

 ORIGINAL

FILED

JUL 10 2024

INYO CO. CLERK
DANIELLE SEXTON, CLERK

dt.



2023-2024

Inyo County Grand Jury

Final Report



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526



Inyo County Grand Jury
PO Box 401
Independence, CA 93526

Honorable Stephen M. Place
Judge of the Superior Court
For Inyo County

Re: 2023-2024 Grand Jury Report

Dear Judge Place:

It is our pleasure to present to you the Inyo County Grand Jury report for the fiscal year 2023-2024.

We fulfilled our formal duty to inquire into the management and condition of “public prisons” in the county (PC §919(b)) by visiting the detention facilities in the County.

In addition to our formal report, we did inquire into other subjects and decided either to not investigate or not to report.

Throughout the year the nine members of the Grand Jury worked well together looking for ways to benefit the citizens of Inyo County. The reports we present represent the substantial contribution by every member of the Grand Jury.

Our tasks benefited greatly by the cooperation and generosity of time of many officials of many departments and special districts of the County who will not be individually named to preserve their confidentiality. We appreciate your support and your staff, especially Jaime Cervenka and Alyse Caton.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve on the Grand Jury.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mitchell W. Cox".

Mitchell W. Cox
Foreman



2023-2024 Inyo County Grand Jury Final Report Table of Contents

Letter to Inyo County Superior Court Judge.....	2
Members of the 2023-2024 Grand Jury.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Problematic Implementation of the New Property Tax Management System.....	6
Safety Issues at Independence Library.....	9
Fire and Life Safety Inspections.....	19
Continuity Report.....	36



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526

2023-2024 Inyo County Grand Jury

Mitchell Cox

Lone Pine
Foreman

Leonard Cudney

Mustang Mesa

Karen Kiefer-Cudney

Mustang Mesa

Samantha Kline

Chipmunk Canyon

Lynette McIntosh

Bishop

Edward Morse

Big Pine

Karen Palley

Cartago

John Shepherd

Mustang Mesa

Peter Thomsen

Bishop



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526

INTRODUCTION

In California, the Grand Jury system consists of 58 separate grand juries, one in each county, that are convened on an annual (July-June) basis by the Superior Court to serve a "watchdog" function, investigating and reporting on the operations of local government.

With regard to its watchdog authority, the civil Grand Jury is well suited to the effective investigation of local governments because it is an independent body, operationally separate from the entities and officials it investigates. It conducts its investigations under the auspices of the Superior Court and has broad access to public officials, employees, records and information.

The Grand Jury's fact-finding efforts result in written reports which contain specific recommendations aimed at identifying problems and offering recommendations for improving government operations and enhancing responsiveness. In this way, the Grand Jury acts as a representative of county residents in promoting government accountability.

Serving on the Inyo Grand Jury is a privilege, a duty and an opportunity. A privilege to be trusted with the authority granted to Grand Juries in California, a duty to investigate issues thoroughly with complete objectivity, and the opportunity to serve the citizens of our county by suggesting ways to improve the efficacy and efficiency of local government.

It should be noted that the Grand Jury receives many complaints and referrals during its year of service. Each complaint is carefully reviewed. A confirmation is sent to all complainants that identify themselves explaining their complaint will be evaluated by the Jury for possible investigation. Unfortunately, in addition to its basic merits, the timing of the complaint, the number of on-going investigations, and the number of members available to investigate are also components in the decision to conduct an investigation.

The following reports represent the efforts of the nine members of the Inyo Grand Jury for the fiscal year 2023-2024. Our reports, including the findings and recommendations, were unanimously approved by the members of the Grand Jury. We hope our findings and recommendations will lead to some incremental improvements in local government and overall benefits to the citizens of Inyo County.



Inyo County Grand Jury Report

Problematic Implementation of the New Property Tax Management System.

SUMMARY

Development and implementation of a new property tax management system (PTMS) for Inyo County was initiated in 2012. It is not yet fully functional. There have been significant challenges to this project: the software itself is complex, and the implementation of an integrated system across three separate departments is naturally problematic. In addition, throughout the project, there have been four CAO's, three IT directors, two county counsels, two assessors, two auditor/controllers, and a software vendor that changed hands at least twice. However, the key factor that has hampered effective implementation has been the fact that the project has never had an effective overall manager. Until the project is provided with that necessary management, completion remains uncertain.

BACKGROUND

Inyo County faced a serious problem when the long-term vendor for the computer system used to manage property taxes announced it was closing and would no longer support the software. California property tax codes are complex, with many provisions unique to California. Additionally, because of its small size, Inyo County's needs were unlike those of most other counties. Inyo found only two viable vendors for a new system. The County selected and contracted with a vendor in 2012 that had proposed an integrated software system to service the needs of the Assessor, Auditor, and Tax Collector that would, of necessity, be unique to Inyo County. The vendor was essentially "starting from scratch" but, with successful implementation in Inyo County, anticipated other California counties would acquire their system.

The complex duties, responsibilities and specific legal obligations of the Assessor, Auditor and Tax Collector require information flowing between their offices to be accurate and properly formatted for the timely issuance of property tax bills. Developing a totally new system to meet these needs presented a major challenge to the vendor, the individual departments involved, and, most of all, Inyo County's ability to manage the overall project.

In addition to the many technical aspects of the project, the environment for the last 12 years has been constantly changing. Four CAO's, three IT Directors, two county counsels, two assessors, two auditor/controllers, one tax collector, and a software vendor that changed hands twice significantly amplified the inherent difficulty of the project.

In 2019, the system attempted to "go live" with little success. The issues and problems were massive: lack of documentation, inability to provide reports, difficulty with formatting outputs, and complex requirements for making corrections. The system was nearly inoperable except for its most basic functions (e.g., entering data and issuing routine property tax bills).



Two week-long meetings were held in late 2023 and early 2024 to resolve issues associated with the many problems faced in issuing non-routine property tax bills. Regulatory time constraints created a situation that, if unresolved, would have had a significant financial impact on Inyo County and taxpayers. These meetings involved the vendor and key participants from Inyo County. Many of the issues were resolved, and more than 1,000 tax bills were issued. Significant improvement was achieved, but the system is not yet fully functional and does not meet the minimum needs of Inyo County and its taxpayers. Several consequential issues are yet to be resolved. Additional problems continue to be discovered as the system is used.

METHODOLOGY

Interviews were conducted with numerous members and former members of the various Inyo County organizations involved in implementing the new software. These interviews were conducted over a period of approximately 6 months. Contractual and other documents related to the implementation of the new system were reviewed.

