

The Benefits of 3rd Party Inspection Compliance Management For the Fire and Life Safety System Industry

*A One Year Case Study of Lynnwood, WA Fire Department
Improving Compliance by using TEGRIS Fire™ by Tegriss Inc.*

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CASE STUDY SUMMARY

In September 2010, Lynnwood started the Tegriss program to improve the compliance of inspection, testing, and maintenance (ITM) of the fire and life safety systems in their jurisdiction. Prior to Tegriss the city had no specific oversight of the industry's ITM activity other than any site visits that the fire inspector or fire fighter staff was able to perform. One year later the department has been experiencing drastic improvements and has accomplished incredible results.

- Lynnwood's compliance rate has more than doubled to 68.96%
- Nearly 20% unrecorded systems have been discovered.
- Inspection work has increased 250%
- The number of deficient systems has been tracked and decreased to less than 3%.
- The department is communicating with every stakeholder at least once per year.

Lynnwood accomplished this with no additional resources and for absolutely no cost to the city.

As Lynnwood enters its second year of the program the improvements continue to grow. Lynnwood was the first city in the region (and in the country) to adopt a 3rd party ITM compliance program and therefore had to support a larger 'learning curve' for property owners and service companies. Despite the extra effort involved with being 'the first', the city has begun to prove the success of this fire prevention program.

THE CHALLENGES OF ITM

Many property owners are not complying with the law that requires them to get their fire safety systems inspected periodically. They are waiting until the fire marshal applies enforcement, which most cities have little or no budget to provide. This means that public safety is on hold and inspection service providers are getting only a fraction of the inspection and repair work they should be getting. Tegriss has met in person with hundreds of stakeholders like AHJs (authorities having jurisdiction), inspection service providers, property owners, rating bureaus, and industry associations and found that most are trying to cope with low levels of enforcement. The general attitude is that this is, "as good as it gets". With a down economy many believe that it could get worse.

The industry has done a great job of building the fire prevention ITM structure with codes and laws to ensure public safety. Without enforcement, these laws are ineffective and result in lost work for inspectors, fire marshals with little oversight of their jurisdiction, public safety at greater risk, and worst of all lowered expectations for the industry.

The industry can benefit greatly from a 3rd Party ITM Compliance Management process to help apply that enforcement.

WHAT DOES A 3rd PARTY ITM COMPLIANCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM DO?

We've heard even the most skeptical contractors tell us, "This is the future of our industry". So what is 3rd party ITM compliance management? What problem is a program like this trying to solve?

The patent pending Tegrís program improves compliance by tracking non-compliant owners and sending AHJ notification letters. It builds the database with an online collaborative system that collects data from the industry stakeholders.

A 3rd party ITM program should be built around one goal. COMPLIANCE. It needs to help the AHJ understand who is NOT complying and then provide them the engine they need to enforce on those properties. It helps Inspection Service Providers get back to work and ensures that the work will always be there by giving them control of the cost of enforcement instead of waiting for the city to increase their fire prevention budget.

The benefits for the property business owners are significant too. Not only does it ensure public safety in their business but they realize a cost savings as well. The program streamlines work for property managers by giving them secure online access to the current status of their property and reminding them when something needs to be done. The program is collaborative so information about their property and systems is constantly being updated by the fire department and their own service provider. The cost of an inspection is drastically more competitive with an influx of new inspectors working in the jurisdiction and businesses realize savings by sharing their compliance status with their fire insurance provider.

An effective program needs to provide significant and obvious value to all of the stakeholders involved while putting compliance back in line.

One challenge for 3rd Party ITM Compliance Management is that it is often confused with Online Reporting programs. Unfortunately, most online electronic reporting tools are only helpful at collecting reports. However, they don't drive compliance. The reports show you who was responsible to submit but have no record of who didn't. Their assumption is that if the city makes another law that requires them to submit online then everyone will simply comply. But this still leaves the fire marshal having to manually chase down the non-compliant properties.

A major jurisdiction in Washington recently held an ITM stakeholder meeting where 50+ service companies attended. The fire marshal proposed that a city fee may be assessed for every report submitted to the city. One of the service contractors stood and boldly stated, "Then you're not going to get anyone to submit reports to you!" In other words, 'Good luck finding us'. The problem was that the service providers did not see any perceived value in the city-assessed fee and they knew the city did not have the tools or resources to track compliance.

THE LYNNWOOD MODEL

The Lynnwood Fire Marshal could see that, like the rest of the country, budget cuts were imminent and the department's ability to provide a reasonable level of fire prevention to the community was in jeopardy. He was looking for a solution that could help the department maintain their fire prevention activities regardless of their budgeted resources.

Lynnwood teamed with Tegriss to help them:

- Build a complete database of every system in their jurisdiction
- Track compliance (who is and who isn't)
- Automate enforcement for non-compliance
- Accept reports online
- Streamline the review process
- Build a property journal with collaborative input from all the stakeholders.

