



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES**  
*Aging and Long-Term Support Administration*  
*PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600*

February 5, 2019

**TACOMA CITY ORDINANCE # 28550**  
**AUTHORIZING PENALTY FOR NON EMERGENT LIFT ASSIST**

Dear Nursing Facility/Home and Assisted Living Facility Administrator:

This message is being sent to provide important information to providers that may be affected by a change in the Tacoma Municipal Code. The Tacoma City Council recently passed Ordinance No. 28550 that authorizes the Tacoma Fire Department (TFD) to assess a penalty charge each time a facility requests dispatch of the TFD for a non-emergent lift assist. The ordinance affects nursing homes and assisted living facilities located in the service area of the TFD. The ordinance is expected to take effect February 1, 2019.

To see the specifics of the ordinance, including how the TFD defines a non-emergent lift assist, the penalty amounts, the appeal process, and other pertinent information, please use the following City of Tacoma link:

<http://cms.cityoftacoma.org/cityclerk/Files/MunicipalCode/Ord/Ord28550amend.pdf>

For technical assistance regarding the ordinance, facilities can contact TFD Medical Services Officer, Mary Hallman. Contact information: Office phone (253) 591-5065, mobile phone (253) 973-0085, or email at [mhallman@cityoftacoma.org](mailto:mhallman@cityoftacoma.org).

The TFD offers an outreach process to facilities, which includes a review of all 911 calls and meetings to discuss inappropriate uses of 911. Through this process, facilities can obtain educational resources. Contact Mary Hallman for more information.

The TFD clarified information in response to questions from Residential Care Services (RCS):

- TFD Emergency Medical Services will respond immediately to emergency 911 calls.
- Fines will not be levied at the time of the response. The incident will undergo an administrative review by the TFD, and the facility will be sent an invoice if the review indicates the incident was non-emergent. The invoice will include instructions on the appeal process.
- TFD will always respond when 911 is activated, whether the call was initiated by facility staff or directly by a facility resident. TFD personnel will provide appropriate and professional assistance as required. After assistance has been provided, the on scene incident commander can work with a resident to decide whether 911 was appropriately summoned or if the resident ought to have called on facility staff for the assistance they were in need of. Lift Assist fines will not be levied toward private

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residents nor will a facility be penalized if a resident calls independently and without direction for 911 assistance. In the event a resident continues to misuse emergency services for a routine lift assist rather than call on facility staff the resident may be referred to the TFD Cares program or a member of Fire Department Administration may work in coordination with facility staff to attempt to modify a resident's behavior.

The Tacoma Fire Department also provided a hyperlink to a video produced by the TFD Cares program about when and when not to access Tacoma Fire Department's emergency medical service (EMS):

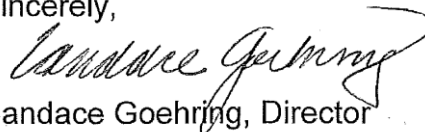
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KxHWq\\_uVJk&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KxHWq_uVJk&feature=youtu.be)

An educational webinar sponsored by the Tacoma Fire Department, WHCA and LeadingAge will be offered on this information on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 10:00. To register, please visit <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6068837289263328525>. Registration links are also available on the ALISA Assisted Living Facility and Nursing Home web pages

Please note that the federal and/or state regulatory requirements for nursing homes and assisted living facilities, including staffing and resident assessment requirements, remain unchanged.

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. If you have any questions of RCS, please contact [Lisa Herke](#), Nursing Home Policy Program Manager at (509) 225-2819 or [Jeanette Childress](#), Assisted Living Policy Program Manager at (360) 725-2591.

Sincerely,



Candace Goehring, Director  
Residential Care Services

DSHS: "Transforming Lives"