DISCUSSION

Implementing the new Property Tax Management System (PTMS) in Inyo County in 2012 was a critical, very complicated, highly interactive, and technically complex project. It remains so to this day. The challenges of creating a computer software system to meet the needs of three elected officials with specific regulatory duties and responsibilities by an inexperienced vendor cannot be understated.

An overall project manager was assigned by the Inyo County Administration in the beginning but was soon removed because of budget considerations. Over the course of the project, there were several, sometimes multiple, project managers with limited ability to coordinate aspects of the project outside their department. None were able to overcome the complex issues enough to enable the various participants to work as a coherent team to implement the project.

The lack of an overall manager with the ability to guide the project led to a myriad of problems. Classic failures in organization plagued the project from its inception: poorly defined objectives, unclear responsibilities, mismatched expectations, poor communication between participants, an inability to effectively mediate and resolve interdepartmental and vendor issues, poor documentation of meetings and decisions, entrenchment, chronic frustrations, and distrust between team members. All these issues have led to a 12-year project that has yet to be completed.

There was minimal knowledge, visibility, or oversight of the project at any level beyond the participants, even though this was of critical importance to Inyo County

One of the few consensuses among the current Inyo County participants is that a change of vendor, while not impossible, would be difficult and ill-advised.

Although the Grand Jury can fully support the conclusions above, we feel that determining “who was to blame” is irrelevant, and the only focus should be on how to resolve today’s issues as efficiently and quickly as possible.



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526

Successful implementation of the PTMS will require implementation of a new management approach that will:

- Provide high-level oversight, support, and public visibility
- Define and communicate the actions necessary for successful completion
- Implement a project structure capable of developing and clearly communicating the objectives, expectations, and responsibilities for each participant
- Provide adequate financial and personnel resources as necessary.
- Result in a sustainable system that meets the on-going needs of Inyo County

FINDINGS

- F1. The management structure of the new Inyo County property tax management system was and continues to be inadequate for the successful implementation of the project.
- F2. At no time was an overall manager assigned with the ability to effectively implement the project.
- F3. Lack of visibility for problems outside the project participants limited the possibility of higher level or public oversight that could provide remedial actions.
- F4. Project completion is not in sight without a significant change in management structure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. Inyo County Board of Supervisors require the Chief Administrative Officer to designate an appropriate manager responsible for completing the implementation of the property tax management system. That designation not later than September 30, 2024 (F4)
- R2. Inyo County Board of Supervisors require the Chief Administrative Officer to provide a comprehensive status report on the implementation of the property tax management system no less than quarterly starting in 4Q 2024. (F3)

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses from the following governing bodies within 90 days:

- Inyo County Board of Supervisors

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.



Inyo County Grand Jury Report

Safety Issues at Independence Library

SUMMARY

Improperly secured bookshelves in Inyo County Free Library in Independence present a significant hazard to patrons and employees. There should be no public access until the bookshelves are properly secured.

Additionally, there have been other consistent public and employee safety related issues in the Independence Library over a period of several years that need to be mitigated.

BACKGROUND

The Inyo County Free Library is located on the ground floor of the historic Inyo County Courthouse in Independence. The library has been undergoing renovation for more than 2 years in conjunction with renovations and upgrades to the building overall. The library renovation involved installation of new bookshelves in the public access area and general upgrades to finishes, fixtures, electrical infrastructure. The work continues with no estimated completion date.

METHODOLOGY

Members of the Grand Jury visited the library several times. Interviews with Inyo County library staff, administrative staff, building and safety staff and Public Works were conducted. The Grand Jury reviewed information and documentation provided by the Risk Management, Building and Safety and the Library staff. Installation drawings and diagrams provided by the bookshelf manufacturer were reviewed.

DISCUSSION

Members of the Grand Jury observed the non-public work areas to be very cluttered with narrow walkways with significant access issues in many areas on at least two occasions. Temporary lighting consisting of portable lights with extension cords, unsecured bookshelves, high storage on shelves and tripping hazards were observed.

Annual inspections by Inyo County Risk Management have consistently documented significant safety and access issues that vary in time as to severity and type. Obstruction of access, excessive clutter and storage in aisles and the center corridor being the most consistent over the period from 2019 to 2024. (Appendix A)

Work order requests are the normal mechanism to initiate corrective actions after inspections or when specific issues are identified by staff. The Grand Jury found little evidence that work orders were consistently issued in a timely manner nor follow up on safety related issues identified in the library.



Public access to the library was reinstated in the spring of 2023 after closure during the COVID 19 pandemic. Public access bookshelves are in a large room on the west side of the main corridor, near the south entrance. It was somewhat less cluttered than the non-public areas when visited by the Grand Jury

The Estey bookshelves in the public area of the library are over 7' high and heavily loaded. Many are unsecured and noticeably unstable to the touch. These bookshelves were installed by the library staff and volunteers. Previous installations of Estey bookshelves in other Inyo County Libraries were reported to have been done similarly. Floor anchors, as recommended by the manufacturer, were not used. Some wall anchors were used but may not have been adequately secured. Other components critical for seismic stability may not have been installed.

When contacted by the Grand Jury, representatives of both the manufacturer and supplier of the shelving said that the lack of proper floor and wall anchors would create a "hazardous condition." (Appendix B)

Numerous Inyo County employees noted long standing ongoing safety and access related issues in and adjacent to the library. There is no formal mechanism for a member of the public or county staff to present safety-related concerns.

FINDINGS

- F1. A significant hazardous condition currently exists in the public area of the library due to improperly secured bookshelves.
- F2. Bookshelves like those in the Independence Library were installed in other libraries and may not be adequately secured.
- F3. There is a well-documented history of persistent clutter, obstructed access and other safety related issues in the public and non-public areas in the Independence library.
- F4. The process for ensuring safety related issues in the Independence Library are identified, mitigated and prevented from reoccurring is ineffective.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. Close the public area of the library and restrict employee access until the bookshelves are inspected and secured according to the manufacturer's recommendations. ⁽¹⁾
- R2. Survey bookshelves in other Inyo County Libraries like those in the Independence Library to ensure they are properly secured at those locations by October 1, 2024.
- R3. Initiate a management and review process that will ensure safety issues are addressed promptly at the Independence Library and do not consistently reoccur by January 1, 2025.

INVITED RESPONSES

- Nate Greenberg, Inyo County Chief Administrative Officer: (F1, F3, F4) = (R1, R3)
- Mike Errante, Inyo County Public Works Director: (F1, F2) = (R1, R2)

(1) May 2024 - the public area of the library is currently closed temporarily due to construction but should not be reopened.



