

Fire Sprinkler Retrofit

The requirement for retrofitting fire sprinklers in High-Rise buildings, Section 31.3.5.11 of NFPA 101, has been on the books since 1998 and effective since 2002. While the dates have changed several times over the years the requirement remains the same. The requirement is as follows:



- All High-Rise buildings (75 Feet or Greater) must be protected throughout by an approved, supervised automatic sprinkler system no later than December 31, 2019.
- An automatic sprinkler system shall not be required where every dwelling unit has exterior exit access. Exit access shall be permitted to be by means of any exterior balcony, porch, gallery, or roof that conforms to the requirements of NFPA. The long side of the balcony, porch, gallery, or similar space shall be at least 50 percent open and shall be arranged to restrict the accumulation of smoke.
- An automatic sprinkler system shall not be required in buildings having an approved, engineered life safety system. This engineered life safety system must be designed by a professional engineer that specializes in fire and life safety design.

Statute 718 (Condominiums) provides further direction for buildings cited under 31.3.5.11 of NFPA 101 and defines a timeline. The local authority having jurisdiction may not require completion of retrofitting with a fire sprinkler system before January 1, 2020. By December 31, 2016, a residential condominium association that is not in compliance with the requirements for a fire sprinkler system and has not voted to forego retrofitting of such a system must initiate an application for a building permit for the required installation with the local government having jurisdiction demonstrating that the association will become compliant by December 31, 2019.

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