



Riverside County Fire Department in cooperation with CAL FIRE

NEWS RELEASE

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Riverside County Business Owners Cautioned on Phony Fire Inspectors

Riverside County Fire Department cautions business owners to be mindful for phony fire inspectors who have targeted businesses within Riverside County.

During these challenging economic times, predators posing as “fire inspectors” take advantage and prey upon unsuspecting business owners. Fire departments in California are indicating an increase of both individuals and fire protection companies posing in “official-looking” clothing and performing questionable “inspections” in local businesses. These individuals will typically enter businesses suggesting they represent the fire department and request to look at or inspect their fire protection systems. Once granted access by the business owner and the “inspection” is completed, the owner is left with an invoice to pay for their “inspection”.

Uniformed Riverside County Fire Department personnel conduct business inspections. Proprietors and other key employees should refrain from permitting anyone to inspect fire sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, kitchen hood fire extinguishing systems, fire alarm systems or any other fire protection devices unless contractual agreements are in place and specific services or inspections have been requested by the business.

We *strongly* urge business owners to consider the following prior to securing fire protection system services:

1. Is the technician clearly identifiable; including a business card? Refrain from allowing anyone to enter your business or grant access to your fire protection system if you are unsure.
2. Request to view the company’s current business license permit, a contractor’s C-16 (fire sprinkler/fixed protection systems) or C-10 (fire alarms) license. You can also check the validity of their license by logging on to <http://cslb.ca.gov>.
3. NEVER pay for services in cash! Make sure you obtain an estimate for any required services. Keep copies of all invoices and pay documents.
4. Insist on keeping all replaced or changed parts and a signed invoice.

If in doubt, you have the right to refuse service in order to verify the legitimacy of the “inspection services”. If needed, contact the Riverside County Fire Department Fire Protection Planning for assistance to verify legitimacy and qualifications of a fire inspector that comes to your business. For further information, or to report a possible phony inspector, please call (951) 955-4777.

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