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526

APPENDIX A

CENTRAL LIBRARY INDEPENDENCE

2019



2020



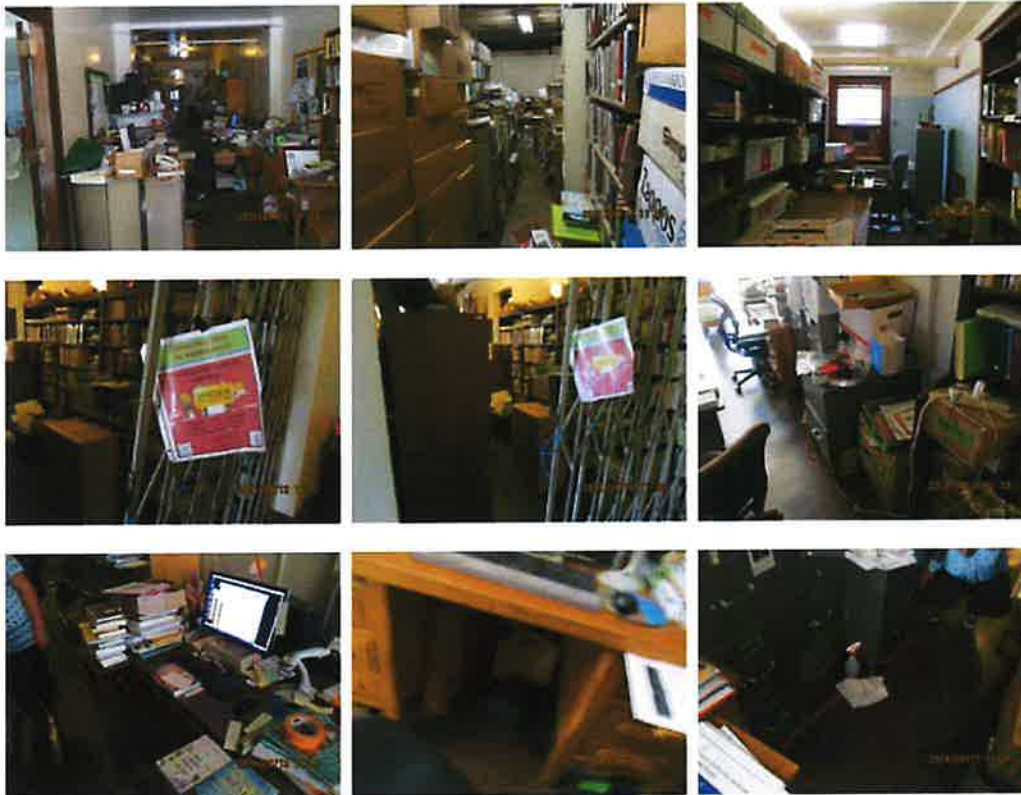


Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526



2021





Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526



2023





Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526

2024





Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526





Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526

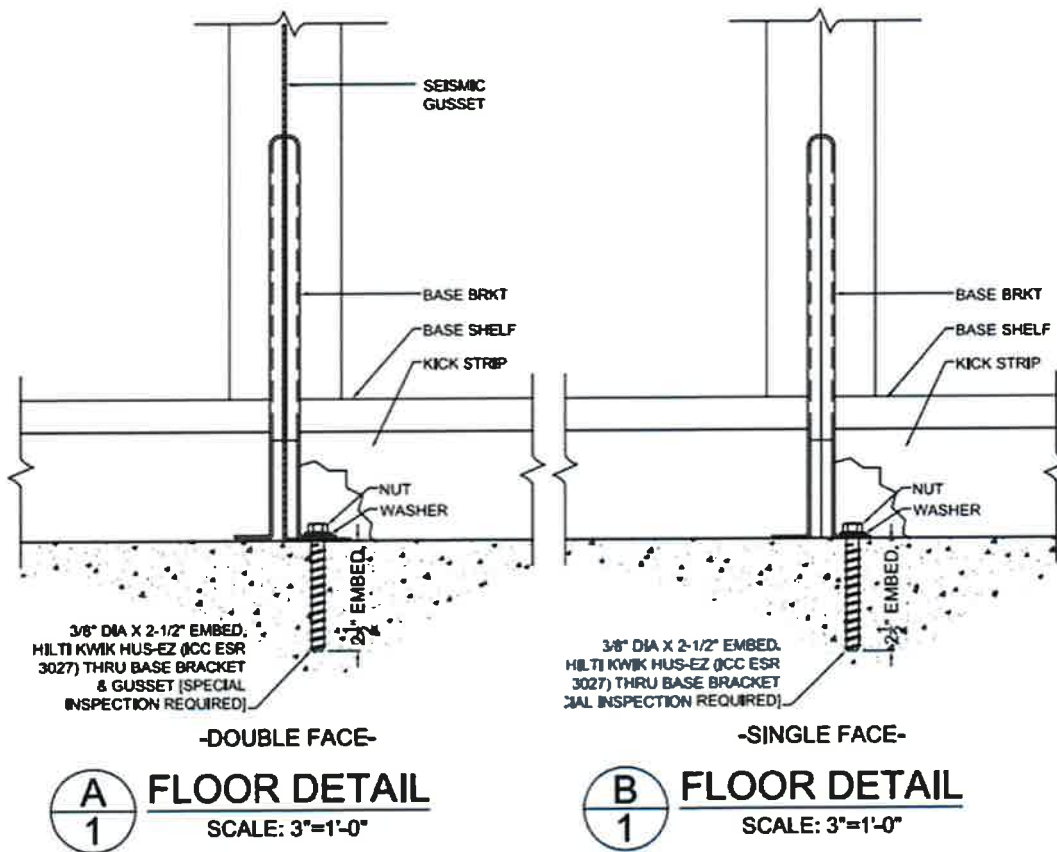


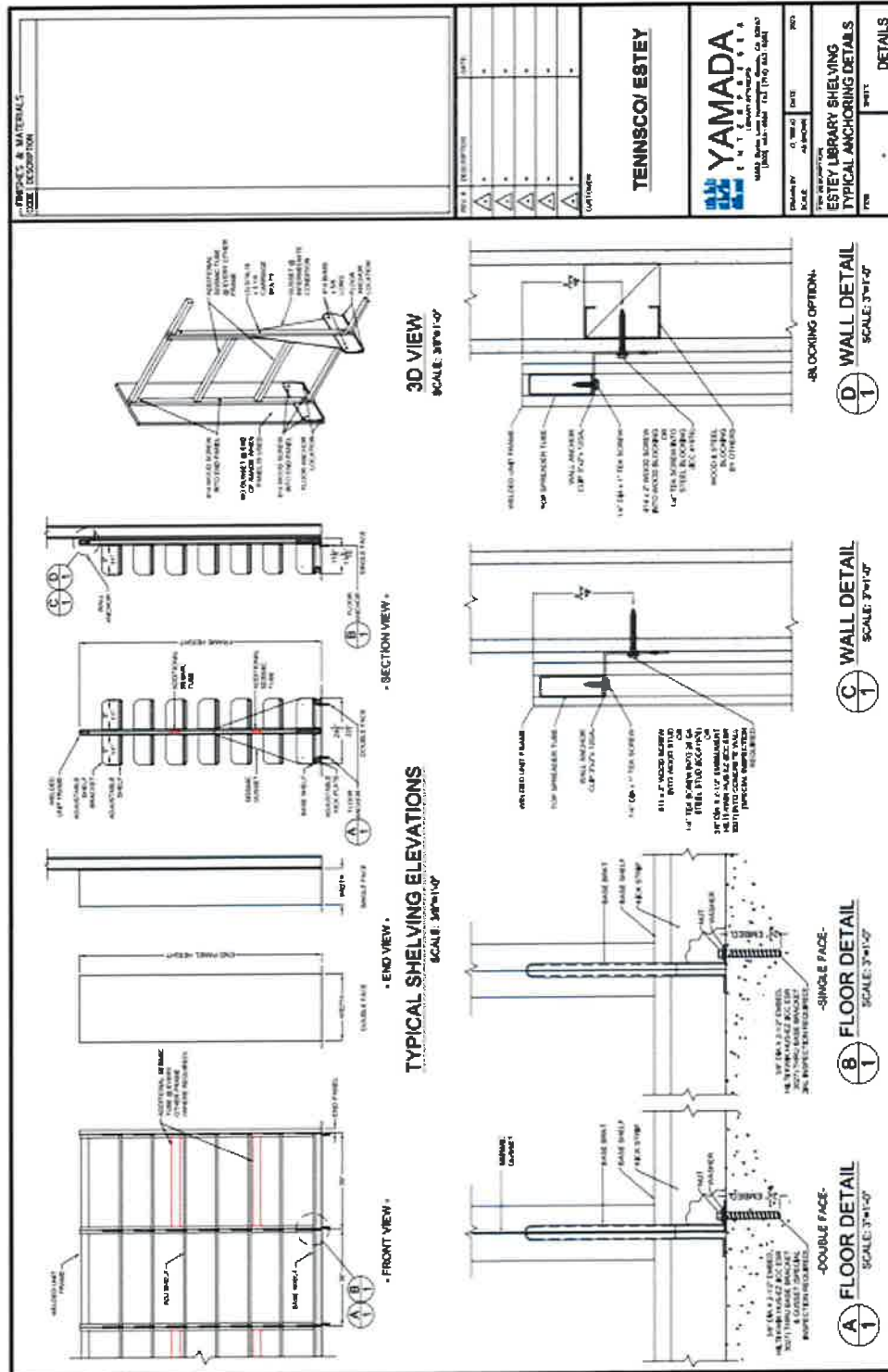


APPENDIX B

ESTEY LIBRARY SHELVING ANCHORING INSTRUCTIONS

Manufacturer's link for anchoring details: <https://www.dropbox.com/t/X8xyqz2Fel4w0oijr>







Inyo County Grand Jury Report

Fire and Life Safety Inspections

SUMMARY

This report addresses fire safety inspections in schools and other facilities in Inyo County. California Health and Safety Codes (HSC) require annual fire safety inspections in certain classes of buildings (schools, hotels, motels, etc.). The chiefs of our local fire departments are responsible for insuring these inspections are conducted. See Appendix C for the relevant codes.

The current Grand Jury opened an investigation into this issue after doing some basic continuity research pursuant to a 2022 Grand Jury report on the same subject. The fact that school inspections were not being conducted regularly was quickly apparent, and the Grand Jury felt that another investigation was warranted. In this report, the Grand Jury wants to expand our area of inquiry beyond just school inspections and to include the other types of facilities that must be inspected. This report also addresses what options local fire chiefs have to ensure that inspections are conducted in their districts.

BACKGROUND

The 2021-2022 Inyo County Grand Jury published a report about school fire safety inspections. That report found that few inspections were being conducted regularly in Inyo County. The report clarified that the responsibility for conducting inspections lies with the local fire district (either with the chief or someone else to whom the chief delegates that authority). The report also stated that according to the relevant HSC, inspection reports—whether conducted by the local chief, the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) via CalFire, or anyone else—must be presented to the special district's board of directors, accepted, and made publicly available.

