



# Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service

*An Internationally Accredited Public Safety Agency*

## NEWS ADVISORY

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### **Warning - Possible Fire Inspector Impersonators**

*If you suspect that you have been a victim or see suspicious activity*

*Contact the local police or Montgomery County Fire Code Enforcement at 240.777.2457*

Several recent suspicious activities dealing with alleged building inspections and possible Fire Inspector Impersonators cause us to ask the public to be vigilant when it comes to fire inspections and code enforcement.

It is suspected that several individuals may be impersonating Montgomery County Fire Inspectors. The most recent activity in Wheaton involved two persons in official looking uniforms with no badges and clipboards (with official looking papers) who had entered a store and briefly walked around as if they were inspecting.

In speaking with the on-duty store manager they advised that the sum of the violation's from Montgomery County, which included the lack of some sign behind the counter among other things, amounted to \$7,000. However, the manager was advised that a cash payment of \$70.00 would allow the store to avoid the fine. The manager asked for government identification. The two men were unable to provide sufficient ID and left without receiving any cash payment or leaving behind any paperwork.

## 2- Inspections

Montgomery County Fire Code Enforcement personnel will always be in uniform with a badge and official identification (ID). Fire Inspectors will never ask for, expect and do not accept cash or check payment. A store employee is often asked to accompany an inspector during a premise inspection.

In the event of a fine or the need for a payment of any kind, the offending responsible person/business will be billed as appropriate. Again, Fire Inspectors will never ask for, expect and do not accept cash or check payment.

If any person or business suspects that they have been contacted by someone other than an official Fire Code Enforcement Inspector, please contact the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service, Fire Code Enforcement Section at 240.777.2457 or contact your local police.

Fire Inspectors assigned to the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service, Fire Code Enforcement Section regularly inspect public assembly and retail occupancies throughout Montgomery County, Maryland. Several significant recent events across the United States illustrate some of the potential dangers associated with over crowding, flammable and combustible decorative interiors, as well as blocked exits. Montgomery County Fire Inspectors conduct special enforcement efforts during the holidays and at other special seasonal events.

The Fire Code Enforcement Section is comprised of over a dozen uniformed Fire Inspectors and several civilian Fire Inspectors. Fire Code inspections performed by the Community Risk Reduction Division and local fire departments insure compliance with applicable State and County fire and life safety codes. The division inspects all new and existing businesses, multi-family dwellings, and Family Day Care Centers.

Throughout the year, but particularly during the holiday season, Fire Inspectors will visit many public assembly occupancies, such as restaurants, nightclubs, bars and particularly retail stores to ensure the safety of consumers, employees and the general public.