



**BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL  
PUBLIC SAFETY AND  
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
COMMITTEE**

**Mission Statement**

*On behalf of the Citizens of Baltimore City, the Public Safety and Government Operations will be responsible for matters concerning public safety, including, but not limited to; emergency preparedness, police services, fire/EMS, and the executive, administrative, and operational functions of the city government and libraries.*

**The Honorable Mark Conway  
Chairman**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**Wednesday, September 1, 2021  
1:00 PM**

**Council Bill: 21-0107  
Study and Report – Operations of the  
Baltimore City Fire Department**



## BILL SYNOPSIS

**Committee: Public Safety and Government Operations**

**Bill 21-0107**

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### Study and Report – Operations of the Baltimore City Fire Department

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*Sponsor: Councilman Kris Burnett*

*Introduced: July 19, 2021*

**Purpose:**

For the purpose of requiring that the Baltimore City Fire Department, in consultation with certain other agencies, submit a report to the Mayor and City Council evaluating departmental operations, fire suppression and Emergency Medical Services staffing, community risk reduction programs, and performance management programs; and providing for a special effective date.

**Effective:** Date of enactment.

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### Agency Reports

Law Department	
Fire Department	
Dept. of Human Resources	
Baltimore City Administrator	
Department of Finance	
Labor Commissioner	
Office of Equity and Civil Rights	

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## **Analysis**

### **Background**

After taking office in the year 2000, former Mayor Martin O'Malley, charged a 10 – member team with the task of analyzing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Baltimore City Fire Department's Operations, as part of the President's Roundtable/Greater Baltimore Committee review of city government. At that time, the review found that the fire department hadn't altered its operations to keep up with the needs of the public throughout the years. One finding that stood out the most was that two-thirds of emergency responses were for medical related incidents, and not fire suppression.

Within the workgroups report, topic areas covered were:

- Introduction: Fire Department
- Resources Should Be Allocated from Fire Suppression to EMS
- The City's Firefighting Bureaucracy can be Streamlined Without Sacrificing its Effectiveness
- Achieving Economics Will Enable the BCFD to Improve and Modernize the Department

### **Fire Department Scheduling**

In 2009, then City Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake introduced Resolution 09-0142R: Informational Hearing – Fire Department – Rotating Company Closures. This resolution examined the rotating company closure policy, the impact that policy had on response times, and the budget shortages and fiscal impact that these practices had on the department.

In 2013, then Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake proposed a change to the shift schedule for city firefighters. At the time of the proposal firefighters were on a 4-days-on (2-10 hour days and 2-14 hour nights), 4-days-off schedule and a 42-hour work week. Shortly after this proposal was introduced, Baltimore City firefighter's transitions to their current schedule which consist of 24-hours on, 24-hours off, 24-hours on, and 5 days off.

At the time of this proposal, it was stated that the new schedule would amount to a 16.7 percent increase in firefighter's weekly hours and would eventually allow the city to reduce the size of the department by 156 people, which would be accomplished through attrition. The firefighters who remained would get a pay raise of 12.5 percent. It was also reported that over the next nine years, the plan would save the city more than \$60 million while enabling it to step up purchases of new fire equipment and quadruple the amount dedicated to repairing and refurbishing the city's fire houses, which are more than 50 years old.

During this same time period, the personnel assigned to the Emergency Services Division have remained on the 4-days-on (2-10 hour days and 2-14 hour nights), 4-days-off work schedule.

### **Office of the Fire Marshal - Civilianization**

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is an international nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards. The association publishes more than 300 consensus codes and standards that are intended to minimize the possibility and effects of fire and other risks. NFPA Code 1031, Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner describes the minimum standards

for fire inspectors. The standard describes three levels of fire inspectors: Fire Inspector I, II, and III. Each level requires mastery of additional knowledge, skills, and abilities. This standard does not indicate that an inspector should be a sworn or civilian employee, but rather provides explanatory text regarding the basic requirements of a fire inspector.

