

**County of Santa Clara**  
**Office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors**



24-5610

**DATE:** May 7, 2024 (Item No. {{item.number}})  
**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Curtis Boone, Acting Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
**SUBJECT:** Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Plumbing Examination Fee Increase

**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Public hearing to consider increase of fees for examination for Certificate of Competency for performing plumbing work. (Clerk of the Board)

Possible action:

- a. Open public hearing and receive testimony.
- b. Close public hearing.
- c. Adopt Resolution Increasing the Fee for the Examination for Certificate of Competency for Performing Plumbing Work.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Finance and Government Operations Committee considered the proposed fee increase on March 19, 2024 (Item No. 15), and forwarded it to the Board of Supervisors as part of the Consent Calendar.

**FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

There will be a small positive impact to the General Fund as a result of this recommendation. The proposed fee could potentially generate an ongoing revenue augmentation for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 in the amount of \$385.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION AND BACKGROUND**

Pursuant to Sections C11-30 and C11-31 of the Santa Clara County Ordinance Code, plumbers who are not contractors, apprentices or utility employees are required to have a certificate of competency from the Board of Plumbing Examiners in order to perform plumbing work in Santa Clara County.

Adopted in 1988, Chapter II of Division C11 of the Santa Clara County Ordinance Code pertains to the examination for an issuance of a certificate of competency for plumbers. The examination fee was originally set at \$15 per applicant tested, and the same fee was charged

by the vendor per exam. This fee was increased on October 22, 2002, to \$50, on December 7, 2004 to \$150, and on June 27, 2023 to \$253.

The amount of the June 2023 increase was based upon calculating the inflation-adjusted amount equivalent to the prior \$150 fee set in December 2004, pursuant to the Consumer Price Index for the Bay Area.

The County contracts with National Inspection Testing and Certification Corporation to offer the exam required to obtain the Plumbing Certificate of Competency. Currently the vendor fee charged to the County is \$175 per exam and the County charges examinees \$253 per exam to partially recover the vendor fee and administrative costs, which were determined to be \$342 when the fee was adopted. This recommendation proposes a new exam and certification fee of \$260 per exam. This fee increase is supported by County policy to set and modify fees and charges imposed by the County and is based on the December 2023 San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose Consumer Price Index, which reflects an increase of 2.6 percent over the prior year.

Pursuant to guidance received during consideration of the 2023 fee increase by the Finance and Government Operations Committee and the Board of Supervisors, the Clerk of the Board intends to adjust this fee annually to account for changes to the Consumer Price Index. Annual increases will reduce the likelihood of a significant rise in the fee. The fee remains below full cost recovery for the County, which would require a fee of \$469.75 per exam according to the most recent cost analysis.

The proposed fee of \$260 is less than the fee charged by the State of California for the same exam. The Contractors State License Board (CSLB) charge is \$450; a State-issued license is valid for several years and then must be renewed.

There are no neighboring counties that offer this exam and certification service. The closest county that offers a Journeyman Plumber license is County of Los Angeles and their license must be renewed biennially. The County of Santa Clara certification for a Journeyman Plumber does not expire.

The proposed fee has been reviewed by the Controller-Treasurer. The Clerk of the Board has consulted with County Counsel to ensure that all statutory requirements are being met. Information regarding the proposed fee will be available to the public as it has been in the past, including on the exam registration form and the related instruction sheet, and on the Clerk of the Board's website.

Following Board of Supervisors approval, the fee increase is anticipated to go into effect as of July 1, 2024.

### **CHILD IMPACT**

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on children and youth.

## **SENIOR IMPACT**

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on seniors.

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The recommended action will have no/neutral sustainability implications.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION**

The fee will not be increased, and the Clerk of the Board will seek a larger increase in 2025 to account for two years of inflation.

## **STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL**

The Deputy Clerk will notify Daryl Ricasa, Administrative Services Manager III, in the Office of the Clerk of the Board.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

- Controller-Treasurer Review Checklist
- Copy of Notice of Public Hearing
- Resolution Increasing the Fee for the Examination for Certificate of Competency for Performing Plumbing Work