Inyo County's fire protection services are provided by 6 special districts: Bishop Rural Fire Protection District (BRFPD), Big Pine Fire Protection District (BFPD), Independence Fire Protection District (IFPD), Lone Pine Fire Protection District (LPFPD), Olancho Community Service District (OCSD), and Southern Inyo Fire Protection District (SIFPD). Current state regulations establish that the fire departments in these special districts are ultimately responsible for ensuring annual inspections are conducted in all required facilities within their districts. Full-time chiefs with the necessary credentials and training may conduct inspections themselves, or they can delegate this responsibility to CalFire or another district fire official.



METHODOLOGY

Members of the Grand Jury conducted interviews with interested parties in person, by phone, and via Zoom. Requests for fire safety inspection reports were made to local fire districts, school districts, and state agencies. The 2021-2022 Grand Jury report was reviewed, together with all responses to that report which were received. The Grand Jury also made a thorough review of pertinent California HSC, state regulations, and information obtained from the California State Fire Marshal's Office and CalFire.

DISCUSSION

This report intends to clarify the following details related to state-mandated fire safety inspections: 1) What facilities are required to be inspected. 2) Who has the responsibility and authority to conduct inspections. 3) Are inspections currently being conducted in Inyo County. 4) Do the fire districts in Inyo County need to implement new procedures to ensure inspections are conducted. 5) Why is it important that annual inspections are conducted in Inyo County schools and other required facilities.

HSC requires annual inspections for schools and several other residential occupancies. The State Fire Marshal's Office has defined the specific facilities that must be inspected as those within three specific occupancy groups: Group E, Group R1, and Group R2.

- Group E: Schools and day-care facilities (with more than 6 children who are over 2 ½ years of age)
- Group R1: Hotels, motels, hostels, and other transient congregate living facilities
- Group R2: Apartment houses, boarding houses (with more than 16 occupants), other congregate living facilities (with more than 16 occupants), convents, dormitories, fraternities, and sororities

The Grand Jury's current information indicates that CalFire will perform inspections, upon request from a local fire chief, for all required facilities. CalFire's current rate is \$240/hour, excluding transportation time. CalFire charges the facilities they are inspecting directly (whether that is a school, a motel, or otherwise), so local fire departments are not responsible for charging inspection fees.

