



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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**CITY COUNCIL PASSES MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN CHICAGO'S LIFE SAFETY EVALUATION
ORDINANCE**

Reforms Increase Transparency and Accountability Among Building Owners Across the City

CHICAGO - The Chicago City Council today approved an ordinance that strengthens the Life Safety Evaluation (LSE) provisions in Chicago's Building Code. The reforms, including disclosure of LSE information to prospective tenants and increased fines for noncompliance, increase transparency and accountability among building owners required to submit and implement a LSE compliance plan.

"City government will do whatever it can to help building owners swiftly come into compliance with these critical life safety standards," said Mayor Emanuel. "While buildings move forward, it is important to ensure that people across the city can stay informed."

The revised ordinance mandates that buildings required to conduct a LSE and submit a life safety compliance plan to the City also maintain a written LSE statement available for inspection for tenants of apartment buildings at the execution of a new lease or the renewal of a lease and for unit owners of condominiums and cooperative buildings. The statement includes three simple components:

- Whether the building filed a life safety compliance plan with the City, specifically the Department of Buildings and the Fire Prevention Bureau of the Chicago Fire Department;
- Whether the life safety compliance plan was approved in writing by the City; and
- Whether all of the modifications identified in the approved life safety compliance plan have been implemented.

The changes also strengthen the penalties for building owners who do not comply with the LSE requirements by increasing the fine range for violations from \$200 to \$500 per day to \$1,000 to \$2,500 per day.

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“We want to make sure that people across the city can stay informed as buildings come into compliance with the City’s life safety standards,” said Department of Buildings Commissioner Michael Merchant. “And we’re urging all building owners to do the work they need to get done as quickly as possible.”

To date, there are over 600 residential buildings across the city required by City Ordinance to submit a Life Safety Evaluation report. These reports are used to determine the current fire safety status of a building and if necessary map out concrete steps building owners will take to ensure their buildings meet the City’s fire safety standards. At the beginning of February, information on the Life Safety Evaluation (LSE) status for hundreds of high-rise residential buildings was made available online at data.cityofchicago.org. The information is updated monthly.

The Chicago Life Safety Ordinance was passed in 2004 to improve fire safety standards in high-rise buildings eight stories or higher. Because the Chicago building code has since 1975 required new high-rise residential buildings to be constructed with sprinkler systems, the Life Safety Ordinance mostly impacted high-rise residential buildings constructed prior to 1975. It requires owners of these pre-1975 buildings to file a report, called the Life Safety Evaluation, which provides information on the current life safety elements of the building as well as any plans needed to meet requirements for fire safety.

The changes approved today by the City Council will be effective 90 days after publication. The written LSE statement must be maintained at least through January 1, 2015, the deadline to come into LSE compliance. After that date, all buildings that have come into LSE compliance will be exempt from the notice requirement.

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