

The Georgetown City Fire Department Self Inspection Policy

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed: _____

Abstract

Georgetown City Fire Department would like to find effective ways of completing commercial fire inspections throughout its jurisdiction. The problem is the Georgetown City Fire Department does not have a self inspection policy for businesses and low hazard occupancies. The purpose of the research was to develop a draft self inspection procedure for businesses and low hazard occupancies in Georgetown City.

Action research was used to develop the procedure by answering the following questions.

1. What type of occupancies can conduct self inspections?
2. Who will be qualified to conduct self inspections?
3. How will the Georgetown City Fire Department educate self inspectors on how to inspect occupancies?
4. What codes are not eligible for self inspection?
5. What data collection system will be used for the program?
6. What time frame will businesses have to return the information?
7. What fire department database will be used to keep and analyze the information returned?
8. What follow up method(s) will be used to mitigate violations to the code?

The procedures used allowed others' work to be reviewed through literature review, a review of other fire departments' self inspection programs, and a review of what is currently being done in the City of Georgetown. The results showed that a program of this type can work but must be able to adapt to the needs of the business owners, and the operational procedures need to be able to change when issues arise. The results also showed that a check and balance needs to be in place to insure that the inspections are being conducted correctly.

The recommendation from this research was to implement the procedure that was developed starting with a trial group then moving to the rest of the occupancies reviewing the procedure for any changes that need to be made.

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The Georgetown City Fire Department Self Inspection Policy

One of the goals for the Georgetown City Fire Department is to make sure that all commercial occupancies have an annual fire inspection. Through past research it was determined that the goal was not being met. The problem which led to this research was the Georgetown City Fire Department does not have a self inspection policy for businesses and low hazard occupancies.

The purpose of this study was to develop a draft self inspection procedure for businesses and low hazard occupancies in Georgetown. This policy (Appendix A) will help the Georgetown City Fire Department reach its goal of having all commercial occupancies inspected annually.

Action research was used to gather information on how other fire department's programs worked, what were their problems, successes and how we could adapt that information to work in our own department. Several questions were answered to help with this research. The first research question was: what type of occupancies can conduct self inspections? To answer this question the author looked to the International Building and Fire Code books to determine what occupancies could be included. The second research question was: who will be qualified to conduct self inspections? To answer this question the author looked at other self inspection programs, and to the types of businesses included in the self inspection program. The third question was: how will the Georgetown City Fire Department educate self inspectors on how to inspect occupancies? To answer this research question the author looked to see what has worked for other departments using the same type of self inspection program. The fourth research question was: what codes are not eligible for self inspection? To answer this question the author

looked into the code books to find any codes that would require special knowledge to insure that no hazards or problems exist. The fifth question was: what data collection system will be used for the program? Again the author looked into other fire department's programs and executive fire officers research papers to find out which collection methods worked the best for them. The sixth research question was: what time frame will businesses have to return the information? The author looked into what the Georgetown City Fire Department was using currently to determine how to answer this question. The seventh question was: what fire department database will be used to keep and analyze the information returned? Again the author looked into the database that the Georgetown City Fire Department uses to determine if that one would work or if another system would be needed. The eighth question was: what follow up method(s) will be used to mitigate violations to the code? This question was answered using method(s) found from other self inspection programs.

Along with the answers to those research questions a fluid document was written to assist the Georgetown City Fire Department with setting the foundation to establish a successful working self inspection program.

Background and Significance

The Georgetown City Fire Department has 36 members among the ranks. Thirty two of those members are paid employees of the City of Georgetown. Twenty six members are shift suppression personnel, eight to nine members per shift working 24 hours a day. Four members are staff personnel including the Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, the Administrative Assistant,

and the Fire Marshal, they work an 8 hour work day five days a week. The remaining six members are volunteers.

The city is covered by two fire stations staffed with the suppression personnel. From those two stations the suppression personnel operate two engine companies with three member crews and two ladder companies with one member crews, and one command vehicle staffed with a battalion chief. These numbers are based on staffing levels for the day (Georgetown City Fire Department, 2011).

The fire prevention bureau is staffed with one person and is tasked with fire inspections, fire investigations, and public education. Tasked with so many different jobs it is impossible for the inspector to complete all of the required fire inspections within the jurisdiction. The fire inspector conducted 577 fire inspections from over 1750 commercial buildings annually (Holcombe, 2010, p. 7).

