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HERMOSA BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT

Hazardous Conditions Incident Report Fire Incident 06-1827 PD DR# 06-3947

On 10-29-06 at 0039 hours, I cited the owner of Union Cattle Company, 1301 Manhattan Avenue, Hermosa Beach, California, for Maintaining a Hazardous Condition, in violation of Uniform Fire Code section 103.4.4 and Hermosa Beach Municipal Code section 15.20.010; specifically Overcrowding as defined in section 2501.16.3 of the Uniform Fire Code, which states "Overcrowding and admittance of persons in a building or portion thereof shall not exceed the approved capacity of a place of assembly are prohibited." The owner cited is Allen Joseph Sanford, DOB 77, DL 77, DL

The overall occupant load for Union Cattle Company is 463, which is a total of several rooms and patios on several floors and levels in the restaurant. The inside occupant load is 297 and the occupant load for the outside decks is 166. Based on the current approved plans from the Building Department, the upstairs Banquet Room is approved for no more than 54. The estimated number of people in the 2nd floor Banquet Room was 148 people.

Engine 11 and Ambulance 12 were dispatched to 1301 Manhattan Avenue, Union Cattle Company, on a complaint of overcrowding at 0039 hours on the above date. The Hermosa Beach Police Department was on-scene. On arrival at 0042 hours I observed a line of approximately 30 people on the west sidewalk outside the front doors to Union Cattle Company. When I arrived at the front doors to Union Cattle Company, I observed people standing elbow to elbow in the lower room with very little room to move in front of the double doors and stairway. Union Cattle Company is a split-level occupancy. A 48 inch wide stairway the leads up to the larger room that holds the majority of the floor space, and has an occupant load of 222. Both occupant loads are posted above the main doorway. The total occupant load for both areas is 313.

I zeroed out three hand counters and gave one to Engineer Powers, one to Firefighter Durkin, while I retained the third one. I instructed them to do their best to get a total count of people inside and we would compare the numbers afterwards. I entered the lower room and began counting, having great difficulty due to the large amount of people at this end (east side) of the room until I got to an area near the bull ride and there were very few people. It was apparent that the overall crowd was not being managed well at this point, so I continued to count throughout the rest of the building. I ascended the stairs that runs west to east, up to the 2nd level deck and leads into the Banquet Room. There were so many people standing at the top of the stairway it was difficult to get onto the patio. I continued counting until I got to an obvious bottleneck of people that was concentrated at the french doors on the west end of the Banquet Room. This room was so obviously overcrowded that I checked my counter at 266, zeroed it out and began counting as I tried to move through the Banquet Room. I had counted 175 when I arrived at the east end of the room. The occupant load for this room is 54. There was a stalemate of people trying to dance and others standing to talk, and others trying to move from one

25mrs

place in the room to another or leave, with no room for anyone to move. I felt that this was a serious situation that was a life-threatening hazard and needed to be mitigated immediately.

I met Firefighter Durkin who had counted a total of 411. Engineer Powers had a total count of 411. My total count was 175 + 266 for a total of 441. The overall occupant load for Union Cattle is 463. I directed Durkin to zero out his counter and recount just the Banquet Room starting from the west side. I zeroed my counter out again and started from the east side. When completed I had an occupant load of 157 and Durkin had a count of 148. Again the occupant load for this room is 54. Although the overall totals were less than the posted overall occupant load, the Banquet Room itself was overcrowded and a life safety hazard, a violation of Section 2501.16.3 of the Uniform Fire Code.

I requested the manager turn off the music to the Banquet Room and turn up the lights, which he made arrangements to do. I contacted Sanford, the owner, outdoors and advised him of the overcrowding situation upstairs and how it needed to be corrected immediately. Initially Mr. Sanford did not understand how they could be overcrowded when they were under the overall total number of occupants. He accompanied me inside where we took a position on some stairs that we could see, and I could explain, how overcrowding and occupant loads work.

I explained that each room has an individual occupant load that when added together establish the overall occupant load for the building. I further explained that the issue tonight is not just the overcrowding, but the blocked access to the stairways that are the emergency exits for the upstairs. He agreed that it was a crowd management issue and we discussed ways to avoid this from happening in the future while still doing a good job of managing the overall occupant numbers. Mr. Sanford was very receptive to the concepts and purposes for doing better crowd management in the future.

I cited Sanford for Maintaining a Fire Hazard; Overcrowding in the Banquet Room at Union Cattle Company, at the above address and date.

Brian P. Scott #182 A/S Fire Captain Hermosa Beach Fire Department