Recently, the City of Beverly Hills Fire Department received information from other city fire departments about the rise of complaints from business owners regarding various fire protection companies performing services to their fire protection equipment. There are fire protection companies that are conducting services out of their job scope or charging the business for services that have not been performed. According to Penal Code 470, this is fraud. You as a business may be at risk. Here are some tips to keep mind when protecting your business from fraud.

- Watch out for aggressive threats that are made towards the business owner stating they are breaking the law if service is not performed. Remember only fire department personnel have the authority to require maintenance, testing & service. Fire protection companies have no enforcement authority. If you ever feel threatened or intimidated, call 911.

- Be careful of fire protection companies that try to negotiate the bill, want cash only, checks made out to individuals or threaten collection.

- Do not sign blank invoices or mailed contractual requests and read all small print. Watch out for hidden fees that address additional fee percentages for supplemental items such as lubricants, cleaning materials, etc.

- Watch out for companies that try to represent themselves as members of the local fire department or working as an agent of the local fire department. Fire Department personnel do not conduct services to extinguishers. This is a tactic used to gain entry to your business. This is called impersonating a peace officer, and this is a felony.

- Inspecting various items such as panic hardware, exit signs, fire alarm devices are conducted yearly by your local fire department. Do not get charged from fire protection companies to conduct services that are already being conducted. Charging fees for inspecting fire protection devices such as alarm or sprinkler components can only be done by C-10 or C-16 licensed contractors.

- Watch out for companies that state if they are denied access to conduct service that an additional fee will be impacted in the future. Know your service contractor and have them make appointments.

- Be careful of fire protection companies that state the fire protection company they have a contract with is no longer in business or they were sent by the company to take over the

### Additional Facts to Help You Understand When Services are Needed:

- Extinguishers shall be serviced by a license person once a year. A tear down of the fire extinguisher is required every six years and a hydrostatic test shall be conducted to your extinguisher every twelve years. (If your extinguisher is due for hydrostatic testing, it is highly recommended that you replace it.) Mark / label all of your fire extinguishers. This will assure you that your extinguisher will return.

- Kitchen suppression or Pre-Engineered systems shall be serviced every six months.

- Fire sprinklers shall be tested annually and certified every five years.

- Kitchen hood and ducts shall be cleaned per AHJ’s recommendations.

- Fire monitored/alarm systems shall be tested annually.

Remember! You can always refuse service and request a Beverly Hills Fire Inspector to visit your business. We will gladly advise you of any needed services. Call (310) 281-2703 for any assistance or questions.