The fire department has determined that one person cannot complete all the fire inspections annually. It is very unlikely that the fire departments staffing levels will improve over the next several years due to today's economy. Therefore this research project will help the department and fire prevention bureau organize a program to assist in completing the fire inspections. This research project was one of the recommendations given in the author's first executive fire officers research paper (Holcombe 2010, pp. 19-21).

This research meets the second year course content of the executive fire officer program, Executive Analysis of Community Risk Reduction through each of the five units. Unit one, the fire department and fire prevention bureau identified that the community is at risk for fire by not completing the fire inspections in all of the commercial occupancies within the jurisdiction. In unit two, this research project identified occupancies that are at risk and the program will help

the department and community reach its risk reduction goal. Unit three directed the research to design a fluid program and policy that will help reduce the community risk from fire. Unit four helped with the design of the program to show the owners of these occupancies that they do have a vested interest to be fire safe. Unit five gave the author a chance to step back to allow the policy and program to be absorbed by the leaders of the department and the city leaders showing them that this policy will help lead the community as a whole to be a safer community by giving the business owners the vested interest with guidance from the fire prevention bureau (National Fire Academy, January 2011).

This applied research project meets United States Fire Academy operational objective, reduce risk at the local level through prevention and mitigation. This research established an avenue to identify and reduce the community's risk from fire at the local level, allowing the owners to take responsibility for their business occupancy through completing self fire inspections, correcting, and maintaining the occupancy from fire code violations.

Literature Review

Fire prevention has in the past come only after a large fires or disasters, those fires that burned large portions of cities. Laws would be enacted to help reduce the disaster from happening again. This continues today even though fire departments are trying to be more proactive. Fire prevention has begun to make it to the fore front as fire departments are now over the past several decades started to compile data on fires and how they started. This data has given us the insight on what needs to be addressed to build a safer community. "The results of

such efforts are borne out statistically every year, confirming the effectiveness of fire prevention programs” (Farr and Sawyer, 2008, pg 1-81).

Under the fire suppression side of the fire department it has been drilled into firefighters heads that there are three priorities on the fire ground, life safety, incident stabilization, and property conservation. Two of these can also be related to fire prevention, property conservation and life safety. If fire departments have a good prevention and inspection program the fire department is already beginning to work on the property conservation by protecting and removing the dangers of fire before they start. Life safety goes hand in hand with this prevention because if we have a safe building that is well maintained then the egress paths will allow for occupants to easily exit the building in case of an emergency. But how do we determine what is the acceptable level risk. This risk is based on several aspects of the community. The national commission on fire prevention and control wrote in the report *America Burning* (1973):

A certain level of losses from fire must be accepted as tolerable simply because of the limited resources of the community. Conditions that endanger the safety of citizens and fire fighters beyond the acceptable risk must be identified as targets for reduction. (p.27-28).

For this research paper the public concern will be a huge part in its success, regulations for fire code compliance are in place to ensure that enforcement can be accomplished, however, this avenue is not always the best for the community. In the report written by the national commission on fire prevention and control *America Burning* (1973) “History has demonstrated over and over that the pressure of public concern lies behind voluntary self-regulation” (p. 147). Through this research project it is believed that a self inspection program for the Georgetown City Fire Department will allow the business owners to comply with the fire code regulations

voluntarily. This will allow them to take the responsibility of maintaining that acceptable level of risk.

Fire inspections are intended to minimize the risk of a fire. If done effectively then the hazard can be removed eliminating the danger and lowering the risk. These inspections should cover egress, lighting, storage, interior finishes, the building utilities, fire protection equipment, including fire extinguishers. There could also be some technical information such as high hazard contents, flammable and combustible storage and operations, hazardous materials, fire detection equipment including fire alarms, fire sprinklers, and standpipe systems. There are several different types of fire inspections, fire prevention division inspections, fire company inspections, and self- inspections (Farr and Sawyer, 2008, pp. 1-84-85).