#### Definition of Terms

- Sworn Fire Inspector – a member whose primary responsibility is conducting fire inspections and who must also maintain all of the same certifications as an entry-level firefighter.
- Civilian Fire Inspector – a member whose primary responsibility is conducting fire inspections and who does not have to initially have or maintain any of the certifications as an entry-level firefighter.

Currently, the Office of the Fire Marshal within the Baltimore City Fire Department is budgeted for approximately 30 full-time fire inspector and supervisory positions. The median salary for fire inspectors is \$70,000, fire inspector Lieutenant's average \$77,000, and fire inspector Captain's average \$97,000 a year.

In comparison, the Office of the State Fire Marshal within the Maryland Department of State Police hires Civilian Fire Safety Inspectors at a salary range of \$28,702 - \$44,812.

#### **Data-Driven Strategies**

In 1990, officials in the New York City Transit Police Department explored an experimental paradigm shift that began to employ new approaches to police operations called the CompStat (Computer Statistics) model. In 2000, under the leadership of former Mayor Martin O'Malley, he brought the CompStat model to Baltimore City hoping that it would help to reduce crime in the city. Mayor O'Malley and his administration explored using the model to improve efficiency within city government, and that's how CitiStat was created.

CompStat like CitiStat works off of five basic principles:

- Specific objectives
- Timely and accurate intelligence
- Effective strategies and tactics
- Rapid deployment of personnel and resources
- Relentless follow-up and assessment

When CitiStat was initially introduced, each agency had a Stat program to measure internal performance. Similar to the Baltimore Police Department, the Fire Department should create a Data-Driven Strategies unit. This unit would be responsible for the overall management and delivery of analytical support functions that directly impact the productivity, efficiency, and delivery of fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). This unit would also embed evidence-based fire, EMS, and management principles into the decision-making process.

Most public safety agencies are “reactive,” devoting far too much time to answering calls for service and not enough to understanding the conditions and treatment that result in improvement. Because of this, data should be gathered from a broader range of sources other than just incident reports, and should be used to understand the causes of problems and the impact of strategies. Skills, procedures,

and research techniques to analyze problems and evaluate police effectiveness should be an integral, continuing part of management.

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### **Additional Information**

**Fiscal Note:** Not Available

**Information Source(s):**

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Analysis by: Samuel Johnson  
Analysis Date: August 31, 2021

Direct Inquiries to: (410) 396-1091

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 21-0107  
(First Reader)**

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Introduced by: Councilmembers Burnett, Cohen, Dorsey, Bullock, Porter, Torrence

Introduced and read first time: July 19, 2021

Assigned to: Public Safety and Government Operations Committee

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REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: City Solicitor, Department of Finance, Office of Equity and Civil Rights, City Administrator, Fire Department, Department of Human Resources, Labor Commissioner

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ORDINANCE concerning

2 style="text-align:center">**Study and Report – Operations of the**  
3 style="text-align:center">**Baltimore City Fire Department**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring that the Baltimore City Fire Department, in consultation with  
5 certain other agencies, submit a report to the Mayor and City Council evaluating  
6 departmental operations, fire suppression and Emergency Medical Services staffing,  
7 community risk reduction programs, and performance management programs; and providing  
8 for a special effective date.

9 **SECTION 1. BE IT ORDAINED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE, That:**

10 (a) No later than 180 days from the enactment of this Ordinance, the Baltimore City Fire  
11 Department (“Department”), in consultation with the City Administrator or the City  
12 Administrator’s designee and the Bureau of the Budget and Management Research,  
13 shall submit a report to the Mayor and City Council setting forth a comprehensive  
14 evaluation of the Department’s operation practices as specified in subsection (b) of  
15 this section.