Suppose a district fire chief wishes to delegate inspection responsibility to the OSFM (via CalFire). In that case, they must contact them directly (see Appendix B) and provide them with a list of all facilities within their district that must be inspected. After CalFire has conducted inspections, they must provide the district fire chief with a copy of all inspection reports. The chief, in turn, must provide those reports to the district board of directors at their year-end budget meeting. The board is then responsible for making a formal resolution accepting the reports and either posting them on the department's website or making them available to the public at the fire station.



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526

The Grand Jury made inquiries to discover what inspections have been conducted in Inyo County over the last five years. Our requests for inspection reports were made to the local fire districts, school district superintendents, and CalFire (via a FOIA request). The Grand Jury is proceeding with the assumption that if a written inspection report does not exist, there is no way to verify that an inspection occurred.

The table below provides a simple representation of which inspection reports the Grand Jury obtained for Inyo County schools for 2019-2023. This table may not provide a complete list of every school in each fire protection district. Each fire protection district is responsible for compiling a list of all schools and other applicable buildings that require annual inspections in their district. Olancho CSD is not listed in the table below because it does not presently have any schools within its district boundaries. Please see Appendix A for a comprehensive and detailed table of every inspection report that the Grand Jury obtained.



No Inspection
 Report Provided
 to the Grand Jury

Inspection
 Report Provided
 to the Grand Jury

Bishop Schools					
Inspection Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Bishop Union HS					
Home Street MS					
Bishop ES					
7th Day Adventist					
7th Day Adventist Pre					
Wonder Years Pre					
Indian Head Start					
Little Promises PS					
Kliks Family Daycare					

Big Pine Schools					
Inspection Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Big Pine PreS					
Big Pine ES					
Big Pine MS					
Big Pine HS					
Big Pine HS Palisade					

Independence Schools					
Inspection Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Owens Valley ES					
Owens Valley MS					
Owens Valley HS					

Lone Pine Schools					
Inspection Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Lo-Inyo ES					
Lone Pine HS					

Death Valley Schools					
Inspection Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Shoshone Academy					



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526

Big Pine FPD and Southern Inyo FPD are presently conducting inspections. This Grand Jury report does not provide data on fire safety inspections conducted in 2024. However, it is important to acknowledge that both Bishop Fire and Independence FPD are now actively contracting with CalFire to conduct fire safety inspections in their districts. The Grand Jury's intent, in this report, is not to rebuke any of the fire protection districts. Instead, the goal is to provide clear and detailed information that will enable all Inyo County fire protection districts to fully comply with all state regulations regarding fire safety inspections. The importance of preventative fire safety measures cannot be overestimated, especially concerning school children in Inyo County. In addition, fire safety in hotels and motels is vital in a county that relies heavily on revenue from visitors and vacationers. Inyo County's history of compliance with fire safety inspection requirements has been poor to date, but the Grand Jury believes rectifying the situation is possible. We must all acknowledge that inspections are urgently needed to ensure the safety of our school children, residents, and visitors.

While conducting this investigation, the Grand Jury has become aware of recent discussions among county agencies and fire district chiefs regarding the difficulties faced in achieving compliance with state regulations that require annual inspections. The Grand Jury believes that the central problem has been confusion about the specifics of these requirements; that uncertainty has been exacerbated by the fact that most of our small fire district chiefs lack the resources to perform the necessary inspections. Inyo County technically has a County Fire Marshal: the Head of Building & Safety. This, however, is a titular position and does not possess any of the responsibilities of a fire marshal since Inyo County does not have a County Fire Department. It is doubtful that creating a county-level position to conduct countywide inspections is feasible at this time. Additionally, we recognize that our county's responsibility for fire protection services lies with six independent special districts; there is no overarching authority with organizational and management capabilities. For these reasons, the simplest solution to the problem appears to be for each district chief to determine the most effective way to ensure that inspections occur, whether this means doing the inspections themselves—if they have the necessary qualifications and resources—or delegating this responsibility to the OSFM.

The Grand Jury's objective in conducting this investigation was to determine whether the 2021-2022 Grand Jury report on the same subject had produced the desired results. We wish to acknowledge that there has been improvement: Big Pine FPD has been contracting with CalFire to conduct inspections for the last two years, and in the Southern Inyo FPD, the fire chief has been conducting inspections since taking office in 2023.



The Grand Jury recognizes that during this investigation, significant progress has occurred: Bishop Fire and Independence FPD are actively taking the necessary steps to comply with HSC requirements. The purpose of this report is to encourage and inform all concerned parties so as to make Inyo County safer for everyone.

FINDINGS

- F1. The record of compliance with California HSC's requirements for annual fire safety inspections in Inyo County has been largely inconsistent over the last five years.
- F2. Many of the local fire protection districts in Inyo County lack the necessary resources or qualifications to conduct annual fire safety inspections.
- F3. Special District fire chiefs may delegate the responsibility for conducting fire safety inspections to the Office of the State Fire Marshal (via CalFire), another district chief or employee, or a private firm that provides inspection services.
- F4. The Boards of Directors of Inyo County's fire protection districts are not in compliance with Health & Safety Code requirements to accept and make public fire safety inspection reports in their districts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. Each fire department, that is not currently in compliance, reach compliance with the requirements for annual fire safety inspections under sections 13146.2, 13146.3, and 13146.4 of the California Health & Safety Codes no later than December 31, 2024.
(F1, F4)
- R2. The Board of Directors of each fire department develops a plan that details how their departments will achieve and maintain compliance with fire safety inspection requirements no later than October 31, 2024, that includes the following: (F1, F4)
 - Determine who will be responsible for conducting fire safety inspections;
 - Compile and maintain a list of all schools and other facilities in their district which require inspections;
 - Determine a procedure for the chief to present inspection reports to the board at their annual budget meeting;
- R3. The Board of Directors of each fire department receives all fire safety inspection reports at their annual budget meeting. The Board of Directors makes a formal resolution that includes posting inspection reports on the department website or making them available to the public at the fire station no later than October 31, 2024.
(F4)



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526

REQUIRED RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses from the following governing bodies within 90 days:

- Bishop Rural Fire Protection District's Board of Directors (R1, R2, R3)
- Bishop City Council (R1, R2, R3)
- Big Pine Fire Protection District's Board of Directors (R1, R2, R3)
- Independence Fire Protection District's Board of Directors (R1, R2, R3)
- Lone Pine Fire Protection District's Board of Directors (R1, R2, R3)
- Olancha Community Service District's Board of Directors (R1, R2, R3)
- Southern Inyo Fire Protection District's Board of Directors (R1, R2, R3)