Self inspections are not a new concept in the fire service. The idea has been around since the 1970's. Gwinnet County Georgia began their self inspection program in 1979. Even then fire departments were looking for ways to save money by building cost effective programs. They decided to allow the business community to take responsibility for fire inspections with minimum government involvement. First they wrote a letter to all concerned business owners explaining the program along with the inspection sheet and explanation sheet. In all about 97% returned the inspection sheet after the fire department sent reminders to the businesses to complete the inspection (Fire Chief Magazine, May 1980, pp. 34-35).

The Arvada Fire Protection District in Colorado also instituted a self inspection program because they were over whelmed by fire inspections. They defined the target group, sent out letters, worksheet, and a checklist. They initially had an 85% return rate in 90 days, and the other 15 percent received phone calls reminding them to complete and return their inspection sheet. They also had "taken steps to ensure compliance with the program. A business cannot be

self inspected two years in a row”. The Arvada Fire Protection District’s self inspection program is still in effect today (Delay and Shriver, 1991, June, p. 10).

Jim Crawford (2008) has written several articles on self inspection programs. He stated that through self inspection programs departments can look to the concept of outcome base/oriented prevention.

Identifying fire hazards and abating them—what the codes specify and require—doesn’t have to be our job exclusively. The ultimate goal is to reduce hazards, thereby reducing risk and, hopeful, the number of fires.... Code compliance is ultimately the responsibility of the business owner.... (p.100)

Several departments have developed programs though the trial and error process. “Asking business owners to take responsibility without any over sight won’t work for those business owners who don’t care enough to be compliant or who can’t afford some of the fixes required by the codes” (Crawford, 2011 January, p.70).

The Garden City Fire Department in Garden City, Kansas developed a random test group and determined that education would be a high priority. They felt that the business owners needed to be comfortable with the program. They wanted to find a way to make this an easy transition for business owners. They did so by developing a list of components to follow. Most programs found have some type of list or steps that they follow (Shelton, 1993, pp.6-7).

Procedures

To determine the best course of action for the Georgetown City Fire Department to take in developing a self inspection program the following procedures were developed to answer the

research questions that were identified. To help answer the first research question the author reviewed the International Building Code and the International Fire Code to determine what occupancies require only the basic requirements to meet the intent of the code. The limitation for this procedure was that it was easier to eliminate occupancies quicker than it was to include them. So the results from this question came from a backwards review.

The second procedure allowed the author to look at other fire departments self inspection programs to determine who had the most vested interests in conducting the self inspections properly. The author did not take into consideration that the local jurisdiction had to be compared until the other departments self inspection programs were reviewed.

The third procedure caused the author to review other self inspection programs and research papers to find out what educational methods were being used within other self inspection programs to determine what would work for the businesses in Georgetown. The limitation here was not all of the resources such as other programs listed if the educational tools were successful. The Georgetown City Fire Departments program had to rely on what the research papers stated.

The procedure used to answer the fourth research question required searching the code books to determine what codes required special knowledge to inspect those fire protection systems.

The fifth research question was answered by reviewing other fire departments self inspection programs and executive fire officers research papers to determine how the other fire departments were collecting the inspection forms.

The procedure used to answer the sixth question required a review of what the Georgetown City Fire Department is currently using for its inspection program. The limitation is

that not all occupancies will be so prompt to conduct the self inspection as soon as they receive the notice and form.

Question seven was answered using the procedure of reviewing how the Georgetown City Fire Department records fire code inspections currently then determined if the same program could be used for the self inspection program.

Procedure eight determined what action needs to be conducted to mitigate any noted violations. The author reviewed the inspection practices to mitigate violations currently found in the department's inspection program.

Results

The results to the first research question, (what occupancies can conduct self inspections?) proved to be easier to answer the question backwards. What occupancies cannot conduct fire inspections? It was determined the International Building Code (2006) has ten major categories of buildings, Assemblies, Businesses, Educational, Factories and Industrial, High Hazard, Institutional, Mercantile, Residential, Storage, and Utility and Miscellaneous. (International Building Code, 2006, pp. 23-36) In those categories there can be sub categories each with their own set of requirements. It was determined through elimination that business type occupancies and small mercantile could be included in the self inspection program due to the size and limited amount of combustibles they would have stored. They were also the occupancies that had the least amount of code requirements to ensure that they met the codes. Meeting these program requirements, however, did not mean that they would be included if they choose to meet fire safety codes that were optional to them such as a fire alarm system or a

sprinkler system. These options would remove them from the program because of the technical knowledge it takes to inspect those systems.