Preparation for the program simply involved signing up online for a free account and setting up their account preferences. After that, the fire marshal simply started requesting and encouraging the inspection service providers in his area to submit these reports online via www.tegrisfire.com. He explained that this would help streamline his efforts to review and respond. During this time, he developed local codes to supplement the IFC and State codes that empower the fire marshal to require a copy of the inspection reports and the manner by which they are submitted.

CODE PATH

Lynnwood Municipal Code (LMC) 9.04.010 adopts the IFC.

IFC 102.7 adopts Referenced Codes and Standards

IFC 104.1 allows the fire code official to adopt policies to clarify the application of IFCs provisions.

Lynnwood Administrative Ruling/Interpretation requires test reports to be submitted via www.tegrisfire.com

IFC 901.6 requires periodic testing of fire service systems

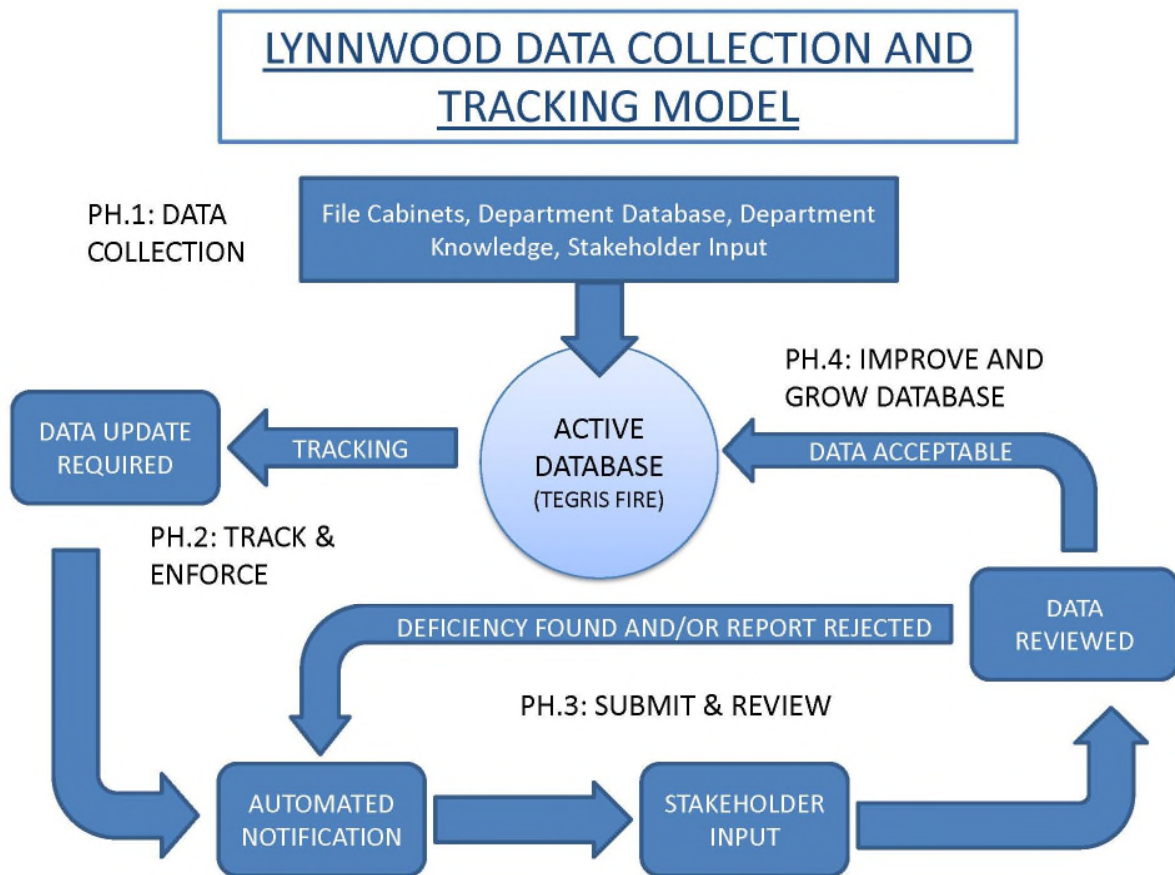
IFC 901.6.1 provides a list of NFPA testing standards

IFC 901.6.2 requires that a report shall be submitted to the fire code official upon request.

When these codes were in place, the fire marshal began to notify inspection service providers that online submittal was going to be required through the online portal in the following months. This period allowed Tegriss and the department to train the community on the new process and build tools such as instructional letters, FAQ's, and stakeholder meetings to better support them. The service companies provided great input at this stage that helped the team better understand their needs as well. Lynnwood then began working with Tegriss through the first phase of the program.

Phase 1 – Data Collection

Tegris worked with Lynnwood to collect all the property and system information available through the city's databases, file cabinets, and department inspectors. This collective database represented a complete record of every system the department was aware of in their jurisdiction. However, much of that data was understandably outdated and incomplete. So the program enabled all stakeholders to grow and purify the information over time through a free and secure online portal.