16 (b) The report shall include:

17 (1) an 8 year fiscal analysis of the current fire suppression work schedule, including:

18 (i) the strengths and opportunities that the schedule has presented for the  
19 Department;

20 (ii) any impact that the schedule has had on reducing overtime costs and  
21 departmental expenses; and

22 (iii) recommendations for other staffing models that could produce cost  
23 savings;

24 (2) a workload analysis of at least 3 fire departments whose Emergency Medical  
25 Services (“EMS”) personnel work 24 hour shifts and have a call volume that is  
26 similar to Baltimore City’s call volume;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS indicate matter added to existing law.  
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

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- 1 (3) an analysis of:
- 2 (i) the positive and negative effects that changing the Department's current  
3 EMS schedule would have on providers, patient care, and overall service  
4 delivery;
- 5 (ii) the impact that this change would have on overtime costs; and
- 6 (iii) funding and staffing needs if the Department increased the number of  
7 EMS providers to 3 per medic unit;
- 8 (4) an assessment of at least 5 different fire marshal offices that use civilian personnel  
9 to perform the duties of fire safety inspectors and a salary and benefits analysis of  
10 the projected cost savings of civilianization;
- 11 (5) a survey of the average downtime of each fire suppression unit and a draft  
12 evaluation plan detailing what internal and external systems would need to be  
13 created for fire suppression units to perform initial and annual Use and Occupancy  
14 Permit inspections;
- 15 (6) an analysis of the total number of arsons committed each year, disaggregated by  
16 fire battalion;
- 17 (7) the current permanent staffing of the fire investigation unit, the average caseload  
18 for each investigator, and national best practices for fire investigations, including  
19 recommended staffing, training, caseloads, and equipment;
- 20 (8) a community impact study of the Department's smoke alarm program that  
21 includes:
- 22 (i) the cost to administer the program each fiscal year;
- 23 (ii) the number of smoke alarm installations in the last 7 years;
- 24 (iii) the number of fire fatalities that have occurred over the last 10 years,  
25 disaggregated by age, fire battalion, and smoke alarm presence in the  
26 residence; and
- 27 (iv) recommendations to enhance the current program with innovative  
28 approaches such as the use of modern technology;
- 29 (9) a comprehensive analysis of the racial and gender demographics of the employees  
30 assigned to the fire suppression companies in Battalions 1, 2, and 6 and a plan of  
31 action and a time line on how the Department will eliminate any disparities by  
32 increasing the number of minority employees assigned to those battalions;
- 33 (10) a draft policy establishing guidance on transfers that requires:

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- 1 (i) recruits to stay at the companies they are assigned to after graduation for a  
2 minimum of 3 years;
  - 3 (ii) newly-promoted supervisors to stay at the companies that they are  
4 assigned to for 2 years after promotion; and
  - 5 (iii) veteran personnel in any position to stay at the companies that they elect  
6 to transfer to for a minimum of 2 years before being granted another  
7 transfer; and
- 8 (11) an evaluation of the Department's full-time data-driven strategies and  
9 performance management program, including:
- 10 (i) how the program is used to monitor critical indicators such as:
    - 11 (A) administrative processes;
    - 12 (B) fire suppression;
    - 13 (C) EMS;
    - 14 (D) special operations;
    - 15 (E) 911 dispatch;
    - 16 (F) community risk reduction and prevention;
    - 17 (G) safety and risk management; and
    - 18 (H) facility and fleet management;
  - 19 (ii) alternative programs that might be used by fire departments in other  
20 jurisdictions; and
  - 21 (iii) if a more modern program exists, a comprehensive plan on the timeline  
22 and steps the Department will take to implement one.

23 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED,** That this Ordinance takes effect on the date it is  
24 enacted.



**PUBLIC SAFETY AND  
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
COMMITTEE**

**AGENCY REPORTS**

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CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT  
Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF LAW  
JAMES L. SHEA, CITY SOLICITOR  
100 N. HOLLIDAY STREET  
SUITE 101, CITY HALL  
BALTIMORE, MD 21202

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August 25, 2021

The Honorable President and Members  
of the Baltimore City Council  
Attn: Natawna B. Austin, Executive Secretary  
Room 409, City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Council Bill 21-0107 – Study and Report – Operations of the Baltimore City Fire  
Department

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Law Department has reviewed City Council Bill 21-0107 for form and legal sufficiency. The bill would require that the Baltimore City Fire Department in consultation with certain other agencies, submit a report to the Mayor and City Council evaluating departmental operations, fire suppression and EMS staffing, community risk reduction programs, and performance management programs and provide for a special effective date.

