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Apopka Encourages Non-Profits to Get Semi-Annual Fire Safety Inspections

APOPKA, Fla. – The City of Apopka soon will require all non-profit organizations including churches, day cares and civic groups to undergo fire safety inspections for the buildings where they operate.

The purpose is to ensure that these facilities include all standard safety measures to accommodate groups of people. It also will help the Apopka Fire Department to schedule regular inspections and to become more familiar with each facility in case of an emergency.

The City of Apopka will issue notices explaining the requirement via direct mail, this news release, the city website and social media. Printed notifications also will be included in more than 22,000 city utility bills starting within a couple of weeks.

In prior years, the city did not require non-profits to obtain business tax receipts in part because they do not pay the tax. All other businesses and organizations must complete business tax applications before operation.

The Apopka Fire Department follows the list of registered businesses to conduct initial and semi-annual fire safety inspections. Therefore, many non-profits did not get building fire inspections until now.

Apopka has between 100 to 150 non-profit organizations although not all of them operate like on-site businesses or hold group meetings within buildings. Non-profits will be required to submit for business licenses, but they will not have to pay the tax.

The application will result in an initial inspection to ensure that building and fire codes are met within the structures. It also will place these facilities on a schedule for semi-annual inspections to ensure that occupants of the buildings are safe.

Once registered, qualifying non-profits will be contacted by the fire department for an initial visit. In some likely cases, property owners will be required to make safety improvements like adding exit signs or fire extinguishers as required by state law. The City of Apopka will work in cooperation with the property owners, providing sufficient time to make the changes.

For questions about non-profit business tax receipts and fire safety inspections, contact Assistant Fire Chief Brian Bowman at (407) 703-1754.

The City of Apopka is a growing area ideally located 13 miles northwest of Orlando with major roadway access to many parts of Central Florida. The hometown community has more than 46,000 residents across 33 square miles and includes a diverse mix of business development.

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