

Office of the County Auditor

Auditor's Analysis

Council Bill No. 23-2025

Introduced: April 7, 2025

Auditor: Rebecca Gold

Fiscal Impact:

The fiscal impact of this legislation is expected to be immaterial. The Department of Fire and Rescue Services (DFRS) will pay approximately \$600 for 25 printed copies of the updated Fire Code manual, to be used by personnel in the Office of the Fire Marshall. An electronic version of the Fire Code will also be publicly available on the Fire Marshall's website.

There are anticipated changes to the fee schedule for the DFRS for Fiscal Year 2026. The department will be proposing an increase in reporting fees for annual inspection, maintenance, and testing (IMT) from \$5 to \$10 per report. This is to keep up with rising costs from its current third-party vendor.

- The \$10 fee will be applied to repair certifications. According to a Battalion Chief of the Office of the Fire Marshal, there will be no increased revenue as a result of this change. The fees (minus charges from the third-party vendor) are received as a credit toward the cost of the third-party service.

Purpose:

The purpose of this legislation is to adopt the 2024 edition of the National Fire Protection Association 1 Fire Code as the Howard County Fire Protection Code.

Other Comments:

This legislation provides changes to the last National Fire Protection Association 1 Fire Code update, which was adopted with Council Bill 75-2021.

Subsection 1.7.11.1 of the legislation indicates that "certain duties may be performed in conjunction with other public and/or private agencies." When asked for clarification, a Battalion Chief of the Office of the Fire Marshal stated that the office works with insurance companies and private fire investigators who may have access to additional resources not available to public agencies.