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University

Fraternities await fire inspections

Fire alarms needed

By Travis Bishop **Emerald Contributor**

According to Eugene's fire marshal, new fire inspections of University fraternities, sororities and co-ops are scheduled to begin within the next couple of weeks.

Following last summer's closing of five fraternity houses for failure to meet fire code regulations, this spring's inspections are important to assure that fire codes have been met, said Dick Gassman, head of Code Enforcement for the city.

"These problems had been built up over a long period of time." Gassman said. "What we want to do is to look close this spring to keep the situation in check and not let it build up on us.

Steve Boosinger, who has since stepped down as deputy fire marshal for Eugene, began inspecting University fraternity, sorority and coop houses in April 1989.

By late July, five fraternity houses had been posted 'no occupancy' because of violations, and Parr Tower, a University co-op, was under close

The closed houses were: Phi Gamma Delta. 791 E. 15th Ave.; Lambda Chi Alpha, 818 E. 15th Ave.: Sigma Chi. 1440 E. 19th Ave.: Sigma Alpha Epsilon, 812 E. 14th Ave. and Beta Theta Pi. 1009 Patterson St.

In addition, the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity house, 851 E. 15th Ave., was posted at the same time and has been boarded up and remained vacant for the 1989-90 school year

Problems varied from house to house, but fire alarm systems were the major concern, Gassman said. Other cited problems included blocked exit ways, fire doors that remained open, fire extinguishers that didn't work, addresses that weren't obviously visible from the street, and sleeping lofts that didn't meet fire safety codes.

The "hard-wired" fire alarm systems that city officials want installed in all of the houses usually cost between \$6,000 and \$10,000, said Roger Cleland, Eugene fire marshal.

Add that to the cost of installing new fire doors and bringing sleeping lofts up to code and the costs to fraternities often easily approached

Sigma Chi spent more than \$13,000 bringing their house up to code and plans to spend another \$6,000 this summer for the installation of a 'hard-wired' fire alarm system, said Kirk Thrift, fraternity president.

Costs for the repairs in many of the fraternities were absorbed by the housing or building corporations that own many of the fraternity and sorority houses on campus, said Tom Oberhue,



Unsafe housing conditions at University fraternities that led to citations from Eugene fire officials last summer will be the subject of another round of inspections to check the progress of repairs.

Interfraternity Council president.

"Most building corporations have some reserve funding set up for situations like this, but some of the houses had to tap into alumni to get the money to pay for the repairs." Oberhue said.

With the upcoming inspections, both city and campus officials are hopeful that the experience of last summer can be built upon.

'Last year, he (Boosinger) was coming down hard on them for their own good and we all learned a lot about fire violations," said Shelly Sutherland, assistant director of student development and University adviser for fraternities and

This year, I think everybody is pretty well prepared. We all have a much better expectation of what is going to happen," Sutherland said