The City Council has an inherent power to investigate “in furtherance of its legislative function.” 4 McQuillin Mun. Corp. § 13:7. The City Council may “exercise within the limits of Baltimore City all the power commonly known as the Police Power to the same extent as the State has or could exercise that power within the limits of Baltimore City,” and may “pass any ordinance, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Charter or the laws of the State, which it may deem proper in the exercise of any of the powers, either express or implied, enumerated in this Charter, as well as any ordinance as it may deem proper in maintaining the peace, good government, health and welfare of Baltimore City.” City Charter, Art. II, §§ (27), (47).

The Law Department approves the bill for form and legal sufficiency.

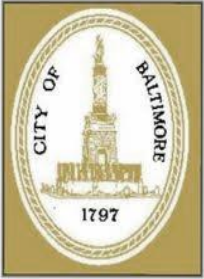
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ashlea Brown".

Ashlea Brown  
Assistant Solicitor

cc:

Matt Stegman  
Nina Themelis  
Nikki Thompson  
Elena DiPietro  
Hilary Ruley  
Victor Tervalá

<b>FROM</b>	<b>NAME &amp; TITLE</b>	Deborah F. Moore-Carter, Labor Commissioner <b>(Approved 8/20/2021)</b>	<b>CITY of BALTIMORE</b>  <b>MEMO</b>  <b>(410) 396-4365</b>	
	<b>AGENCY NAME &amp; ADDRESS</b>	Office of the Labor Commissioner 417 East Fayette Street, Suite 1203		
	<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Council Bill 21-0107: Study and Report – Operations of the Baltimore City Fire Department</b>		

The Honorable President  
Nick J. Mosby and  
Members of the Baltimore City Council  
City Hall  
100 N. Holiday Street, Room 406  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

August 20, 2021

***Recommended Position***

The Office of the Labor Commissioner (OLC) has reviewed City Council Bill 21-0107, which proposes requiring that the Baltimore City Fire Department, in consultation with certain other agencies, submit a report to the Mayor and City Council evaluating departmental operations, fire suppression and Emergency Medical Services staffing, community risk reduction programs, and performance management programs; and providing for a special effective date.

The OLC takes no position City Council Bill No. 21-0107.

***Comments and Analysis***

The Office of the Labor Commissioner is responsible for contract administration therefore any recommendations to make changes to the fire suppression (Emergency Medical Services) work schedule will need to be bargained with the Baltimore Fire Fighters Local 734, IAFF. The OLC defers to the Fire Department, the Department of Finance and the Department of Human Resources.

DFMC:yb



August 20, 2021

To the Honorable City Council President, Nick Mosby  
and Members of the Baltimore City Council  
City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street, Room 409  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

**Re: CC Bill 21-0107 – Study and Report - Operations of the Baltimore City Fire Department**

Dear President and City Council Members,

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) has reviewed City Council Bill 21-0107 – Study and Report - Operations of the Baltimore City Fire Department (BCFD). For the purpose of requiring that the Baltimore City Fire Department, in consultation with certain other agencies, submit a report to the Mayor and City Council evaluating departmental operations, fire suppression and Emergency Medical Services staffing, community risk reduction programs, and performance management programs; and providing for a special effective date.

DHR has reviewed the above-referenced bill and takes **no position** on the legislation.

DHR works to ensure the policies and practices of agencies are aligned to attract and retain a high quality and diverse workforce. To that end, we support operations that lend to the optimal delivery of City services. We defer to the Baltimore City Department of Law regarding the legal sufficiency of the proposal.

For additional questions or concerns, contact me at [Quinton.Herbert@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:Quinton.Herbert@baltimorecity.gov) or by phone at (410) 396-1563.

Sincerely,

Quinton M. Herbert, JD