INVITED RESPONSES

- Bishop RFPD Chief Bret Russell
- Big Pine FPD Chief Damon Carrington
- Independence FPD Chief Joseph Cappello
- Lone Pine FPD Chief Carl Bursell
- Olancha CSD Chief Chelsea Benbrook
- Southern Inyo FPD Chief Phil Worsman
- Lone Pine School Superintendent Edward Campbell
- Death Valley School District Superintendent Jim Copeland
- Independence School District Superintendent Rosanne Lampariello
- Inyo County Superintendent of Schools Barry Simpson
- Cal Fire Chief Darwin Workman
- Cal Fire Chief Jeffrey Bailey



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
 Post Office Box 401
 Independence, CA 93526

APPENDIX A

SCHOOLS	Inspection Date	Pass/Fail	Details	Reinspection Date
Bishop Area				
Bishop Union HS	8/13/2020	Correction notice issued		8/20
Bishop Union HS	6/23/2022	Correction notice issued	3 violations noted	
Home Street MS	8/27/2020	Passed with comments	4 violations noted	
Home Street MS	6/21/2022	Correction notice issued	2 violations noted	
Bishop ES	9/24/2020	Passed with comments		
Bishop ES	6/15/2022	Correction notice issued	6 violations noted	
Bishop 7th Day Adventist Church School	2/21/2020	Correction notice issued		
Bishop 7th Day Adventist Preschool	2/21/2020	Citation issued	7 violations noted	
ICOE Wonder Years Preschool	8/18/2022	Passed		
B. Indian Head Start	3/15/2019	Passed		
Little Promises PS				
Kliks Family Daycare				



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
 Post Office Box 401
 Independence, CA 93526

Big Pine				
BP: ES 2nd-6th Bldg	4/11/2022	Fail	4 Violations	
BP: ES 2nd-6th Bldg	8/29/2023	Pass		
BP: After School Bldg	4/11/2022	Pass		
BP: After School Bldg	8/29/2023	Fail	1 Violation	
BP: Library	4/11/2022	Pass		
BP: Library	8/29/2023	Pass		
BP: Boardroom	4/11/2022	Fail	3 Violations	
BP: Library	8/29/2023	Fail	4 Violations	
BP: Care Room Bldg	4/11/2022	Pass		
BP: Care Room Building	8/29/2023	Pass		
BP: Elective Storage	4/11/2022	Fail	1 Violation	
BP: K-8 Science Storage	8/29/2023	Pass		
BP: Gym	4/11/2022	Fail	10 Violations	
BP: Gym	8/29/2023	Fail	7 Violations	
BP: K-1st Grade Building	4/11/2022	Pass		
BP: K-1st Grade Building	8/29/2023	Pass		
BP: Preschool	4/11/2022	Pass		
BP: Preschool	8/29/2023	Pass		
BP: High School	4/11/2022	Fail	7 Violations	
BP: High School	8/29/2023	Fail	5 Violations	
BP: RSP	4/11/2022	Pass		
BP: RSP	8/29/2023	Pass		
Big Pine: Training Room	4/11/2022	Pass		
Palisade: English Classroom	4/11/2022	Fail	1 Violation	



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
 Post Office Box 401
 Independence, CA 93526

Palisade: English Classroom	8/29/2023	Pass		
Palisade: History Classroom	4/11/2022	Pass		
Palisade: History Classroom	8/29/2023	Pass		
Palisade: Math & Science Classroom	4/11/2022	Pass		
Palisade: Math & Science Classroom	8/29/2023	Pass		
Palisade: Office	4/11/2022	Fail	3 Violations	
Palisade: Office	8/29/2023	Pass		
Palisade: Technology Building	4/11/2022	Pass		
BP: Crew Room	8/29/2023	Pass		
Independence				
Owens Valley ES				
Owens Valley MS				
Owens Valley HS				
Lone Pine				
Lo-Inyo ES	8/16/2019	N/A	None noted	10/18/2019
Lo-Inyo ES	10/18/2019	N/A	"Making progress on past violations."	60 Days
Lone Pine HS	8/23/2019	N/A	2 violations noted	30 Days
Lone Pine HS	10/18/2019	N/A	2 past violations were corrected. 1 violation requires reinspection.	30 Days



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
 Post Office Box 401
 Independence, CA 93526

Death Valley				
Death Valley Shoshone Academy	3/7/23		11 violations noted	
Death Valley Shoshone Academy	11/23	Failed	34+ violations noted	Priority code for corrections noted
Schools in Inyo County not within a Fire District's Boundaries				
Round Valley Schools				
Cerro Coso Community College - Bishop Campus				



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526

APPENDIX B

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY

Gavin Newsom, Governor



DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION
OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL
Fire and Life Safety Division
P.O. Box 944246
SACRAMENTO, CA 94244-2460
(916) 568-3801
Website: www.fire.ca.gov



February 27, 2024

Re: State Fire Marshal Mandated Inspections

Dear Local Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ):

The purpose of this annual notification is to provide information to local AHJ fire departments and fire protection districts on statutory notification and reporting requirements for State Fire Marshal mandated inspections performed by your agency.

In accordance with Health and Safety Code (HSC) Section 13146.1, CAL FIRE - Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is charged to inspect every jail or place of detention at least once every two years, including those within local AHJ jurisdictions, unless notified by the local AHJ that they will perform the inspections by June 30 of each applicable year. Some jails or places of detention may request to have annual inspections due to other requirements or accreditation. Reports of the inspections shall be submitted to the following within 30 days of the inspection:

- Official in charge of the facility
- Local governing body
- State Fire Marshal
- Board of Corrections

In accordance with HSC Section 13217, local AHJs are charged with performing annual inspections of high-rise structures in their jurisdiction unless the local AHJ elects to have the OSFM perform the inspections. Notification to the OSFM of who will be performing the inspection is required by June 30 of each applicable year. If a local AHJ performs the inspection, results of the inspection shall be submitted to the OSFM no later than 30 days after the date of the inspection.

In accordance with HSC Sections 13146.2 and 13146.3, Group E and Group R-1/R-2 occupancies are required to be inspected annually by the local AHJ. OSFM notification and reporting is not required for these inspections.

