



PORTLAND FIRE & RESCUE



Randy Leonard, Commissioner
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REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date: December 13, 2012

To: Commissioner Randy Leonard

From: Erin A. Janssens, Fire Chief

Subject: Accept the Report on FY2012-13 Budget Note – Charging for Lift Assist Calls

1. FY 2012-13 ADOPTED BUDGET NOTE REQUEST

This report is in response to budget note in the FY2012-13 adopted budget, requesting that “Portland Fire & Rescue will evaluate the feasibility of charging fees or fines for chronic public assist calls.” In addition, this report will be followed by another revenue-oriented PF&R FY2012-13 budget note report: addressing the feasibility of billing for emergency medical services.

2. PF&R MISSION AND PUBLIC ASSIST CALLS

Portland Fire & Rescue’s mission is to aggressively and safely protect life, property, and the environment. Towards meeting this mission, PF&R responds to a wide range of fire, Emergency Medical Service (EMS), and other calls, including public assist calls. Given the wide range of service calls that PF&R receives, rendering this type of service is currently within the scope of services provided by PF&R.

3. PUBLIC ASSIST CALLS

The dispatch typecode “PUBAST”, or public assist, is a broad category that covers a number of types of calls for service to which Portland Fire & Rescue responds. However, the preponderance of public assist calls involve PF&R assisting or lifting a person to a bed or a chair. During FY2011-12, PF&R responded to 1,776 public assist calls, and found 1,500 situations that involved PF&R responders literally assisting or lifting persons who were not able to lift themselves to a bed or chair. For comparison, during the same period, PF&R responded to total of 68,997 calls in all categories.

4. PF&R PUBLIC ASSIST CALL DATA

a. Public Assist Calls by Incident Location Property Type, FY 2011-12

- PF&R’s responses to public assist calls, which are largely for lift assist calls, were to residences 81% of the time during FY2011-12.

- During the same period, PF&R's response to senior care facilities represented only 11% of public assist calls.
- 57% of Public Assist calls to multifamily housing addresses went to properties designated as subsidized housing in assessment and taxation records.

Property Type*	# of Public Assist Calls	% of Total
Residential	1,353	76%
Single Family	871	
Multi Family (5+ Units)	313	
Multifamily (2-4 Units)*	99	
Condominium	37	
Manufactured Home	33	
Senior Care Facility	215	12%
Adult Foster Care	19	1%
Commercial/Industrial	48	3%
Miscellaneous/Other	141	8%
TOTAL	1,776	100%

*Using data from assessment and taxation records.

b. Repeated Public Assist Call Frequency, Unique Incident Address, FY 2011-12

- Most public assist calls to a unique incident address had a frequency of one or two in one year.
- The repeated public assist call frequency (i.e. three or more calls in one year) was greater for unique Single Family and Multi-Family Residence addresses (38%) than it was for unique addresses at Senior Care Facilities (27%).

