

Looking Back -

2019-2020 NEVADA COUNTY Grand Jury Report:

FIRE INSPECTION IN NEVADA COUNTY
What We Don't Know Can Hurt Us

2020-2021 Nevada County Grand Jury

Report Date: March 31, 2021

Release Date: June 15, 2021

Looking Back - FIRE INSPECTION IN NEVADA COUNTY What We Don't Know Can Hurt Us

Summary

The 2019-2020 Nevada County Grand Jury (19-20 Jury) released the report “*FIRE INSPECTION IN NEVADA COUNTY, What We Don't Know Can Hurt Us,*” as an informational report for the community of the status of fire inspection in Nevada County and compliance with California Health and Safety Code (HSC) § 13146 et seq. These provisions, effective January 1, 2019, require every fire agency required to perform these annual inspections to make a report to its administering authority every year on its level of compliance with the HSC.

The 19-20 Jury report included findings and recommendations, but did not require responses from the fire departments (FDs), fire protection districts (FPDs), or the Nevada County Consolidated Fire District (CFD).

The 2020-2021 Nevada County Grand Jury determined that progress had been made in complying with the HSC since the 19-20 Jury report was issued. As of March 31, 2021, the number of complying agencies increased from five of the eleven agencies, or 45%, to nine, or 81.8%.

Glossary

19-20 Jury	2019-2020 Nevada County Grand Jury
20-21 Jury	2020-2021 Nevada County Grand Jury
CFD	Consolidated Fire District
County	Nevada County
FD	Fire Department
FPD	Fire Protection District
HSC	California Health and Safety Code

Background

The Nevada County Grand Jury is a judicial body empaneled as an arm of the Nevada County Superior Court authorized by the state constitution to act as a voice of the people and conscience of the community.

The 2019-2020 Nevada County Grand Jury (19-20 Jury) released the report *FIRE INSPECTION IN NEVADA COUNTY, What We Don't Know Can Hurt Us*, as an informational report to inform the community of the status of fire inspection in Nevada County and compliance with California Health and Safety Code (HSC) § 13146 et seq. These provisions, effective January 1, 2019, require every fire agency required to perform these annual inspections to make a report to its administering authority every year on its level of compliance with the mandate.

The 19-20 Jury report included findings and recommendations, but did not require responses from the FDs, FPDs, or the CFD.

The fire agencies providing fire services in Nevada County are:

- Grass Valley FD
- Higgins FPD
- Nevada City FD (Merged with Grass Valley FD, November 2020)
- Nevada County CFD
- North San Juan FPD
- Ophir Hill FPD
- Peardale-Chicago Park FPD
- Penn Valley FPD
- Rough and Ready FPD
- Truckee FPD
- Washington FD

Approach

The 20-21 Jury reviewed the 19-20 Jury report and the information received from the 19-20 Jury survey distributed to each FD, FPD, and CFD. It decided to determine the status of fire inspection in Nevada County in the 20-21 Jury year by investigating the level of-compliance with HSC § 13146 et seq. in each fire department and district.

The approach of the 19-20 Jury was at the level of each FD, FPD, and CFD. The 20-21 Jury chose to determine HSC compliance at the level of each administering authority. A letter was sent to the board or city council of each fire agency requesting a copy of the:

- summary report received from the related fire agency,
- resolution or similar formal document acknowledging receipt of the above summary report, and
- minutes from the board or council meeting reflecting discussion of the above.

Additional research was conducted through the internet, websites, and other grand jury reports.

Discussion

The following chart summarizes the information on the status of HSC compliance reported to the 20-21 Jury as of March 31, 2021. City fire departments have city councils authorizing their activities and fire districts are authorized by their board of directors.

Fire Agency	Date Response Received	Report Submitted to Administrating Authority	Resolution/ Acknowledgement of Receipt
Grass Valley Fire Department *	11/24/20	Annual Inspection Compliance Report	11/24/20 Resolution # 2020.59
Higgins Fire Protection District	11/09/20	Annual Inspection Compliance Report	02/17/21 Resolution # 21-22-01
Nevada City Fire Department *	09/28/20	Responded that it was an unfunded mandate and did not have the manpower to comply.	
Nevada County Consolidated Fire District	03/15/21	Annual Inspection Compliance Report	Minutes
North San Juan Fire Protection District	11/18/20	Response that these inspections are conducted at the County level. They do not have funding to complete.	
Ophir Hill Fire Protection District	03/08/21	Annual Inspection Compliance Report	Minutes
Peardale-Chicago Park Fire Protection District	03/11/21	Annual Inspection Compliance Report	Minutes
Penn Valley Fire Protection District	03/04/21	Annual Inspection Compliance Report	Resolution # 21-1
Rough and Ready Fire Protection District	10/8/20	Annual Inspection Compliance Report	Resolution # 2019/20-03
Truckee Fire Protection District	01/19/21	Annual Inspection Compliance Report	Resolution # 01-2021
Washington Fire Department	12/28/20	Annual Inspection Compliance Report	Minutes

* Note: Grass Valley and Nevada City Fire Departments merged in November 2020, and will be integrated into a single unit, the Grass Valley/Nevada City Fire Department. To date there have been no reports of inspections conducted in Nevada City.

Findings

- F1. Progress has been made in compliance with the HSC since the 19-20 Jury report was issued. The number of complying agencies increased from five of the eleven agencies, or 45%, to nine, or 81.8%.
- F2. The Nevada City FD did not comply with the HSC.
- F3. The HSC-compliant Grass Valley FD and the non-compliant Nevada City FD merged in November 2020.
- F4. The North San Juan FPD did not comply with the HSC.

Recommendations

The 20-21 Grand Jury recommends the following:

- R1. The merged Grass Valley/Nevada City FD should bring Nevada City inspections into compliance with the HSC.
- R2. The North San Juan FPD should bring inspections into compliance with the HSC.

Responses

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the Nevada County Grand Jury requests responses from the following:

- Grass Valley City Council shall respond to Finding F2 and Recommendation R1 by 13 September 2021.
- North San Juan Fire Protection District Board of Directors shall respond by 13 September 2021 to Finding F4 and Recommendation R2 with evidence that the FPD has complied with HSC inspection requirements or has provided a plan of action to the Board to ensure compliance.