



AGENDA REPORT

Community Development

DATE:	December 19, 2023
TO:	Mayor Martinez and Members of the City Council
FROM:	Lina Velasco, Director of Community Development Chris Castanchoa, Building Official James Atencio, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Subject:	Amendments to Richmond Municipal Code Chapter 6.48 Gas Shut-Off Devices
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund related to these amendments. The installation of these gas shut off valves would reduce the impact of Fire resources following an earthquake.
PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:	October 10, 2000 – City Council passed and adopted Ordinance No. 32-00 N.S., adding Chapter 6.48 to the Municipal Code.
STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:	The City Council adopted Ordinance No. 32-00 N.S. on October 10, 2000, adding Richmond Municipal Code Chapter 6.48 Shut-Off Devices. Currently, the scope of this ordinance contains only construction triggers for compliance. Contra Costa County’s Municipal Code Chapter 718-8 Gas Shut-Off Devices contains both construction triggers and a point-of sale trigger. The proposed amendments to RMC 6.48 would add a point-of-sale trigger to comply within Richmond’s Ordinance, in addition to the current construction trigger; thereby, aligning the City’s ordinance with the County’s requirements.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:	INTRODUCE (first reading) an ordinance amending Richmond Municipal Code Chapter 6.48 adding a point-of-sale trigger to add a gas shut off device, in addition to the current construction trigger – Community Development Department (Lina Velasco/Chris Castanchoa 510-620-6764).
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DISCUSSION:

The Richmond City Council adopted Ordinance No. 32-00 N.S. adding Richmond Municipal Code (RMC) Chapter 6.48 Gas Shut-Off Devices on October 10, 2000. RMC Section 6.48.020 (2)(C) requires the installation of a gas shutoff device in an existing residential, commercial, or industrial building during an alteration/addition not involving fuel-gas piping, when the value of such alteration/addition is more than \$60,000 for single-family dwellings and \$50,000 for all other buildings.

Contra Costa County Municipal Code (CCCMC) Chapter 718-8 Gas Shut-Off Devices requires the installation of a gas shutoff device in an existing residential, commercial, or industrial building during an alteration/addition not involving fuel-gas piping, when the value of the alteration/addition is more than \$15,000. Additionally, CCCMC 718-8 requires the installation of a gas shutoff device in any existing residential, commercial, or industrial building that has fuel gas piping supplying the building and the building is sold on or after December 1, 2006. Contra Costa County’s ordinance only applies to areas under Contra Costa County jurisdiction, including unincorporated North Richmond and El Sobrante. Consequently, the County’s point-of-sale trigger has resulted in some confusion and regular inquiries from realtors who are unsure if the ordinance applies to properties within the City of Richmond.

The proposed amendments to RMC Chapter 6.48 would lower the alteration/addition threshold to match the County’s ordinance and will also add the point-of-sale requirement. Adopting and implementing these amendments will increase the number of devices installed within the City, improve public safety, and reduce confusion for realtors and owners by aligning the City’s requirements with those of the County.

In an earthquake, the shaking of a building can cause damage to gas piping and appliances. This damage can result in a release of natural gas that can lead to fires or explosions. Structural weaknesses, the absence of appliance anchors, and lack of flexible pipe connectors can all contribute to greater possibility of natural gas leaks. This problem is so prevalent that natural gas contributes to one of every four fires after an earthquake. After a large earthquake, the occurrence of multiple fires will quickly deplete fire department resources, thereby delaying their response time to any given emergency. Installation of approved gas shut-off valves would significantly reduce the risk and spread of fires caused by damaged gas piping in the event of an earthquake.

CONCLUSION:

Adopting and implementing these amendments will increase the number of devices installed within the City, improve public safety, and reduce confusion by realtors and owners by aligning the City's requirements with those of the County.

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

Attachment 1 – Ordinance No. 32-00 N.S. adding RMC Chapter 6.48

Attachment 2 – Ordinance adopting Amendments to RMC Chapter 6.48