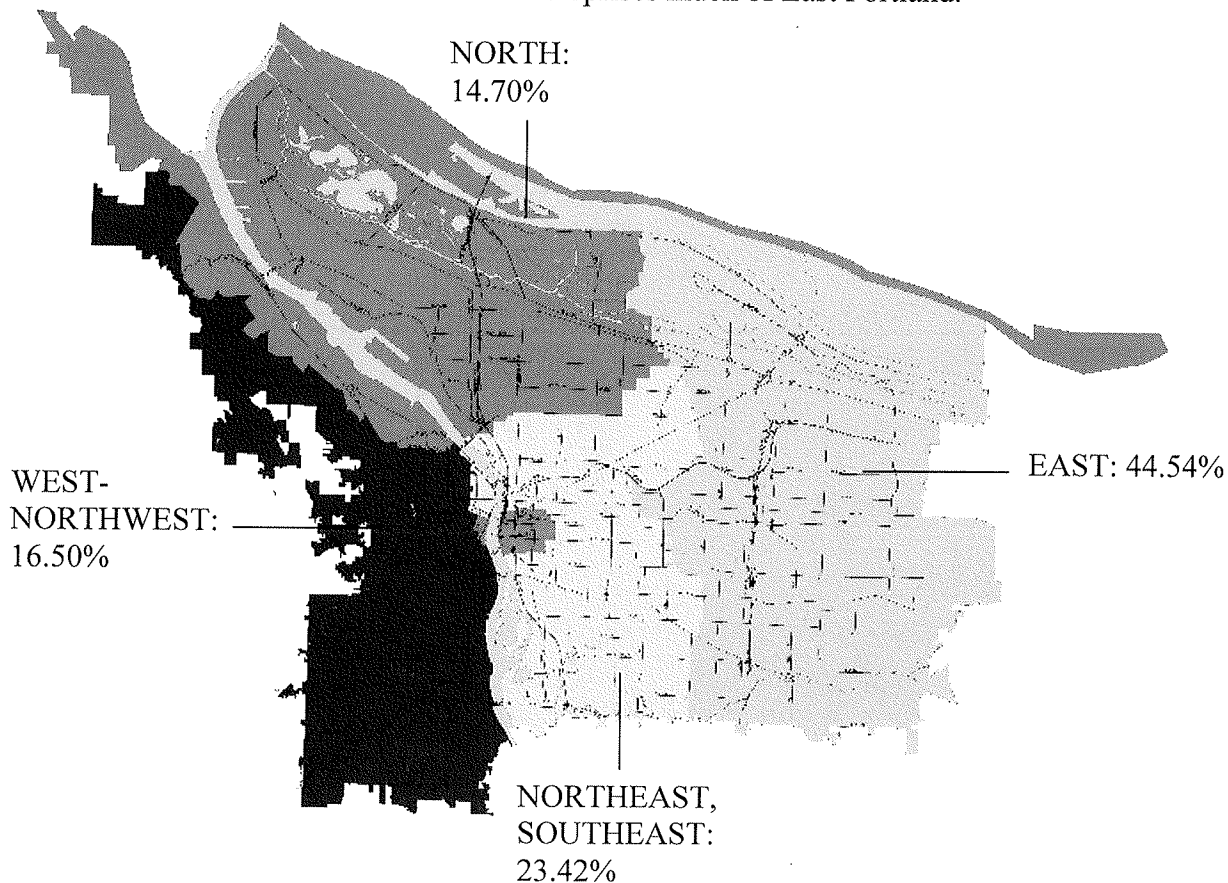
# of Public Assist Calls to Same Address	FREQUENCY	
	Residences	Senior Care Facilities
1	41.46%	51.16%
2	20.25%	22.33%
3-5	20.47%	21.40%
6-10	11.31%	0.00%
11+	6.50%	5.12%
All Calls	100.00%	100.00%

c. Number of Unique Public Assist Call Addresses, FY 2011-12

# Calls to Same Address	Number of Unique Public Assist Call Addresses								
	Single Family	Condo	Man. Home	Multi Family (5+ Units)	Multi Plex (2-4 Units)	Senior Care	Adult Foster Care	Comm. & Ind.	Misc.
1	355	24	21	137	24	110	13	30	78
2	91	3	4	34	5	24	3	4	14
3	30	1		11	5	7			5
4	8	1	1	8	1	5			1
5	8			3	1	1		2	2
6	5				2				1
7	2			1		1			
8	2			1					
9	4								
10	3								
11						11			
12									
13				1					
14									
15	2								
16	1								
29					1				

d. Percentage of Total Public Assist Calls by PF&R Service District, FY 2011-12

- PF&R has four major geographic service areas. During FY2011-12, 45% of all calls were to a service area that comprises much of East Portland.



d. Public Assist Calls by Fire Management Area (FMA), FY 2011-12

FMA / Fire Station	Number of Public Assist Calls	% of Total
1	69	3.89%
2	56	3.15%
3	91	5.12%
4	59	3.32%
5	38	2.14%
6	1	0.06%
7	151	8.50%
8	49	2.76%
9	38	2.14%
10	16	0.90%
11	123	6.93%
12	47	2.65%
13	84	4.73%
14	66	3.72%
15	17	0.96%
16	18	1.01%
17	15	0.84%
18	45	2.53%
19	158	8.90%
20	52	2.93%
21	17	0.96%
22	54	3.04%
24	23	1.30%
25	111	6.25%
26	36	2.03%
27	9	0.51%
28	62	3.49%
29	39	2.20%
30	134	7.55%
31	83	4.67%
Other	15	0.84%
Total	1,776	100.00%

f. Public Assist Calls by Month, FY 2011-12

– No significant seasonal fluctuation was observed for public assist calls.

Month	# of Public Assist Calls
July 2011	136
August 2011	170
September 2011	159
October 2011	134
November 2011	147

December 2011	158
January 2012	143
February 2012	137
March 2012	136
April 2012	144
May 2012	153
June 2012	159

5. CHARGING FOR CHRONIC PUBLIC ASSIST CALLS

Pro – In Favor of Charging

- Charging could potentially discourage individuals and facilities from misuse of the emergency response system – especially facilities, which may have multiple individuals making public assist calls
- Charging could discourage care facilities from having the City perform services that are within facilities' contracts with residents and patients.
- Multiple individuals in a facility may be making public assist calls that should appropriately be handled by the facility.
- Charging could prevent unnecessary firefighter injuries related to lifting individuals.
- Charging could potentially generate revenue.

