PREVENTION BULLETIN

Title: Request for Electrical Service and Air Conditioning Upgrades

Date: September 2, 2020

Bulletin No. P20-21

Revised:

By: Fire Chief Chris Martin

The City of Sterling Heights Fire Department has identified an increase in the number of fires in and around residential homes due to excessive use of electrical power, as well as an increased risk of the occurrence of such fires. Due to uses of power in residential homes that far exceed the usage levels for which most residential homes are designed, the electrical grid system cannot supply the power required, especially for older systems, and infrastructure is being damaged as a result. Further, during a fire or other emergency situation, the Fire Department cannot pull meter systems over 200 amps, as this is a life safety issue for the firefighters on scene. Commercial meters installed in residential structures will delay firefighter activity and delay rescue operations.

Therefore, the Fire Marshal is requiring the following for the installation of electrical system and air conditioning upgrades in residential homes:

- Residential homes cannot exceed electrical services over 200 amps.
- Any residential requests for residential service over 200 amps must include an electric load information sheet supplied by a licensed electrician.
- The applicant must be the owner and provide proof of ownership of the home.
- All service requests must represent an actual need for a residential use; for example, an increase for service for installation of a swimming pool or hot tub must also have the required pool permit or hot tub permit request.
- All approved service installations over 200 amps must have a service disconnect by the meter to allow for power disconnect during a fire or hazardous conditions.
- All approved service installations over 200 amps must have signage placed above the meter stating “Do not pull meter, use disconnect.”
- Residential homes may only utilize air conditioning units in accordance with the attached chart.
- Air conditioning units installed must comply with all requirements in City codes, including the mechanical code, and necessary permits and inspections must be obtained from the City.
- All requests for permits and inspections must be submitted in writing to the Building Department for review by the Building Official, the Fire Marshal, and the appropriate inspector licensed in that trade.
- If a home is proposing electrical or air conditioning exceeding the limitations in this Bulletin, the owner will be required to provide supporting documentation and explain why the increases are necessary for residential use. Requests will be denied if deemed to create unsafe conditions and/or if the proposed use poses a danger of fire or nuisance conditions to the neighborhood.
- If the applicant is denied the request, he/she can apply for a variance to the Board of Code Appeals.

RESIDENTIAL HOME SQUARE FOOTAGE	PERMISSIBLE A/C TONNAGE	PERMISSIBLE A/C UNITS
UNDER 1800	**3**	**1**
1800-2100	**3.5**	**1**
2100-2800	**4**	**1**
2800-3300	**4.5**	**1**
OVER 3300	**5**	**1** **HOWEVER, 2 UNITS MAY BE CONSIDERED DEPENDING ON CONFIGURATION OF HOME A/C "ZONES," DECIBEL LEVELS, ELECTRICAL PANEL STABILITY, NEED, AND PROXIMITY TO OTHER HOMES**

Authority: Section 110 of the International Fire Code (IFC) governs unsafe buildings, structures, and building systems. Violations of Section 110 are misdemeanors pursuant to Chapter 1 of the City Code. Section 104.1.2 of the IFC is a local amendment indicating that the rules promulgated by the Fire Marshal shall have the same effect and enforceability as any other provision of the IFC. This Bulletin has been issued pursuant to Section 104.1.2 as a safety measure designed to prevent unsafe buildings, structures, and building systems. Therefore, violations of this Bulletin are misdemeanors, punishable as set forth in the City Code. In addition, violations of this Bulletin will subject the property to disconnection of utility service pursuant to Section 112 of the IFC.