It was determined by review other fire departments self inspection programs that the owners of the businesses or the managers would be the individuals that have the most vested interest in making sure that the building is safe for the occupants to enter and conduct business. Someone that has just started working or doesn't have the authority to make the corrections when violations are found would not be the ideal persons to conduct the inspections. Therefore the fire prevention bureau decided that the owners and managers of these businesses and small mercantile would be the ones to conduct the inspections. Allowing them to take that responsibility of maintaining a fire safe facility for which they are required to have.

It was found that other fire departments had trouble with inspections being completed in a timely fashion and needed a reminder. This problem could be the result of the business owners' not knowing what was truly required of them. The Georgetown City Fire Department is trying to avoid part of this problem by sending an explanation sheet (Appendix B) on how to inspect the building and why certain issues are considered a violation. We hope that this will raise the return rate of the self inspection forms. The department will also make an inspector available to assist the owner or manager conducting the inspection if they feel that more guidance is needed.

To help write the explanation sheet the Georgetown City Fire Department had to decide what fire codes would not allow occupancies to be included in the self inspection program. It was determined that by reviewing chapter 10 of the International Fire Code 2006 edition that if any of the occupancies had a technological fire safety devices such as cooking exhaust equipment, fire alarms, fire sprinkler systems, standpipe systems, or smoke control systems that would require the inspector to have special knowledge to ensure that the devices were working

properly then those occupancies and codes could not be included in the inspection program. This would mean that an inspector would have to visit the occupancy every year to conduct an onsite inspection. Occupancies that had to follow codes from chapter 11 through chapter 44 would also be excluded from the program. It was determined that there were no occupancies in the group B (business) or small mercantile that have to comply with these sections of the code.

To determine what the best method of collecting the information back from the occupancies after they complete the self inspection the author reviewed several executive fire officer's research papers and other fire department programs. It was found through this review of fire departments self inspection programs that most departments are finding it useful to send a self address returned envelope along with the inspection packet. However another avenue that the Georgetown City Fire Department is considering to use in the future for collecting this data is by linking the self inspection report to the internet and email system. This method will cut down on the cost of supplying the envelopes to them to be mailed back and postage to send them. Also this process will save time for the owners and managers. A requirement of sending this information through the computer would be that the owner or manager would have to maintain the hard copy from where they actually conducted the inspection. In case they are chosen for a spot check to ensure that inspection was done and that it was done correctly. This computer portion of the program can be added later after the program is established to make it easier on the customer.

During the process of answering the question of what time frame will businesses have to return the information, it was found that the department uses an unwritten policy of allowing thirty calendar days for violations to be repaired when they are not immediate life safety issues. This program would continue to use that approach to give the owners and managers time to make

the repairs and submit that the repairs have been made. The department has found through its onsite inspection program that most if not all fire safety issues can be repaired in that amount of time as long as the owners and managers put forth the effort to correct the violation.

Once the inspection sheet (Appendix C) has been returned to the fire department it can be entered into the inspection module of our data reporting system. The department currently uses the Fire House 7 software to record its daily operations data. The occupancies eligible for the self inspection program have been placed in a separate inspection district. It allows the fire prevention bureau to identify them more easily and inspectors can run a report to find out when they were inspected each year. After the data is returned inspectors can pull up the report and record the inspection including what, if any, violations were found. If a violation was found inspectors can note that and if it was repaired. If a violation is noted but not corrected then a re-inspection can be scheduled using this data. From that the inspector is able to schedule the next inspection for the occupancy. An onsite inspection will be scheduled for every other year and can be noted in the file so when the occupancy inspection comes due then it will automatically prompt the inspector when the report is pulled for scheduled inspections.

The Georgetown City Fire Department's fire prevention bureau wants to make sure that when a fire code violation is found that it gets corrected as quickly as possible. Through education and working with the occupancies in the department's jurisdiction the department has found the violations over the years have been less frequent. The department wants each of the occupancies eligible for the self inspection program to understand that if violations are noted then an inspector will visit the occupancy to ensure that the violation is corrected through a re-inspection program and that the owner or manager understands why the issue is considered a

violation. By ensuring that the violations noted are taken care of then the community will have a safer area live, work, and play.