Phase 2 – Track and Enforce

The system due dates triggered notification letters to be sent to property owners that required collaborative input from them and their inspection service providers. It invited them to correct the information or to otherwise fill out the online report and submit. There was no charge to the AHJ, inspection service provider, or property owner to setup, maintain, and use various features of the program.

LYNNWOOD DASHBOARD		
Dashboard		
Inbox (12)	Tasks	Deficiencies (53)
Reports With Deficiencies 3	OverDue Properties 313	Fix and Wait 8
Reports Overdue 8	Awaiting Re-Submittal 14	Corrections Required 43
		Fix and Reinspect 2

Phase 3 – Submit and Review Data

Upon submittal of the report, the inspection service provider was charged \$15 to help ensure 100% enforcement throughout the jurisdiction. The inspection report was available to the department through their online dashboard which allowed systems with deficiencies to be prioritized. The review process required

REPORT REVIEW	
Inspection Report Review *	Deficiency Response *
-----Select----- -----Select----- Accept Reject and Resubmit No Review necessary	-----Select----- This response will be sent to Property Owner
Review report comments:	

scrolling through a standard formatted report and selecting 'accept' or 'reject'. Deficient systems initiated a notification letter that was automatically sent to the property owner informing them of their responsibility to fix it. That deficiency was tracked until repairs were confirmed. The inspection service provider finalized the inspection cycle when they confirmed that they'd been paid (optionally).

Phase 4 – Improve and Grow Database



The screenshot shows a web interface titled "LYNNWOOD STATISTICS". Below the title is a "Statistics" header with a small icon. The main content area displays a list of statistics in a two-column format:

Statistics	
Total # Active Systems	1741
Total # of Active Properties	1002
Total # Properties Due in Next 30 Days	77
No. of Inspection Companies	99
General Compliance	68.96%

At each 'touch point' with a stakeholder, Tegriss encouraged or required collaborative information to help build a better database and develop a complete record of information and events for that property. By collaborating with the property 'experts' the data continues to be self-corrected and self generating. The jurisdictional records continue to grow with new properties and systems that were previously unknown.

Throughout these phases, Tegriss and Lynnwood continued to work with hundreds of property owners and service providers to train them on the new process. This included holding face to face and online meetings, phone and email support, online forums, user guides, FAQ's, and instructional letter campaigns.

LYNNWOOD, WA - FIRE PREVENTION – THIS CASE STUDY

This case study represents the first of its kind to demonstrate the benefits of a 3rd Party ITM Compliance Program that tracks non-compliance and automates enforcement. It also shows why the industry has gone to great lengths developing and lobbying for fire prevention based laws that require property owners to maintain their systems. The benefits of a fire department having a strong fire-fighting program is well documented but very few studies measure the incredible advantages of a strong fire prevention program. More than just preventing fires, the entire inspection service industry relies on a fire department's ability to enforce. And it's the best (if not only) way the city communicates with the local tax-paying businesses on a regular basis. The Lynnwood fire prevention staff within the department takes on a vital role for the community and service industry. Lynnwood was able to measure these benefits and more as detailed below.

METRICS OF THE STUDY

The performance of the program was based on the following statistics gathered at the start of the program and again one year later. Some of these statistics are tracked daily on the fire marshal's online dashboard. These metrics were used to measure improvements in the following categories: fire and life safety, database quality, market improvement, stakeholder communication, and required departmental resources.

Fire and Life Safety

- % Compliance – The number of known properties that have no overdue systems per the total number of properties with systems
- % Deficiencies – The number of known systems that have at least one deficiency per the total number of systems

Database Quality

- # of known properties with at least one system (wet sprinkler, dry sprinkler, pre-action sprinkler, fire alarm, standpipe, hood suppression, or fire pump)
- # of known systems throughout the jurisdiction

Market Improvement

- # of licensed contractors working in the jurisdiction
- # of systems that have been inspected
- # of deficiencies that have been repaired

Communication

- % accuracy of the department's stakeholder contact list including names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses for property owners and inspection service companies
- # of times the department initiated communication with the stakeholders ("touches")

Departmental Resources

Lynnwood does not record the # of hours the department dedicates to specific ITM compliance activities which could range from plan review to building inspection. Instead the fire marshal was surveyed and the results were detailed in this study.

Additionally, anecdotal evidence was collected that confirmed that inspection service providers working in Lynnwood are experiencing more inspection and repair work and hiring new inspectors. They also shared that their inspections are progressing more efficiently and they are realizing a cost savings using the online tools.