In accordance with HSC Section 13146.6, if the governing body relies on an all-volunteer fire department, Group E or Group R-1/R-2 occupancies in your jurisdiction must be inspected through one of the following methods:

- Request the OSFM to perform the inspections.
 - If you are an all-volunteer fire department, and you are requesting the OSFM perform your Group E and Group R-1/R-2 occupancy inspections per HSC

Page 1 of 2

"The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection serves and safeguards the people and protects the property and resources of California."



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526

Section 13146.6, please notify us by including those structures on the Inventory Spreadsheet.

- Request another city, county, or city and county fire department or district that has regular full-time members of a regularly organized fire department to perform the inspections.

If a structure meets the definitions of both a high-rise and an R-1/R-2, inspection responsibility will fall to the local AHJ under HSC Section 13146.2. The AHJ will still be responsible for the notification and reporting of this structure per HSC Section 13217.

The OSFM continues working with our contractor to establish an electronic notification and reporting system through GOVMOTUS FIRE. This system will track inspections for high-rise structures and jails (or places of detention) performed by the AHJ fire departments and fire protection districts. Through this system, local AHJs will notify the OSFM that the local AHJ will perform these inspections or defer them to the OSFM, identify that the inspections have been completed, and submit the results of the inspections to the OSFM.

This system will replace the annual letter sent by our office. Until the system is established, OSFMLocalFireInfoUpdate@fire.ca.gov will be utilized for local AHJ communication for mandated inspection notification and reporting.

To facilitate this program, a general email address for your department to use as the Login ID is required. If the email address that you have received this notification at is not the email address you wish to utilize as your department's Login ID, please enter the correct email on the attached Inventory Spreadsheet. This spreadsheet also needs to include all high-rise structures and jails or places of detention in your jurisdiction and identify who will be performing these inspections. The spreadsheet may also contain data for your jurisdiction based on the information you reported last year. Please review the information and update it as needed. Please return the completed spreadsheet to OSFMLocalFireInfoUpdate@fire.ca.gov within 30 days of receipt.

If your department has no structures that require reporting or notification to the OSFM, fill out the AHJ information section of the spreadsheet and enter "no buildings to notify/report on" in the first line of the inventory. Additionally, if another AHJ will be performing these mandated inspections on your behalf, still fill out and submit the Inventory Spreadsheet for your jurisdiction. Your reporting and notification can then be done via your login either by your department or the AHJ performing the inspections for you.

Upon receipt of this email, please reply to OSFMLocalFireInfoUpdate@fire.ca.gov with an acknowledgment so that we know this email address is current and being monitored. If you previously submitted an inventory to us for this program, please verify your email address and provide any corrections that may need to be made to the inventory we have on file to keep it up to date. If you have any questions, we may be contacted at (916) 568-3801.

Respectfully,

Brad Goodrich
Chief of Fire and Life Safety

Cc: Jack Stinson, Chief of Fire and Life Safety
Darwin Workman, Chief of Fire and Life Safety

Page 2 of 2

"The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection serves and safeguards the people and protects the property and resources of California."



APPENDIX C

1. HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE - HSC
2. DIVISION 12. FIRES AND FIRE PROTECTION [13000 - 14959] (*Division 12 enacted by Stats. 1939, Ch. 60.*)
3. PART 2. FIRE PROTECTION [13100 - 13263] (*Part 2 enacted by Stats. 1939, Ch. 60.*)
4. CHAPTER 1. State Fire Marshal [13100 - 13159.10] (*Chapter 1 enacted by Stats. 1939, Ch. 60.*)
5. ARTICLE 2. The State Board of Fire Services [13140 - 13147] (*Heading of Article 2 amended by Stats. 1973, Ch. 1197.*)
6. 13146.
7. (a) The responsibility for enforcement of building standards adopted by the State Fire Marshal and published in the California Building Standards Code relating to fire and panic safety and other regulations of the State Fire Marshal shall be as follows:
8. (1) The city, county, or city and county with jurisdiction in the area affected by the standard or regulation shall delegate the enforcement of the building standards relating to fire and panic safety and other regulations of the State Fire Marshal as they relate to R-3 dwellings, as described in Section 310.5 of Part 2 of the California Building Standards Code, to either of the following:
 9. (A) The chief of the fire authority of the city, county, or city and county, or the chief's authorized representative.
 10. (B) The chief building official of the city, county, or city and county, or the official's authorized representative.
11. (2) The chief of any city, county, or city and county fire department or of any fire protection district, and their authorized representatives, shall enforce within its jurisdiction the building standards and other regulations of the State Fire Marshal, except those described in paragraph (1) or (4).
12. (3) The State Fire Marshal shall have authority to enforce the building standards and other regulations of the State Fire Marshal in areas outside of corporate cities and districts providing fire protection services.
13. (4) The State Fire Marshal shall have authority to enforce the building standards and other regulations of the State Fire Marshal in corporate cities and districts providing fire protection services upon request of the chief fire official or the governing body.
14. (5) The State Fire Marshal shall enforce the building standards and other regulations of the State Fire Marshal on all University of California campuses and properties



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526

- administered or occupied by the University of California and on all California State University campuses and properties administered or occupied by the California State University. For each university campus or property, the State Fire Marshal may delegate that responsibility to the person of the State Fire Marshal's choice who shall be known as the Designated Campus Fire Marshal.
15. (b) A fee may be charged pursuant to the enforcement authority of this section but shall not exceed the estimated reasonable cost of providing the service for which the fee is charged, pursuant to Section 66014 of the Government Code.
 16. 13146.1.
 17. (a) Notwithstanding Section 13146, the State Fire Marshal, or the State Fire Marshal's authorized representative, shall inspect every jail or place of detention for persons charged with or convicted of a crime, unless the chief of any city, county, or city and county fire department or fire protection district, or that chief's authorized representative, indicates in writing to the State Fire Marshal, by June 30 of each applicable year pursuant to subdivision (b), that inspections of jails or places of detention, therein, shall be conducted by the chief, or the chief's authorized representative, and submits the reports as required in subdivision (c).
 18. (b) The inspections shall be made at least once every two years for the purpose of enforcing the regulations adopted by the State Fire Marshal, pursuant to Section 13143, and the minimum standards pertaining to fire and life safety adopted by the Board of State and Community Corrections, pursuant to Section 6030 of the Penal Code.
 19. (c) Reports of the inspections shall be submitted to the official in charge of the facility, the local governing body, the State Fire Marshal, and the Board of Corrections within 30 days of the inspections.
 20. (d) The State Fire Marshal, or the State Fire Marshal's authorized representative, who performs an inspection pursuant to subdivision (a) may charge and collect a fee for the inspection from the local government. Any fee collected pursuant to this subdivision shall be in an amount, as determined by the State Fire Marshal, sufficient to pay the costs of that inspection or those related fire and life safety activities
 21. 13146.2.
 22. (a) Every city, county, or city and county fire department or district providing fire protection services required by Sections 13145 and 13146 to enforce building standards adopted by the State Fire Marshal and other regulations of the State Fire Marshal shall, annually, inspect all structures subject to subdivision (b) of Section 17921, except dwellings, for compliance with building standards and other regulations of the State Fire Marshal.
 23. (b) A city, county, or city and county fire department or district providing fire protection services that inspects a structure pursuant to subdivision (a) may charge and collect a fee for the inspection from the owner of the structure in an amount, as determined by the city,



