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**CITY COUNCIL PASSES ORDINANCE TO HOLD BAD CONTRACTORS ACCOUNTABLE FOR
INSTALLING UNPERMITTED AND UNSAFE SIGNS**

The City Council today passed an ordinance that amends the Chicago Municipal Code to allow the Department of Buildings (DOB) to hold bad contractors accountable for installing signs in the City without a permit.

"When bad contractors take money from businesses only to perform illegal work, they hurt business owners, endanger public safety and create an unfair playing field for contractors who follow the rules," said Mayor Emanuel. "This ordinance eliminates a loophole that allowed bad contractors to avoid fines and penalties and helps protect small business owners from the acts of bad contractors."

City code requires a building permit for on-premise signs including electrical/neon signs, storefront signs, awning signs and hanging signs. As it stands today, general contractors and electrical contractors who install signs without permits can escape liability from doing illegal work because violations are cited against the building owner or business tenant. The ordinance amendment removes compliance as an affirmative defense for general contractors and electrical contractors and subjects these bad actors to fines and penalties. The ordinance will not impact business tenants or the property owners as they will still have the right to have compliance as an affirmative defense.

"This new and important tool will provide a level playing field for the honest contractors who serve both their clients and the public with high quality service and integrity, said DOB Commissioner Judy Frydland."

The measure passed today follows on the successful implementation of the Bad Contractor Ordinance passed by City Council in 2017. This ordinance streamlines and provides necessary steps for discipline against contractors and trade professionals who repeatedly violate Chicago building code and licensing regulations which in turn endangers public health and safety.

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