CURRENT DATA FOR LYNNWOOD, WA FIRE DEPARTMENT	Initial Data (Sept 2010)	Current Data (Sept 2011)	% Change	Notes
<u>FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY</u>				
% Compliance	32.8%	69.0%	110.6%	Compliance has more than doubled
% Systems with a Deficiency	12.5%	2.58%	384.5%	Deficiencies were drastically decreased
<u>DATABASE QUALITY</u>				
# of known properties with at least 1 system	609	867	42.4%	An additional 42.4% properties were discovered to have systems
# of known systems	1465	1741	18.8%	An additional 18.8% systems were discovered
<u>MARKET IMPROVEMENT</u>				
# of licensed contractors in jurisdiction	40	99	147.5%	There are over twice as many contractors working in Lynnwood
Approx number of systems being inspected	480	1201	250%	Inspection work has improved 2.5 X
Approx number of impaired systems	183	45	- 306.9%	Over 130 impaired systems have been identified and repaired
<u>COMMUNICATION</u>				
% accuracy of a CURRENT contact list	25%	100%		The department now maintains an accurate contact list
% of ITM service providers communicated with during a year	10%	100%		The department communicates with nearly every contractor at least once/yr
% of property owners communicated with during a year (email, letter, phone, visit)	10%	100%		The department communicates with every fire system property owner at least once per year

FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY RESULTS

Prior to Tegrís, Lynnwood could not effectively track the rate at which property owners were getting their required inspections from certified service companies; the “Compliance Rate”. During deployment of Tegrís, the team did extensive research of the department’s in house database and file cabinets and revealed that only 32.75% of the known systems had been inspected within the last required period. One year later the compliance rate is tracked up-to-the-minute at 68.96%. More so, this current number also includes new properties and systems that the department did not previously have on record (see “Database Quality” below). Many of the ‘non-compliant’ properties are in the system but are still waiting for stakeholder input until finalized.

Before Tegrís, the fire marshal had estimated that 12.5% of their known systems listed at least one deficiency that needed repairs. This was only an estimate because of the challenges the department was facing with limited resources to collect and process reports. Since using Tegrís, the department has received a total of 1223 reports with 120 of them (9.8%) listing at least one deficiency. 92 of those have generated a ‘deficiency’ notification letter to the property owner from the fire marshal (through Tegrís). The department has full visibility to the status of every deficient system on their online dashboard until completed. Currently, they are tracking repairs on 45 out of 1741 active systems (2.58%). This number fluctuates daily as new reports are submitted and old repairs are completed.

TEGRIS USER

“We had a customer in Lynnwood that refused to let us fix his impaired fire alarm panel for three years because he was waiting for the fire marshal to make him. After receiving a Tegrís letter from the fire marshal he called me and told me he had to get it done now and showed me the letter. He hired us and now the alarm panel is fixed!”

FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY - KEY BENEFITS TO LYNNWOOD

- Improved Public Safety - By improving compliance from 32.75% to 68.96% and reducing the number of impaired systems from 12.5% to 2.58% the Lynnwood community can be assured that the places they work and visit are protected with working systems. The fire department and the elected officials of Lynnwood can stand behind real numbers that show how they’ve improved public safety over the last year.
- Demonstrated Need - Enforcement is necessary! The majority of property owners are NOT getting inspections done until they feel enforcement. “I’ll do it when the fire marshal makes me” is the theme that is plaguing the ITM industry. Only 32.75% of the property owners were getting inspections without departmental enforcement. In the first year, roughly 50% of the owners complied after 1 reminder letter from the fire marshal. Half of the rest complied after an Overdue Notification letter. And again 50% of the rest complied after sending a Final Notice letter. The necessity for subsequent letters is largely attributed to the fact that Lynnwood was the first AHJ in the region to use the new submittal method. Both Tegrís and Lynnwood had to

support the learning curve for the community of property owners and service companies. As Lynnwood is entering its second year into Tegrís, the subsequent notifications are starting to decrease. The community's awareness of the program appears to be saturated as measured by the decreased number of support calls. Additionally, other adopting cities in the same region have experienced quicker compliance by the industry stakeholders. Service companies that work regionally have already learned the system through Lynnwood's efforts.

- Preparedness - By improving the quantity of records from 609 properties & 1465 systems to 867 properties & 1741 systems the department is better aware of every property and system in their jurisdiction. This improves their emergency preparedness and acquaints them with every untested or broken system. Through their secure online account they have immediate (and mobile) access to previous inspection reports, deficiencies, contact information, historic data, and journal information.

DATA QUALITY RESULTS

Before employing the Tegrís system, Lynnwood maintained their property records in a self-developed Access database as well as a manual file cabinet system. Records and reports would be kept in a unique folder in the file cabinet until the Access database would bring an annual reminder to their attention. This would prompt the department admin to assign a site visit to the property. That site visit generally included verification of a current inspection tag. Notes for the property were handwritten and placed back into the folder. Deficiencies or follow-ups required scheduling a reminder.

Because the Access database was not kept current, the fire marshal could only estimate the number of properties with systems in their jurisdiction. Original Estimate: 1800 systems on 1300 properties

When Tegrís and the department finished its initial data collection work it discovered that the department only had records for 1465 systems on 609 properties.

Tegrís is a collaborative online platform that encourages (and sometimes requires) the input from other industry stakeholders such as property owners or inspection service providers. These stakeholders are able to create new property records and add systems to them. As such, Lynnwood is now tracking 1741 active systems on 867 properties.