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526

- county, or city and county fire department or district providing fire protection services, sufficient to pay the costs of that inspection.
24. (c) A city, county, or city and county fire department or district providing fire protection services that provides related fire and life safety activities for structures subject to subdivision (b) of Section 17921, such as plan review, construction consulting, fire watch, and investigation, may charge and collect a fee from the owner of the structure in an amount, as determined by the city, county, city and county, or district, sufficient to pay the costs of those related fire and life safety activities.
25. (d) The State Fire Marshal, or the State Fire Marshal's authorized representative, who inspects a structure subject to subdivision (b) of Section 17921, except dwellings, for compliance with building standards and other regulations of the State Fire Marshal, may charge and collect a fee for the inspection from the owner of the structure. The State Fire Marshal may also charge and collect a fee from the owner of the structure for related fire and life safety activities, such as plan review, construction consulting, fire watch, and investigation. Any fee collected pursuant to this subdivision shall be in an amount, as determined by the State Fire Marshal, sufficient to pay the costs of that inspection or those related fire and life safety activities.
26. 13146.3.
27. (a) A city, county, or city and county fire department or district providing fire protection services shall inspect every building used as a public or private school within its jurisdiction, for the purpose of enforcing regulations promulgated pursuant to Section 13143, not less than once each year. The State Fire Marshal and the State Fire Marshal's authorized representatives shall make these inspections not less than once each year in areas outside of corporate cities and districts providing fire protection services.
28. (b) A city, county, or city and county fire department or district that, or the State Fire Marshal or the State Fire Marshal's authorized representative who, inspects a structure pursuant to subdivision (a) may charge and collect a fee for the inspection in an amount sufficient to pay the costs of that inspection.
29. 13146.4.
30. (a) Every city or county fire department, city and county fire department, or district required to perform an annual inspection pursuant to Sections 13146.2 and 13146.3 shall report annually to its administering authority on its compliance with Sections 13146.2 and 13146.3.
31. (b) The report made pursuant to subdivision (a) shall occur when the administering authority discusses its annual budget, or at another time determined by the administering authority.
32. (c) The administering authority shall acknowledge receipt of the report made pursuant to subdivision (a) in a resolution or a similar formal document.



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526

33. (d) For purposes of this section, “administering authority” means a city council, county board of supervisors, or district board, as the case may be.
34. 13146.5.
35. The provisions of Sections 13145, 13146 and 13146.3 shall, so far as practicable, be carried out at the local level by persons who are regular full-time members of a regularly organized fire department of a city, county, or district providing fire protection services, and shall not be carried out by other persons pursuant to Section 34004 of the Government Code.



Inyo County Grand Jury Report

Continuity Report

SUMMARY

The 2022-2023 Inyo County Grand Jury published a report on the Concealed Carry Permit (CCW) renewal process. The Grand Jury found that the information on the Inyo County Sheriff's Office's (ICSO) website did not provide the necessary information on minimum processing times to ensure that applicants would receive their new CCW permit before their previous permit expired. This report tracks the ICSO's response to the 2023 Grand Jury report and evaluates whether the recommendations that the ICSO agreed to were implemented.

METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury reviewed the 2022-2023 report on CCW renewals, interviewed Sheriff's Office representatives, and reviewed the current ICSO website.

DISCUSSION

The 2022-2023 Grand Jury report on CCW renewals made the following findings and recommendations:

FINDINGS

- F1. There are discrepancies between the information for renewing a Concealed Carry Permit on the ICSO website and current practices.
- F2. No information is presented on the ICSO website as to typical Concealed Carry Permit renewal process times nor an indication of the minimum time necessary to receive a renewal before the existing permit expiration date.
- F3. The Permitium Concealed Carry Permit expiration notice process is problematic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The Grand Jury recommends that the ICSO review and revise the website to eliminate discrepancies between stated and actual CCW renewal practices by December 31, 2023.
- R2. The Grand Jury recommends the ICSO provide evidence on the website as to typical CCW renewal times by December 31, 2023.
- R3. The Grand Jury recommends the ICSO clearly indicate the minimum time required to review a CCW if all documentation is properly submitted by December 31, 2023.
- R4. The Grand Jury recommends the ICSO assure expiration date notices sent by Permitium are accurate and include guidance for timely renewals by December 31, 2023.



Inyo County

Inyo County Grand Jury
Post Office Box 401
Independence, CA 93526

The Grand Jury report, published on June 11, 2023, required a response from the Inyo County Sheriff within 60 days of its release to the public (pursuant to Penal Code 933.06). No response was received from the ICSO, and the ICSO's website didn't reflect any of the recommended changes. The current Grand Jury met with representatives of the ICSO on September 20, 2023, to follow up on the 2022-2023 report and inquire about the lack of a response to the previous report. The Grand Jury renewed the findings and recommendations in the report and requested a response from the ICSO.

The ICSO responded to the 2022-2023 Grand Jury report on October 11th, 2023. The response read as follows:

- F1. Respondent agrees with the finding.
- F2. Respondent agrees with the finding.
- F3. Respondent agrees with the finding.
- R1. Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented noting timeframe.
- R2. Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented noting timeframe.
- R3. Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented noting timeframe.
- R4. Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented noting timeframe.

The Grand Jury has reviewed the ICSO's website and found one correction in response to the recommendations noted in the 2022-2023 report: a note on the CCW application/renewal page now reads: "Applicants RENEWING a Concealed Carry Weapon license in Inyo County may apply up to 180 days before the expiration date listed on their current Concealed Carry Weapon license." While potentially helpful to renewal applicants, this note does not directly address any of the four recommendations contained in the original report. The Grand Jury has not found any other evidence that the ICSO has implemented any of the recommendations in the 2022-2023 report—recommendations to which the ICSO replied, "Recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented noting timeframe."

The current Grand Jury renews the findings and recommendations of the 2022-2023 report and encourages the ICSO to implement corrective actions as soon as possible.

INVITED RESPONSES

- Inyo County Sheriff's Office

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.