

CONSTRUCTION FAQ'S

1. Does FMO do over-the-counter (Express) plan reviews?

- A. No. The Fire Marshal's Office does not have separate plan checkers and inspectors, and our staff is small. Over-the-counter reviews would impact the efficiency of our first-come, first-serve process of reviewing plans. However, if you have a small system you may qualify for our Minor Systems Modification Program. For guidelines, detailed Instructions and forms see our, "**Minor Systems Modification Program**", webpage.

2. Can I schedule the Fire Marshal for the Final inspection if I am still using a generator to provide power to the site?

- A. No. You must have a permanent working PG&E meter installed on your structure to conduct the final inspection.

3. Does the Fire Marshal grant Final Occupancy?

- A. No. Only the Building Official has the authority to grant Final Building Occupancy. However, if Fire Marshal sign-off is required, you will need all fire protection systems to be Finaled before we can sign off on the Building Permit Card.

4. Why does the Fire Marshal take 30 days to review my plans?

- A. We have a first-come, first-serve policy, so depending on the current volume of submittals and inspection requests, (our deputies are both plan reviewers and inspectors), your plans could take from a week to 40 days. However, we strive to get all plans reviewed within 30 days.

5. How do I get a fire department lock box for my security gate lock?

- A. For emergency responders to be able to get onto your property you need to provide a fire department lock box (commonly called a Knox Box) or gate switch. You must obtain an application from your local responding fire department and have them visit the site to close the box and/or test the key once it is installed. Our Land Development Deputy can give you the contact information for your local fire department. You can contact him/her at (408) 299-5763.

6. Why is there overlap between the regulations that the Fire Marshal enforces and those enforced by the Hazardous Materials Compliance Division (HMCD) of the Department of Environmental Health?

- A. The Fire Marshal's Office enforces the Fire Code, which has many provisions pertaining to hazardous materials. Our focus is on fire safety, injury prevention and environmental protection. HMCD enforces the County's Hazardous Materials Storage Ordinance among other programs, whose focus is on protecting the environment and public health. There are some overlapping regulations between the two, however each agency also has many regulations that differ. We both try to coordinate our efforts to avoid confusion and inconvenience to our customers.

7. Why should I have sprinklers in my home?

- A. Fire sprinklers are required by the Fire Marshal for a variety of reasons, all of which are mitigations for your project's inability to meet the strict provisions of the Fire Code. The most common reason is the lack of required fire protection water supply at the required pressure, which means there is minimal fire protection water supply available on the site with which to fight a structure fire. Residential fire sprinklers are economical, reliable and proven to be the best way to protect your family and home from the dangers of fire, which makes them a reasonable equivalent method of protection when you cannot provide the required fire-flow or your access does not meet the code. For more information, please visit the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (See FAQ page for link to this site.) website.

8. If I choose to install a fire protection system (e.g., fire sprinklers, fire alarm system, Clean Agent/FM2000 system, etc.) when it is not required, do I still need a permit from the Fire Marshal?

- A. Yes. The code requires that fire protection systems must have an installation permit from the local fire authority, which ensures proper installation of the system. There are no exemptions for systems installed voluntarily.