

DREXEL HEIGHTS FIRE DISTRICT

FIRE PREVENTION DIVISION

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It isn't easy, or glamorous, or heroic enforcing fire codes.

We joke in the fire service that the code enforcement people—fire marshals, the prevention officers, fire chiefs—are the only ones in the fire department who don't get waved at with the whole hand when they drive down the street.

It's not that we are bad people, but we can be quite unpopular at times. That's because we usually end up costing folks money trying to protect them, and the public, and our firefighters from their carelessness, accidents, the stupidity of their neighbors or the occasional act of God.

Yet truth be known, fire prevention folks save far more lives and property from fire losses than a whole fleet of firefighters on big red trucks.

Again, it is not easy work. Local fire authorities must balance their interpretations of the fire code with their fire department's response capabilities, local policies and politics, safety of the citizens and firefighters, hazards and risks, demographics, insurance ratings, fire experience, weather and a myriad of other issues.