



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
**Inter-Departmental Correspondence**

**County Manager's Office**

**DATE:** November 16, 2007  
**BOARD MEETING DATE:** November 27, 2007  
**SPECIAL NOTICE/HEARING:** No  
**VOTE REQUIRED:** Majority

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Reyna Farrales, Deputy County Manager

**SUBJECT:** Adoption of International Fire Code As Amended by State Fire Code With Amendments to County Ordinance Chapter 3.84 Fire Protection Regulations

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt an Ordinance:

1. Repealing and replacing San Mateo County Ordinance Title 3 Chapter 3.84 Fire Protection Regulations, and adopting the 2006 Edition of the International Fire Code, as amended by the 2007 California Fire Code published by the International Fire Code Council, together with all Appendix chapters and referenced standards; and
2. Making certain findings of local conditions and amending Chapter 3.84 Fire Protection Regulations of Title 3 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code

**VISION ALIGNMENT:**

**Commitment:** Ensuring basic health and safety for all.

**Goal 7:** Maintain and enhance the public safety of all residents and visitors.

Adoption of the International Fire Code achieves a higher level of uniformity among local jurisdictions, which benefits enforcement in protecting the health, safety and welfare of residents and property.

**BACKGROUND:**

Fire protection regulations within unincorporated areas were first adopted by County Ordinance in October 1979. Minimal revisions have been made since that time. There have been efforts among cities and fire agencies to adopt a uniform model code to better serve communities in the county. There is also a need to clarify the duties of the County Fire Marshal as the enforcement official of fire regulations in San Mateo County. Exhibit A summarizes proposed amendments to the Ordinance.

**DISCUSSION:**

The County provides fire protection services through an agreement with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). The County Fire Marshal under the direction of the County Fire Chief has been working with other local fire prevention officers to achieve code uniformity, and with the County's Planning and Building Department and Public Works to review the codes for adoption as part of the County Ordinance, and to identify amendments needed to ensure inclusion of existing local ordinances given conditions specific to the unincorporated areas served by the County.

The California Fire Code is published in a triennial cycle by order of the California Legislature. The 2007 edition incorporates, by adoption, the 2006 edition of the International Fire Code (IFC) published by the International Fire Code Council with necessary amendments. The California Fire Code is known as Part Nine (9) of Title 24, part of the California Code of Regulations. The adoption of the IFC, as amended by the California Fire Code, is required by state law and achieves a higher level of uniformity among local agencies, which benefits enforcement officers in protecting the health, safety and welfare of residents and property.

Cities and fire agencies throughout the county are in the process of adopting the codes to begin enforcement in January 2008. If adopted, the ordinance will be effective on January 3, 2008. Existing projects already underway will not be affected. The County Fire Marshal will work with each new applicant as needed on alternate means of compliance.

Amendments or deletions to the International and California Fire Codes must be supported by findings that establish a climatic, geologic or topographic reason for the change. Supporting findings and amendments to the Fire Codes and the County Ordinance have been included for adoption. Exhibit A provides a crosswalk from the existing County Ordinance sections to applicable International Fire Code sections, as well as a summary of amendments to the County Ordinance. Certain sections of the International Fire Code have been amended to incorporate existing local ordinances, or deleted if already covered in other amendments.

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) California Chapter and Associated General Contractors of California have been notified of the proposed code adoption in San Mateo County, and public notice has been made in two local newspapers. Copies of the 2006 International Fire Code and 2007 California Fire Code are on file with the Clerk of the Board.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

None. Enforcement of fire protection regulations is covered under the County's existing agreement with CAL FIRE. There will be minimal impact to residents and businesses since no changes are being made that would result in more restrictive regulations than what currently exists in the County Ordinance.