Discussion

The Georgetown City Fire Department has realized that the success of their fire inspection program relies on code compliance. Over the past several years the occupancies in the jurisdiction that are having annual fire inspections are complying with the codes. These inspections however are taking up more time then the fire prevention office has to give. With more responsibility such as fire investigations and public education being given to the fire prevention bureau other ways have to be found for the occupancies to be inspected. Ultimately code compliance is the responsibility of the business owners. The fire department just lends a hand on pointing issues out to them. This process gives them guidance on what needs to be corrected other than the owners being complacent with the violations (Crawford, 2008 May, p. 100). In the report America Burning (1973) the commission made the recommendation “that local governments make fire prevention at least equal to suppression in the planning of fire departments priorities.” The Georgetown City Fire Department has tried to accomplish that by placing its inspection priorities on code compliance. They have failed, however, on keeping up with completing these inspections and are trying to find better ways to accomplish this. The department believes that a self inspection program will help with this short coming. The research has paved the way with designing and developing the self inspection program. The department could have started from scratch and developed a program not using the resources of

fire departments that already have self inspection programs but some of those programs have worked out issues that the Georgetown City Fire Department will have with its program.

The research questions were designed to lead the department in a systemic process to develop the self inspection program. This process was to start at the most basic information and work through the outcome ending with good solid results. Starting with determining the occupancies, the results showed no difference in the types of occupancies that other fire departments were using. Determining the target group such as how Arvada Fire Protection District did helped Georgetown City Fire Department by following the same elements and requirements. The department wanted to find those occupancies that the owners and managers could conduct the fire inspections without having to have technical knowledge about fire protection systems in order to make sure that the inspection was done accurately (Delay and Shriver, 1991, June, p. 10).

Knowing what occupancies were able to be included also helped to determine who had the most vested interest in making sure that the fire inspections are completed on time and accurately. After determining that businesses and small mercantile the research showed that most of these were locally owned stores or small chain stores. So the owners or managers of these establishments would have the most vested interests because these stores are their livelihood. The department realizes that one can't be thrown into doing these inspections without some type of training or education on what they would need to look for and why. Knowing that not every code section in the code books can be explained in an easy time efficient manner, the department wanted to find a way to educate the owners and managers to want to do these inspections and educate them. Through the research it was found that other departments

learned that by sending an explanation sheet out with the inspection checklist owners were able to understand what was required of them (Shelton, 1993, pp.6).

After determining what occupancies were going to be included and who was going to conduct the inspection and how they were going to be educated the department needed to make sure that the explanation sheet and the inspection check list covered the sections in the code that were appropriate for these occupancies. By looking at the code books it was determined that any of the technical fire protection requirements would exclude them because of the technical knowledge and special license it takes to inspect those systems. Also there are sections in the code books that do not deal with these types of occupancies and would also be excluded. The remaining sections would help develop the inspection check list and explanation sheet.

Questions five, six, seven and eight of the research questions all deal with the operation of the program, from timeframe to conduct the inspection, to getting the information back, data entry and re-inspection and spot checking the compliance of the inspections.

The Georgetown City Fire Department wanted to make sure that the inspections were completed in a timely fashion and allowed the owners to conduct the inspection and make repairs if necessary. Gwinnett County, Georgia self inspection program gave their occupancies 30 days to complete the inspection and return the forms (Fire Chief Magazine, May 1980, pp. 34-35). Black (2009) wrote in an executive fire officer research paper that was written concerning the town of Duck, North Carolina self inspection program that a test group of thirty inspections were sent out, eleven returned the form within 30 days. Nine returned the form within 60 days, and the other 10 inspection forms were not returned due to the time constraints of the research paper. There was a 67% return rate during for that research. (pg.17) The Georgetown City Fire Department requires that on site inspection violations to be cleared in thirty days and believes

that most of the businesses should be able to inspect the occupancy and make corrections of any violations found. This thirty day notice will also keep the inspection scheduling on a cycle that is familiar with what the department is currently using. Having a pre-addressed envelope and sending out reminder cards to the businesses will help with the return rate (Shelton, 1993, pp.7).

