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CITY COUNCIL PASSES ORDINANCE TO IMPROVE FIRE SAFETY
Ordinance to Implement Fire System Testing Administration Software Platform

In an effort to increase efficiency and enhance public safety, Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Fire Department (CFD) are seeking a vendor to provide software that would better monitor compliance with the City's existing fire protection testing requirements and permit more efficient data collection. An ordinance passed by City Council today authorizes the Fire Commissioner to contract with a vendor to adopt a software platform which will be used to track and analyze fire inspection reports throughout Chicago. The software platform will be provided at no cost to the City.

"This is an important measure to improve fire safety in the City of Chicago," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "By taking this step forward, we are leveraging technology in a way that will benefit public safety and minimize harm in the event of a fire."

Under the current Municipal Code, building owners are required to perform annual tests of certain fire safety systems – such as fire sprinklers, fire pumps, or standpipes -- and submit an annual fee to the City through CFD's Fire Prevention Bureau. These tests are performed by independent third-party inspection firms who must have a valid State-issued certification to perform the tests, which in certain instances are scheduled with, and witnessed by, members of the Fire Prevention Bureau.

The platform that the City is seeking will improve the current system by having same State-certified inspectors that currently perform the required annual tests enter the inspection results directly into the software platform. In turn, the City will be able to aggregate the available data and then analyze it to identify buildings and systems that still need to be inspected. Using this software, CFD will be able to track compliance electronically and determine which fire systems are not currently in compliance.

Other cities -- such as Los Angeles and Tucson, as well as local suburbs -- Naperville, Libertyville, and Warrenville -- have adopted such software platforms and as a result, have significantly increased compliance with inspection requirements.

With the addition of the software, current CFD employees in the Fire Prevention Bureau will continue to monitor the fire protection systems inspection requirements, but will now have a more efficient electronic tool to monitor compliance.

The firm providing the software platform will be selected through a competitive solicitation process. CFD will begin the competitive solicitation process upon council approval of the ordinance.

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