SCREEN SHOT OF PROPERTY JOURNAL

Property Name:

Property Address: Ave W.
Lynnwood, WA 98036

Select Select

Entry No.	Date/Time	Created By	Access	Event Type	Subject	Actions
2780	2011-10-21 20:27:42	Lynnwood Fire Department	Public	Property Edited	See Details	
Changes: Address = Ave W., Lynnwood, WA, 98036 (Ave W., Lynnwood, WA, 98036)						
2779	2011-10-21 20:26:41	Lynnwood Fire Department	Specific	Property Viewed	Access granted with Property Access Code	
2517	2011-10-17 14:49:51	Lynnwood Fire Department	Specific	Property Viewed	Access granted with Property Access Code	
1728	2011-10-10 10:22:55	Duct Services	Specific	Property Viewed	Limited Access granted - Property Access Code bypassed	
1727	2011-10-10 10:22:11	Duct Services	Public	Inspection Report	Range Hood System / Brier	
Original Submittal Date = Rejected Date = none Resubmittal Date = none Accepted Date = Payment Confirmation Date = 2011-10-10 10:22:11 Deficiencies found? = Yes Deficiencies remain? = No Inspector's Name = Alison Inspector's State Certification Number = Inspector's notes = none Authority's notes = Commercial Hood System is to be tied into the fire alarm system.						
352	2011-08-31 09:08:42	Lynnwood Fire Department	Public	Journal Entry	Underground Tunnels	
Content : All of the buildings in the main campus have interconnecting access tunnels.						
349	2011-08-31 09:06:00	Lynnwood Fire Department	Specific	Property Viewed	Access granted with Property Access Code	

Because of the collaborative nature of Tegriss, it's not just the quantity of records being tracked but also the quality. Each stakeholder has unique details about the property and provides public information to share with the department (and private information for their own records). This creates a Property Journal which maintains a complete record of every event that occurred for that property, every notification letter sent to the owner, all notes, and previous inspection reports. Information is securely captured and institutionalized into the permanent record so that new stakeholders (such as a new service company or even a new property owner) have a complete log of the public information. To date there has been

over 500 additional journal entries on different properties in Lynnwood that help grow the department's knowledge of their jurisdiction.

Another benefit of the online submittal process is that reports have been standardized. Every report submitted to Lynnwood is typed and on the same form. The data is pre-screened for unlikely or incomplete information. Each report includes a statement by the inspector that the information is true and accurate. This declaration and the transparency of the report existing online (and always visible) encourages better data entry

INSPECTOR DECLARATION

☒ By checking here you are certifying, under penalty of perjury, that you are a valid agent of your company representing that the company maintains all the necessary licenses and/or certifications to perform this service for this system in this jurisdiction AND THAT the company has properly inspected this system consistent with state and local standards AND THAT the system has been properly tagged or labeled and the property owner or responsible person has been notified of the inspection results, the system status, and any corrective actions.

than when reports are destined to be stored away (and out of sight) in a file cabinet. In the first year Lynnwood has collected 1223 standard, legible inspection reports.

DATA QUALITY - KEY BENEFITS TO LYNNWOOD

- Automation - Lynnwood's data will continue to improve without the required data entry from the fire department. The program continuously monitors the data for upcoming due dates and uses those events to automate communication with the appropriate stakeholders. This drives the data collection process and ensures data growth.

Asset Type	Definitely Yes	Definitely No	Not Sure
Dry sprinkler	☐	☐	☐
Wet sprinkler	☐	☐	☐
Fire alarm	☐	☐	☐
Deluge	☐	☐	☐
Range Hood	☐	☐	☐
Standpipe	☐	☐	☐
Fire Pump	☐	☐	☐

- Collaboration – Each stakeholder has unique knowledge about the properties and systems they maintain. By enabling an online tool to collect that information, Lynnwood is creating a complete record of their jurisdiction and also takes the time to input their institutional knowledge to complete the records for each property. This information that was previously kept in the file cabinet is now accessible to the city anywhere through a secure online portal in 'the cloud'.

- Transparency – The information collected by each stakeholder is tied to their account identity. This is saved in the permanent record for each property that is available for the appropriate parties to see online. This

transparency encourages users to provide quality data with a heightened focus on accuracy.

This discourages uncertified and substandard work that is commonly hidden in file cabinets. By keeping the information online and visible the data quality has improved.

MARKET IMPROVEMENT

The ITM service industry is heavily reliant on property owners complying with the laws that require inspections. As compliance improves there are more work opportunities in both inspections and repairs. When this compliance improves in a focused jurisdiction the service providers are able to better prepare their business to accommodate the market growth. While the city of Lynnwood has improved their compliance from 32.75% to 68.96% the market is experiencing significant growth. An additional 721 systems were inspected due to the program so far. And over 130 repair jobs have been enforced.

For Lynnwood the cost of enforcement is now controlled by the inspection service providers as a business expense. This ensures that the property owners in Lynnwood will continue to be tracked and notified until they get their inspections done regardless of the fire prevention budget. And service providers are assured that 1741 systems will be inspected next year.

As the demand for inspections has been established, the supply of service providers has grown from 40 to 99. This increase in the supply of inspectors gives the property owners a broader selection to choose from. Property owners can now find a quality service company for a competitive price.

MARKET INCREASE ESTIMATE

At an average cost of \$100 per inspection and \$200 per repair (approximate) that represents an additional \$99,700 per year into the Lynnwood ITM market based on only 68.96% compliance.

The number of licensed contractors increased from 40 to 99 over that period. That means, on average, each service provider did an extra 7.3 inspections and an extra 1.31 repairs for an additional \$1,007 of work per year from Lynnwood alone. (These numbers are based on only 68.96% compliance.)

PROJECTION

Lynnwood is currently identifying property owners and contractors who are still learning about the requirements. With enforcement and some more support training for service providers Lynnwood anticipates achieving 95%+ within this second year. That means Lynnwood is protecting \$165,400 in inspection work per year.

The fire marshal reported that prior to this program he would occasionally find unlicensed 'fly by night' or 'trunk slammer' contractors who would work in the city without a city business license, state license, or individual technicians license. Unqualified inspectors are unlikely to submit unqualified reports to a fire marshal. The transparency of the online report discourages unlicensed and substandard contractors to work in Lynnwood. This has leveled the playing field for legitimate contractors.

MARKET IMPROVEMENT – KEY BENEFITS TO LYNNWOOD

- **City Revenue** - The number of known contractors working in Lynnwood has grown to 99 in the last year. The department tracks that number daily on their online dashboard. Each service provider is required to have a city business license. At \$166 per license that represents an enforceable \$16,434 of license revenue per year. Tegriss also enables the city to collect an optional overdue, review, or service fee for any report. The AHJ establishes the amount in their preferences and funds are deposited directly into their own account. Lynnwood currently has no additional fees.
- **Competition** – The city has created an influx of service providers for the business owners in their community. They now have nearly 100 service providers that work in their area to choose from. This drives competition which improves the quality and lowers the cost of inspections. The other communities in this region will also realize the benefits of an increased supply of service providers.
- **Eliminating Non-Certified Work** – The transparency of the online report filters out contractors who are uncertified or provide substandard work. These contractors were previously able to operate in the city without being noticed. They knew that their ‘inspection report’ would be filed in an onsite file cabinet for years until an authority hunted it down. By eliminating these service providers there is more work for certified inspectors.
- **Cost savings** – Service providers are able to focus their work in a concentrated area which allows them to schedule more efficiently and save on costs. They are able to cut costs from using expensive hardware and software in exchange for filling out reports online using any web enabled mobile device.
- **ITM Economic Stimulus**– By enforcing these inspections the city of Lynnwood has stimulated the ITM service industry with an estimated \$100,000 of new revenue every year. As compliance continues to improve toward 100% then the city will be protecting an estimated \$165,000 of inspection work per year for the ITM service industry.
- **Financial independence** – The inspection service business now has a tool that enforces all of the inspection and repair work available in the city. Because this tool is paid for by the service company (and therefore the customer) the industry does not have to rely on the city’s fire prevention budget for enforcement. They are assured that 100% enforcement will continue to be applied regardless of the economy and fire prevention budget.

COMMUNICATION RESULTS

Communication is critical in fire prevention. Before Tegrís, Lynnwood relied on the folders in their file cabinet to hold any current contact information. Because of the lack of resources to maintain those records, the natural inefficiencies of file cabinets, and the continuous flux of new owners and property managers the quantity and quality of those records were poor. The fire marshal estimated that the file cabinet generally had 50% of the contact information when they looked for it. Of that about 50% of the contact information was accurate when you used it. In other words, about 25% of the department's contact list was accurate.

Tegrís' mission is to enable a safer community by connecting people to fire and life safety information. Communication is our key value. We seek to maintain a current contact list for the entire community. The Tegrís system sends several reminder, overdue, and deficiency notifications to the property owner on behalf of the fire department. It also sends email reminders to users to remind them when the inspection process requires their involvement.

By providing the community with an online collaborative platform and using due dates as a trigger to encourage participation the department was able to leverage the contact information collected on inspection reports by the service companies.

Service companies working in Lynnwood are required to submit the reports via their online account. The account information includes a current email address that is used to create a contact list for the department. The department is able to contact any and all contractors in a single email. This can be used to communicate new codes, common concerns, or general notices to the industry.

Similarly, contact information for property owners are being populated and updated. As email addresses are becoming more and more common, this allows the department to communicate with the community instantly and inexpensively. While it is not required for property owners to sign up, 413 have set up their own free account which also improves the current information and gives the department another direct channel for communication. Lynnwood's database continues to collect

BULK EMAIL EVERY OWNER OR INSPECTOR

Role:

[Send Bulk Email to all Users](#)

Contact Name	Address	Contact Number	Email Address
+ [REDACTED]	Lynnwood, WA 98037	425-7 [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
+ Anne [REDACTED]	Lynnwood, WA 98036	425-9 [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
+ Anthony [REDACTED]	Lynnwood, WA 98036	425-8 [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
+ Arment [REDACTED]	Bothell, WA 98021	425-4 [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
+ Beverly [REDACTED]	Lynnwood, WA 98046	206-5 [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

current email addresses from every property owner in the jurisdiction. In a city-wide emergency the ability to communicate with every property owner quickly may prove to be vital.

Prior to Tegrís the fire marshal reported that the department did not regularly communicate with the ITM stakeholders. The department received ITM questions from about 10% of the service companies each year but generated little to none. During site visits they would communicate directly with the property owner about 10% of the time.

One year into using Tegrís, Lynnwood has initiated communication (email, mail, phone calls, site visits) over 2000 times to 867 property/system owner and 99 service provider in the city. Property owners have been receiving reminder and notification letters and service companies receive a reminder email when customers are due. This ensures that the Lynnwood fire department has multiple touches with the stakeholders in the community every year. Thus far Lynnwood has sent 1790 letters alone via Tegrís to property owners informing them of their inspection and repair responsibilities.

EXCERPT FROM SAMPLE NOTIFICATION LETTER

This is a reminder that you have one or more life safety systems due for inspection at the property listed above. It is required by state and local ordinance to have these life safety systems inspected by a state certified inspector on or before the due date shown. Timely compliance of required inspections will secure your life safety system's capabilities to protect lives and property.

System	Location	Inspection Due Date	Frequency	Status
Wet Sprinkler System	1st Floor	07/02/09	Annual	Due
Wet Sprinkler System	2nd Floor	07/02/09	Annual	Due
Dry Sprinkler System	Loading Dock	07/03/09	Annual	Due
Fire Alarm System	Room #135	09/20/09	Annual	OK
Kitchen Hood	Kitchen	10/15/09	Semi-Annual	OK

COMMUNICATION – KEY BENEFITS TO LYNNWOOD

- Education - Lynnwood has developed a system that keeps contact information current. This opens the channels for them when they need to provide education and enforcement to the community. The fire department is connected to the stakeholders at the push of a button. Getting a message out is as easy as sending an email. Also the fire marshal is able to update and customize instructions and notes on every blank Lynnwood inspection report which helps communicate new requirements to the service providers instantly.
- Public Relations - Lynnwood's fire prevention bureau represents one of the most important connections that the city has to maintain regular communication with its business owners. This is an imperative tool for the city to improve the public relations with the community.
- Structure - Lynnwood has developed a structure for effective and efficient communication.
 - A current contact list of all parties.
 - A conduit for sending and receiving information.
 - A focused theme of ITM.
 - An automated tool that triggers stakeholder input at regular intervals.

- Mitigating risk – Lynnwood has records for every letter they've sent to a property owner detailing the owner's responsibility to inspect, test, and maintain their system. This communication encourages the fire preventative activities that keep a disaster from occurring. It also provides the department with the substantiation they'll need if one does occur.

DEPARTMENTAL RESOURCES RESULTS

Like most of the city services around the country, Lynnwood, WA has experienced very tight budget constraints over the last year. By putting this program in place, however, they were able to increase the level of compliance in the city. As one of the pioneers of this program, the department had the unique challenge of testing many of the new features within Tegriss as well as helping support the community. This resulted in the department using more resources than what would normally be required but even with this extra work the overall departmental resources dedicated to ITM did not change. As Lynnwood is entering its second year in the program, the testing and support issues are decreasing as well as the time needed to manage specific ITM activities. This will allow the department to process more reports and provide more enforcement.

Most of the time spent in the first year was uniquely dedicated to three main activities.

1. Handling first time support questions – Property owners and service providers would call in to verify the new standards. Inspection service providers created confusion when they did not submit inspection reports in a timely manner and caused the property to become overdue. This occasionally generated a phone call to verify the standard and learn about the importance of timely submittals. Now that the community has gone through the first year cycle the department is experiencing less support calls.
2. Improving on the initial data (addresses and due dates) – A lot of the initial data provided by the department was inaccurate and outdated. As this data was discovered over the first year the program was updated by the department as well as by other stakeholders. The database now has very current contact, property, and system information which demands much less input from the department.
3. Identifying sub standard service providers - The department had to spend time dealing with specific service providers who were not providing inspection reports per the standards. Some service providers waited until the department made them comply. The program helped the department identify companies that were trying to ignore standards. Now that those companies have been identified and warned, their compliance has improved and less time is spent by the department.

Now in its second year the department has already dealt with most of the issues of implementing the new standard and expects to accomplish even more.

DEPARTMENTAL RESOURCES – KEY BENEFITS TO LYNNWOOD

- Doing more with the same resources – The Lynnwood fire marshal was aware that budget cuts were possible and took a pro-active step to protect fire prevention activity within the city. By using a tool that automatically tracks non-compliant properties and sends enforcement letters the city was able to provide a higher level of fire prevention than before while the ITM resources stayed the same. It is expected that compliance will continue to improve with less required management from the department.
- Protecting Fire Prevention Resources - These statistics show that Lynnwood's fire prevention staff is essential to the city's health and public relations. They used their resources effectively to create jobs in Lynnwood, lower inspection costs, keep constant communication with the businesses, and improve public safety. Protecting their budget or improving it will lead to even more success for the Lynnwood community. As cities around the nation struggle to hold their fire prevention services intact, this example in Lynnwood, WA needs to be used to demonstrate the importance of our fire marshals, fire inspectors, and administrators.

LYNNWOOD'S CHALLENGES IN REACHING 100% COMPLIANCE

One of the biggest challenges that Lynnwood and Tegriss encountered was from service companies that did not believe the program would improve compliance. The initial perception from these companies was that it was simply another online reporting program. Online reporting programs only enable a service company to submit reports online. They only have the ability to track the reports that have been submitted. In other words, they only track who IS complying. They have no visibility to who isn't complying therefore they cannot improve compliance. Tegriss' patent-pending method of tracking non-compliance AND automating enforcement letters is unique. It not only tracks every truant system in the jurisdiction but also does something about it. In dealing with some of the inspection service providers it has taken time and resources to explain those differences. This case study helps demonstrate the measured increase in work Lynnwood service providers are experiencing.

While city-wide adoption of the Tegriss platform has been wide spread there were contractors who lagged in their acceptance of the program. Anecdotally, through face to face meetings with these companies it was detailed that this was because of the industry confusion between online reporting systems and the Tegriss compliance program. The inspection community largely accepts the new process of reporting online if the system tracks non-compliant properties. Tracking improves compliance and levels the playing field against sub-standard competitors.

In the case of 'ITM compliance' service companies have been living with low compliance (20%-30%) forever. This doesn't feel like 20% to them. It feels like 100%. In other words, what improvement could a program like this bring to the industry? If no one thinks it's broken then why would we need a fix?

And still with others an explanation isn't enough. They want to experience the results before fully adopting the program. **Ironically, more than one service company has said, "I'll do it when the fire marshal makes me" which is exactly what they complain about from their own customers.** It's a conundrum that Lynnwood had to overcome through perseverance and dedication to the new process. One year later the proof is evident. Compliance is 68.96% and the participating contractors are realizing the benefits.

The last real challenge that Lynnwood and Tegriss faced over the last year was not an unexpected one; People resist change. Any proposed standard by the AHJ is a perceived threat to a service company's current processes for getting business done. In this case, Lynnwood was enforcing a submittal standard that had never been enforced before. The change required service companies to not only start submitting reports but also to submit them online.

The toughest opponents showed a significant lack of understanding that a problem even existed and that our proposed solution was anything more than an online reporting tool. With no perceived benefit, the cost of submitting reports was considered unnecessary and the change was taxing to their current process. After several support meetings with these contractors and enforcement by the city, they are now using the system. However, many of the remaining non-compliant properties are service providers delaying submission of their customer's report. The fire prevention staff finds that when they call the property owner asking about their non-compliant status they're told that the inspection was completed and the property owner has no idea the report wasn't submitted. This usually generates a call from the customer to their service provider. And when a service provider was found to be consistently ignoring city codes then the fire marshal would contact them too.

Again, it's these contractors who have the least understanding of how enforcement affects their business who wait until they themselves require pressure from the city. There's a big market difference between a city with 20% compliance and 100%. The service providers stand to benefit financially for an improvement in compliance. But not every contractor has the leadership needed to realize that symbiotic relationship they have with the other stakeholders. For many it's degraded to a simple customer relationship where an AHJ is just another obstacle.

Lynnwood has answered this challenge with a dedicated fire prevention staff that demands a submittal standard, unapologetically. They recognize that some service providers and property owners will resist change, even when it's good for their own business. But no new standard goes unchallenged. The city has learned very quickly which service providers perform their work per code and which ones wait for the fire marshal to catch them. This also helps the AHJ identify inspectors who ignore code which lets them prioritize the reports that need the highest level of scrutiny.

Most of these challenges will be overcome now that Lynnwood is going through its second cycle of annual reports. Compliance is expected to grow as the industry gets accustomed to the standard.

CONCLUSION

The Lynnwood fire department is the first to launch a compliance tracking, automatic enforcement, and online reporting program in the nation. Their first year involved a significant learning (and training) curve for the ITM industry but the success is very clear. With Tegriss, they have implemented a complete no-cost program to the city that has more than doubled their compliance. The status of every system is being tracked, inspected, and repaired which means that work, jobs, and public safety is growing. The department has never communicated with the city's business owners this much before and their records have never been this accurate.

Across the nation this story is unique for government services but Lynnwood took a pro-active stance to protecting their fire prevention services for the community. They predicted these results and attained them.

Tegriss is a no-cost solution for cities to ensure compliance in their jurisdiction. There are several cities using the program with even more success and higher compliance than Lynnwood (eg. Richland, WA has improved from 20% to 85% currently). Every city presents unique challenges to adopting, executing, and maintaining a submittal standard. Some cities are entrenched in politics or processes while some have simply defined their standard and self-started. In all cases, Tegriss provides the support you need to get started.

Our mission: To enable a safer community by connecting people with fire and life safety information.

Our vision: 100% nationwide ITM compliance.

If you need help with compliance in your city or if you want to help us advocate for improved compliance in the industry please call.

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