The research showed that other fire departments have found that spot checks and re-inspections are necessary to make sure compliance is being properly documented. It would also show if any changes to the program need to be made and provide a check and balance system (Shelton, 1993, pp.11-12). Requiring re-inspection and spot checking for compliance will go along with the company re-inspection program that the Georgetown City Fire Department currently uses. It will allow the fire companies to make visits and to remain familiar with those occupancies while checking to see that the self inspection program is functioning properly.

In *America Burning* (1973) it was noted that “people do not want government regulating every aspect of our live.” (pg. 147) Even though the owners would still have to comply with the fire codes they would feel like they have more control over doing it instead of having a fire official mandating that it be done. Finding a balance between what the acceptable risk is for the community and what the community will allow to be forced on them is a fine line. If fire departments can do this then their fire prevention programs will be successful. Fire prevention is one of the most important non- suppression activities that fire departments must undertake. (Fire Chief Handbook, 2003, p. 1038) The five E’s of fire prevention as studied in the Executive Analysis of Community Risk Reduction will influence the audience if they are presented in the proper ways. Education the target audience (group) must understand what the outcomes could be if issues are ignored and what the outcomes would be if they are taken care of immediately. Enforcement deals with better laws to protect the citizens. The enforcement aspect is probably

the least liked of the risk reduction strategies. Engineering deals with better and alternative ways to build and protect ourselves. Economic Incentives can be positive or negative, if acted on positively then it could save money and negatively by punishing people monetarily for certain actions. Emergency responses are those resources needed to mitigate the risks not taken care of by the other four E's of prevention, the risks that communities have to deem as acceptable. The self inspection program if presented using these E's of fire prevention will guide the department in properly disseminating the information to the community to make the program successful.

Recommendation

The goal of this research project was to develop a fluid document that would help the Georgetown City Fire Department to decide if a self inspection program would be a feasible task to implement. By developing a draft policy that would outline the program from the policy listed in (Appendix A) to the inspection checklist in (Appendix C), and a reference and explanation sheet (Appendix B) for the business owners and managers to assist them with conducting the inspection. A lot was learned from conducting this research that will make the program a success such as having an easy means of collecting the information, and by being available if the business owner need assistance with the inspection. Having a self inspection program would allow time to be freed up to inspect those occupancies that have more technical fire protection systems installed as well as other duties that may need to be done.

Self inspection programs are not a new idea for fire departments they are a means of adapting to the time constraints and rising cost of operating fire prevention programs. With no additional money available to hire inspection personnel to help provide the service to the

expanding commercial occupancies fire departments have to look for different ways of maintaining the same level of service. The Georgetown City Fire Department is no different from any of the other fire departments that have implemented self inspection programs. The department also feels the constraints of time and budgetary issues for more personnel. One of the aspects of having a self inspection program is that it gives some of the responsibility back to the businesses while maintaining that checks and balances of the inspections without requiring a whole lot of time involvement other than a few re-inspections and spot checks (Crawford, 2011 January, p.70).

It is my recommendation that this self inspection program be added to the fire prevention bureau inspection programs to assist the department in completing all of the commercial fire inspections on an annual basis. By implementing the program it will free up time for the inspector to complete other tasks that are important to the fire department and to the safety and well being of the community. It will allow the inspector time to conduct inspections in other buildings that have not been normally inspected on a regular basis. By implementing the program it also allow the fire prevention bureau time to develop new safety and prevention programs for the community. This program will be a great benefit to the fire department and the fire prevention bureau's fire and life safety programs.

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Appendix A
Self Inspection Policy
(DRAFT)

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction and to define the objectives for the fire prevention bureau to implement, enforce, and evaluate self inspections.

Scope:

This operational procedure shall provide guidance defining the key operational components needed for development and implementation of a successful self inspection program.

Objectives:

Define the requirements of the self inspection program.

To identify the occupancies that meets the requirements of the self inspection program.

To develop an operational list of items that needs to be done to implement the program.

Evaluate the success of the inspection program.

