



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY FIRE



CITY OF LOMPOC



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA



CARP/SUMMERLAND FIRE PROTECTION



CITY OF SANTA MARIA



MONTECITO FIRE PROTECTION

## **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Beware of Fraudulent Fire Inspections and Services.**

SANTA BARBARA, CA February 26, 2016 – Fire departments throughout Santa Barbara County warn business owners of recent fire inspection fraud.

During the past several weeks there have been numerous reports of individuals entering businesses to perform a fire inspection survey for a fee. Schemes used by these individuals include using high-pressure sales tactics and/or posing as members, or contracted members, of the fire department to convince business owners to buy their services. It is important to understand that no fire departments within Santa Barbara County, including local jurisdictions, contract with any company or individuals for fire inspection services. Additionally, no fire department will ever ask for money up front.

Business owners need to be alert to anyone coming to their offices, stores or restaurants offering to perform a survey or inspection. This includes, but not limited to; servicing fire extinguishers, performing work on the hood and duct systems over the cooking areas, visual inspections of exit lighting, or conducting service to automatic sprinkler systems.

Although it is a requirement that fire appliances be serviced on a regular basis, local fire departments throughout Santa Barbara County do not endorse, recommend or send any fire extinguishing or fire protection service companies to local businesses. There are several reputable companies in the area that provide these services. Do not permit a service company to provide service that you did not request or that is not required. When fire protection services are needed it is important for business owners to confirm that a licensed company perform the service.

To help identify qualified fire protection contractors, require the following ***BEFORE*** using their services:

1. Always perform a background check on the fire inspection company and ask for current identification and business card. Only hire a contractor who has a valid California contractor’s license and insurance.
2. To check contractor licenses, violations, or complaints, visit the California Contractors State License Board website at <http://www.cslb.ca.gov>. C-16 Licenses are required to service or repair a fire sprinkler system. C-10 Licenses are required to perform electrical work or repair a fire alarm system.
3. Ask the contractor which services he will provide and how much it will cost. Request the contractor to leave any defective parts that they replace.
4. If you hire a contractor to service your fire extinguishers, request to see their California State Fire Marshal fire extinguisher license with photo identification. The current list of issued licenses can be found at the State Fire Marshal’s website at: <http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/licensinglistings/pdf/fe/cofrlistpublic.pdf>.

All fire departments encourage business owners to be aware of these fraudulent scams. If you are approached by a non-fire department employee requiring a fee for service and suspect fraud, please call your local fire department fire prevention division.

Anyone with questions or concerns about a recent service call or who has experienced high pressure sales tactics in connection with fire protection services is urged to contact their local fire department:

Santa Barbara County:	805-686-5061	or email <a href="mailto:fireinfo@sbcfire.com">fireinfo@sbcfire.com</a>
City of Santa Barbara:	805-564-5721	or email <a href="mailto:jaustin@santabarbaraca.gov">jaustin@santabarbaraca.gov</a>
City of Lompoc:	805-757-0709	or email <a href="mailto:d_foose@ci.lompoc.ca.us">d_foose@ci.lompoc.ca.us</a>
City of Santa Maria:	805-925-0951 x255	or email <a href="mailto:eenriquez@ci.santa-maria.ca.us">eenriquez@ci.santa-maria.ca.us</a>
Montecito Fire Protection District:	805-969-2537	or email <a href="mailto:jreed@montecitofire.com">jreed@montecitofire.com</a>
Carpinteria-Summerland Fire District:	805-684-4591	or email <a href="mailto:r.evans@csfd.net">r.evans@csfd.net</a>

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