

Summary of the Key Provisions of the Life Safety and High Rise Ordinance

The Ordinance focuses on improving the life safety attributes of existing high-rise buildings. There are approximately 1700 existing high rises and of these, 1300 are pre-fire ordinance or pre-1975 buildings. Of the 1300 pre-fire ordinance buildings, approximately 200 are commercial and 1100 are residential.

1) Sprinklers:

- a) Commercial: Pre-1975 or pre-fire ordinance buildings will require a sprinkler system that can be installed in 3 phases over 12 years (starting 2005 and ending 2017). There are approximately 200 commercial pre-ordinance buildings that are affected. Landmarked buildings are generally exempt from the requirement.
- b) Residential: Pre-1975 residential buildings are exempt from this requirement.

2) Life Safety Evaluation:

All high rises that are exempt from having sprinklers are required to submit a Life Safety Evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation is to review the existing life safety features of the building and establish a commitment to repair any deficiencies over a seven-year period (starting in 2005 and ending in 2012). A licensed Architect or Professional Engineer must perform the evaluation.

3) Voice communication systems:

In order for the Fire Department to communicate with building occupants in the case of an emergency and for emergency response teams to communicate with a central incident command, the new ordinance requires that all pre-1975 high rise residential and commercial buildings have both a one-way and a two way voice communication system (residential buildings less than 15 stories and 60 units only require a one way voice communication system). For residential buildings the system must be completed by 2012.

4) Fire Rated Stairway Doors and Frames in Residential Buildings:

In order to protect the path of egress in case of an emergency, the ordinance requires all existing residential buildings have a one hour fire rated doors in stairwells (currently post-1975 high rise residential buildings meet this requirement). The installation of the doors must be completed by 2012.

5) Life Safety Data Sheet:

Existing high rise buildings will be required to provide basic information to the Fire Department regarding the building's standpipe and sprinkler system as well as the building's use, ownership and management.