Procedure:

- 1) Identify those businesses and small mercantile that are less than 12,000 square feet can be included in the program.
- 2) Those occupancies included in the program shall be listed in the occupancy files under the inspection district 20.
- 3) Items needed to be included for each occupancy's inspection packet:

- a. A cover letter.
 - b. The inspection check sheet.
 - c. The explanation sheet.
 - d. A pre-addressed, stamped return envelope.
- 4) Ensure that an inspector is available if the owner needs help with the inspection.
 - 5) Send out reminder cards to those occupancies that do not return the inspection sheet within the allotted 30 day time frame.
 - 6) Schedule spot checks to ensure compliance with the code and to ensure that the program is working properly. Make notes of possible changes that need to be made.
 - 7) Evaluate the program annually.
 - a. Evaluate how many of the occupancies were sent a self inspection packet.
 - b. Evaluate how many returned the inspection form and how long it took get the form back.
 - c. Evaluate how many inspection reminders needed to be sent out.
 - d. Evaluate how many violations were noted and corrected.
 - e. Make changes to the program if needed.
 - 8) No occupancy shall be self inspected two years in a row.

Appendix B

Explanation Sheet

This page is provided as guidance on how to conduct the inspection, what to look for, and why issues are considered a violation. The sheet is divided into the same sections as the inspection check sheet to make it easier for the self inspector to understand explanation for each section on the inspection check sheet. Use this sheet in conjunction with the inspection check sheet take a look around the building following the inspection sheet looking for any of the items noted on the sheet. If problems are noted they need to be taken care of immediately.

Business Section:

This section of the inspection is designed to make sure that the licensing for the business is correct and that the address numbers are posted so that fire and emergency personnel can locate your facility easier in the time of need.

Electrical Section:

This section is designed to help identify potential concerns before they become a problem, listed is a few that are common areas. These areas are designed to either have covers placed on them or to be removed. The breakers are to be labeled for easy identification if needed to be turned off. Extension cords are not allowed to be used as permanent wiring.

Storage and Precautions against Fire Section:

This area is designed to identify storage and situations that place combustibles to close to a heat source. Identifying and correcting these areas will reduce the chances of a fire from occurring from this type of situation.

Exits Section:

Exits are designed to allow occupants a safe way out of a building and maintaining all the exits and egress components will reduce the chance that someone will become trapped or lost in a building. Exits cannot be blocked or locked while a building occupied. Internally illuminated exits signs are to be illuminated at all times.

Fire Extinguisher Section:

Fire Extinguishers for commercial buildings are to help the occupant/owner to extinguish a small fire if one occurs. They need to be maintained in good working order at all times. They need to be maintenance every year. Everyone that works for your business needs to be familiar with how a fire extinguisher works.

Fire Protection Systems Section:

This section of the inspection allows you to look over your occupancy to make sure that nothing has been placed in the way to interfere with the proper operation of the system. Storage is to be no closer than 18 inches from the tip of the sprinkler head. Buildings without sprinklers, storage is to be no closer than 24 inches from the ceiling area. Sprinkler, standpipes, and fire alarm systems are to be tested at least annually. Hood system systems for cooking are to be tested every six months.

Appendix C

Self Inspection Form

Georgetown City Fire Department

Fire Prevention Bureau

Self Inspection Form

Business

Business License Posted	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____
Business License Valid Date	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____
Address posted on Front of Building	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____

Electrical Systems

Breaker Boxes are Accessible	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____
No Extension Cords are in use	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____
All Junction Boxes are Closed	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____
No Electrical Cords run under carpet	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____

Storage and General Precautions against Fire

Combustible Storage areas are neat and clean	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____
Combustible wastes are removed daily	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____
No storage in mechanical/water heater rooms	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____
Candles are not allowed in building	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____
Ash trays are emptied outside daily	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____

Exits

All exits are unlocked and not blocked	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____
Exit doors open easily	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____
Exit Signs are posted above exit doors	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____
corridors and Exits are always illuminated	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____

Fire Extinguishers

Total number of Fire Extinguishers:				
All extinguishers have a valid inspection date	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____
All extinguishers are hung on the wall	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____
All employees know how to use the Extinguisher	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____

Fire Protection Systems (complete if present in your building)

Sprinkler heads are not blocked	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____
Sprinkler heads have not been painted	YES _____	NO _____	N/A _____	CORRECTED _____
Sprinkler system was last tested on:				
Fire Alarm System was last tested on:				

Your Signature: _____

Please complete and return Form By: