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# CITY OF BALTIMORE

Brandon M. Scott – Mayor  
Zeke Cohen – Council President



## Office of Council Services

Nancy Mead – Director  
100 Holliday Street, Room 415  
Baltimore, MD 21202

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## PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Honorable Mark Conway  
CHAIR

### HEARING NOTES

25-0018

*Emergency Scene – Unauthorized Persons Prohibited*

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**Hearing Date:** 9/16/2025

**Hearing Start Time:** 1:00 PM

**Hearing End Time:** X:00 PM

**Location:** Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex

**Total Estimated Attendance:** XX

|                    | YEA | NAY | ABSENT | ABSTENTION |
|--------------------|-----|-----|--------|------------|
| <b>Final Vote:</b> | 5   | 2   | 0      | 0          |

#### Committee Members in Attendance:

- **Chair** Mark Conway
- Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer
- Paris Gray
- Antonio Glover
- **Vice Chair** Zac Blanchard
- Danielle McCray
- Phylicia Porter

#### Additional Councilmembers in Attendance

- Odette Ramos
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### **MAJOR SPEAKERS**

*(This is NOT an attendance record.)*

- Councilwoman Odette Ramos
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### **NOTES**

- Chair Conway opened the hearing with some opening remarks and introductions
- Councilwoman Ramos gave some opening remarks discussing the bill
  - Requires that the fire chief create an emergency scene around an emergency with whatever barricade/tape necessary and limits who is permitted within that scene
  - Bill discusses what a scene is and who is allowed in
  - Also sets forth penalties for violations
  - The bill does not permit anyone from speaking with residents outside of the boundaries
- Councilwoman Ramos discussed circulated amendments in the context of the unofficial reprint

- Caution tape changed to barricade so that the fire chief in charge can use whatever materials are at their disposal
- Barricades will stay up so long as keeping them up does not prevent a public safety hazard
- New list of authorized persons to integrate Fire Department Personnel under one subheading
  - Also creates a definition for community or volunteer nonprofit association to assist individuals amidst a disaster
- Sets penalties as a misdemeanor but changes to make penalties the same as those for crossing a crime scene
  - Police use disorderly conduct/disobeying the order of an officer to penalize and the amendments point to that
- Finally, administration wanted this to take effect immediately
- Councilwoman Ramos also discussed those amendments offered by those in opposition
  - The amendments were duplicative with the ethics code
  - Not interested in having the fire department give passes to specific organizations
- Councilman Schleifer asked that CM Ramos elaborate on how the Fire Department can bring charges
  - City law department responds that the bill must have its own penalties
    - In this particular law it sets the same penalties as in the other law
    - Fire department would notify the police that a crime has been committed
      - Then it is up to the state's attorney on whether to charge
  - Councilwoman Ramos clarifies that this bill makes clear who is responsible for what
  - It is within the fire chief's discretion on who can be authorized to enter, like a police line
- Councilman Blanchard asked a question about licensing and why that was not included
  - Councilwoman Ramos indicated that the Fire Department is under an ethics law and was concerned with determining what organizations would and would not be authorized
    - And it is a safety concern
- Councilman Glover asked whether restoration companies can speak with the chief to identify themselves and request to speak with families
  - Fire department indicates that the bill solidifies that they will not need to speak with outside companies until the incident is mitigated
  - People will be excluded based on their duties
  - Asked what the harm would be with a company speaking with a relative outside of the barricaded area
  - Councilwoman Ramos indicates that the bill gives the chief the authority to set up a scene to determine who can enter a scene vs. who cannot
    - After the fire is no longer a danger and the chief deems it safe, anyone can go wherever they want
    - Recognizes it can be helpful to have people assist victims of fire
    - Have worked with DHCD to establish a victims and crisis services unit to assist victims of fire
    - Solely prevents restoration companies (and related) from being in the middle of an active scene
- Councilwoman McCray asked whether the purpose of the bill was to solely establish penalties
  - Councilwoman Ramos indicates that it allows the fire department to set up a scene but also creates penalties for individuals who continue to cross the scene

- Councilman Schleifer indicated that he supports the intent but expressed concern over those who *may* be allowed onto a scene and suggested that it creates more confusing discretions
  - Suggests that BGE may be concerned to turn off gas because of potential penalties
  - Should be more clear about who is and who is not allowed
- Motion to move amendments favorably by Blanchard
  - Ayes have it
- Councilman Schleifer asked about amending further on clarifying on who may be allowed
- Councilwoman Ramos indicated that she was willing to work on something in second reader
- Councilman Blanchard comments that the bill allows the chief to authorize who can be on the scene
  - Knowing how fluid these circumstances are, we should allow the chiefs to have this discretion
  - Chiefs/scene commanders may not know the entire city code and becoming more specific may cause confusion
  - Mr. Schnella suggests that the bill in its current form is supported by the administration, but the administration does not support mandating who can and cannot enter
    - Want to ensure the fire chief can control their scene for safety reasons
- Motion to recommend the bill favorably by Blanchard
  - Bill was recommended favorably with amendments

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***FURTHER STUDY REQUESTED***

NONE

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***COMMITTEE VOTE***

***Amendment Vote***

**Motioned by:** Zac Blanchard

**Voice Vote Result:** Favorable

**Motioned by:** Zac Blanchard

| MEMBER                  | YEA | NAY | ABSENT | ABSTENTION |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|--------|------------|
| Mark Conway             | X   |     |        |            |
| Zac Blanchard           | X   |     |        |            |
| Danielle McCray         | X   |     |        |            |
| Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer |     | X   |        |            |

|                 |   |   |  |  |
|-----------------|---|---|--|--|
| Paris Gray      | X |   |  |  |
| Phylicia Porter | X |   |  |  |
| Antonio Glover  |   | X |  |  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    |   |   |  |  |

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**Hearing Packet in bill file? -----** ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**

**Attendance Sheet in bill file? -----** ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☒ **N/A**

**Agency reports read? -----** ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**

**Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded? -----** ☒ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **N/A**

**Certification of advertising/posting notices in the bill file? -----** ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☒ **N/A**

**Evidence of notification to property owners in bill file? -----** ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☒ **N/A**

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Notes by: Ethan Navarre  
Notes Date: 9/16/2025

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