis:

Concerning fire inspection fees in the County, the Fire Department has provided numbers that estimate \$192,000 will be collected from fire inspection fees in FY 2025. In FY 2026 amount is estimated to increase to \$195,000. The chart below details the top five fire calls⁹ in the County for CY 2024.



Looking at the chart, INVEST2 (Automatic Fire Alarm) calls make up most of the top fire calls the Department responds to. The proposed Bill's focus on adding additional penalties for false alarms can potentially help reduce the amount of fire alarm calls being responded to and reallocate Department resources.

⁸ [DIVISION 4. - FIRE PREVENTION CODE.](#)

⁹ Call Types: INVEST2(Automatic Fire Alarm), STRUCF4(Reported Fire in Home, Apt, or Commercial Structure), INVEST3 (Vehicle Fire), STRUCF2 (Appliance Fire or Odor of Smoke), INVEST1 (Wires Down).

Provisions of CB-020-2025:

The proposed Bill would establish a provision to charge inspection fees, at \$150 an hour, to the owner or occupant of occupancy. This provision is relevant to situations when faulty equipment was determined to initiate the alarm. The fee and any requirement for a witnessed test of the alarm would only apply after three (3) faulty or nuisance alarm activations occur within a 90-day period. Single family dwellings would be added to Sec. 11-155¹⁰ of the County Code as a part of the list of occupancies that the Fire Chief or authorized representative can have evacuated in the event there is actual danger to the occupants or those in proximity.

Fire inspection fees are proposed to be increased in the following categories:

Category	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Assembly (50 – 300 individuals)	\$120.00	\$150.00
Family or Group Day Care Homes (Initial Inspection)	\$75.00	\$100.00
Family or Group Day Care Homes (Renewal Inspection)	\$50.00	\$75.00
Nursery or Day Care Center	\$100.00	\$150.00
Apartment Buildings	\$125.00 per hour	\$150.00 per hour
1 and 2 Family Dwellings	\$75.00	\$100.00
Foster Care Homes	\$75.00	\$100.00
Alternative Living Units	\$75.00	\$125.00
Fireworks Shoot (Site Inspection)	\$50.00	\$75.00
Fireworks Shoot (On-Site Inspector, per event)	\$50.00/hr, four-hour min./\$200.00	\$75.00/hr, four-hour min./\$300.00
Add – Faulty or nuisance alarm inspections	N/A	\$150/hour

The proposed Bill also adds language in the fire prevention code aimed at prohibiting the storage of charcoal burning, other fuel-burning, or electric cooking equipment outside of any multifamily dwelling. This cooking equipment would also have to be permanently installed at a fixed location at least thirty (30) feet from every part of the building. It is also proposed to consider patios and balconies open to the exterior as separate spaces from the dwelling unit. Certain cooking equipment, flammables or combustibles can be subject to removal by management and/or the Office of the Fire Marshal.

Additional proposed provisions would include prohibiting the storage of charcoal fire stoves or cooking appliances in buildings, trailers, and other confined spaces. Portable heaters must be designed with a tip-over shutoff function¹¹. Any motor vehicles or any other gasoline-powered equipment stored in patios and balconies open to the exterior of a dwelling can be subject to

¹⁰ [§ 11-155. - Evacuation of persons.](#)

¹¹ Feature that shuts off heater if it falls or is moved from its vertical position.

removal by management and/or the Office of the Fire Marshal. Manual-Pull test stations¹² will also be required to be tested annually. Finally, the Bill would propose an increase to the civil fine, currently \$5,000, to \$10,000 whenever a person violates a provision of Subtitle 11 of the County Code if the person creates a substantial risk of death or serious physical injury to a group¹³.

Fiscal Impact:

- *Direct Impact*

Enactment of CB-020-2025 has the potential to have a favorable fiscal impact on the County in the form of additional fees and fines collected due to the Bill increasing fire inspection fees and civil monetary fines. The amount of any impact could be estimated using prior years' numbers for the various inspections conducted and fines imposed, and then adjusting for the proposed increases in fee/fine amounts. The administration should be able to provide this information.

- *Indirect Impact*

Enactment of CB-020-2025 could have a favorable indirect fiscal impact on the County by decreasing the occurrence of false fire alarms and increase compliance with fire prevention regulations.

- *Appropriated in the Current Fiscal Year Budget*

No

Effective Date of Proposed Legislation:

The Act shall take effect forty-five (45) days after it becomes law.

If you require additional information, or have questions about this fiscal impact statement, please reach out to me via phone or email.

¹² Fire alarm requiring handle to be pulled down to activate.

¹³ Bill proposes to update the current group requirement to equal fifty (50) or more persons from one hundred (100).