Con – Against Charging

- Charging could potentially discourage critical use of the emergency response system, especially by individuals.
- The delay or absence of assistance can have significant impact on individuals and cause a rapid deterioration of their condition
- Charging as a disincentive does not necessarily address underlying, chronic issues experienced by individuals, especially those in vulnerable populations.
- The application of charges has equity implications, especially since 45% of all public assist calls in the past fiscal year were from East Portland.
- Recent literature indicates that lift assist calls are associated with substantial subsequent utilization of EMS, and should trigger fall prevention and other safety interventions.
- PF&R recognizes that public assist calls may be early indicators of medical problems that require more aggressive evaluation¹ such as the need for in-home care. It may be more beneficial, for chronic calling individuals, that larger strategies involving other public and nonprofit social service agencies are implemented.
- PF&R utilizes public assist calls to address other issues and perform community outreach, such as providing smoke alarms to high-risk populations and mitigating trip hazards.
- The City would need to establish a potentially subjective threshold for “chronic” use of the system.
- Billing, collection, and recovery costs at this time are unknown.

6. CONCLUSION

Responding to public assist calls is within the scope of services currently provided by Portland Fire & Rescue. Whether repeated public assist calls to the same address should warrant corresponding charges in the form of fees or fines would be a significant policy change for the City of Portland; to date, PF&R has assumed that calls for service are among the basic services funded by City property taxes and other longstanding revenue sources. In addition, PF&R provides other services while on public assist calls, especially for disadvantaged populations in Portland.

At this time, PF&R is not making a recommendation regarding charging for chronic public assist calls. Charging for such calls would be a significant policy change for the City of Portland and merits thorough study prior to consideration by Council. If Council is interested in pursuing this possibility, PF&R will need to conduct in-depth analysis and research prior to making an informed recommendation. While charging for chronic public assist calls may potentially prevent avoidable calls for service, charging also has the potential to inadvertently discourage both individuals and facilities from making critical calls for emergency services. In addition, public assist calls are often the result of larger medical issues. PF&R will continue to track data which may be helpful in evaluating how chronic public assist callers may benefit from collaborative information sharing between PF&R and other organizations, including social service agencies.

Erin A. Janssens, Fire Chief

TO THE COUNCIL

The Commissioner of Public Safety concurs with the recommendations of the Chief of Portland Fire & Rescue and

RECOMMENDS:

That the Council accept the report.

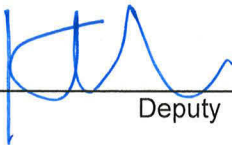
Respectfully submitted,

Randy Leonard
Commissioner of Public Safety

¹ Descriptive Study of the "Lift-Assist" Call. David C. Cone, John Ahern, Christopher H. Lee, Dorothy Baker, Terrence Murphy, and Sandy Bogucki. Prehospital Emergency Care, September 2012.

Agenda No.
REPORT NO.
 Title

Accept the ~~Report~~ on FY2012-13 Budget Note – Charging for Lift Assist Calls (Report)

<p>INTRODUCED BY Commissioner/Auditor: Commissioner Randy Leonard</p>	<p>CLERK USE: DATE FILED <u>DEC 14 2012</u></p>
<p>COMMISSIONER APPROVAL</p> <p>Mayor—Finance and Administration - Adams</p> <p>Position 1/Utilities - Fritz</p> <p>Position 2/Works - Fish</p> <p>Position 3/Affairs - Saltzman</p> <p>Position 4/Safety - Leonard <i>RL</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LaVonne Griffin-Valade Auditor of the City of Portland</p> <p>By:  Deputy</p>
<p>BUREAU APPROVAL</p> <p>Bureau: Portland Fire & Rescue Bureau Head: Erin A. Janssens, Fire Chief <i>EJ</i></p>	<p>ACTION TAKEN: DEC 19 2012 ACCEPTED</p>
<p>Prepared by: Carol Ann Boucher Date Prepared: 12/11/2012</p>	
<p>Financial Impact & Public Involvement Statement Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amends Budget <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Council Meeting Date</p>	
<p>City Attorney Approval: required for contract, code, easement, franchise, charter, Comp Plan</p>	

AGENDA
<p>TIME CERTAIN <input type="checkbox"/> Start time: _____</p> <p>Total amount of time needed: _____ (for presentation, testimony and discussion)</p>
<p>CONSENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>REGULAR <input type="checkbox"/> Total amount of time needed: _____ (for presentation, testimony and discussion)</p>

FOUR-FIFTHS AGENDA	COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:		
		YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz	1. Fritz	✓	
2. Fish	2. Fish	✓	
3. Saltzman	3. Saltzman	✓	
4. Leonard	4. Leonard	✓	
Adams	Adams	✓	