

FILE NO.

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST
(Amended XXXXXX XX, 20XX)

[San Francisco Fire Code]

Ordinance repealing the San Francisco Fire Code in its entirety and replacing that code with a new 2016 San Francisco Fire Code consisting of the 2016 California Fire Code and portions of the 2015 International Fire Code together with San Francisco amendments; adopting findings of local conditions pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 17958.7 and directing the Clerk of the Board to forward San Francisco's amendments to the California Building Standards Commission and State Fire Marshal; and making environmental findings.

Existing Law

The San Francisco Fire Code is designed to regulate and govern the safeguarding of life and property from fire and explosions hazards arising from the storage, handling and use of hazardous substances, materials and devices, and from conditions hazardous to life or property in the occupancy of buildings and premises; and to provide for the issuance of permits, inspections and other Fire Department services, and the assessment and collection of fees for those permits, inspections and services. The current San Francisco Fire Code incorporates by reference the 2016 California Fire Code (Title 24, California Code of Regulations, Part 9) and those portions of the 2015 International Fire Code not promulgated by the California Building Standards Commission, with local amendments adopted by San Francisco.

Amendments to Current Law

The proposed 2016 San Francisco Fire Code incorporates by reference the 2016 California Fire Code (Title 24, California Code of Regulations, Part 9), including appendices adopted by the State. In addition, except as expressly deleted, modified or amended, the proposed 2016 San Francisco Fire Code incorporates by reference those portions of the 2015 International Fire Code that were not adopted by the California Building Standards Commission in the California Fire Code, as well as Section 503, Section D105 of Appendix D as amended, and Appendix I in its entirety. The proposed 2016 San Francisco Fire Code also includes local amendments specific to San Francisco.

In general, the proposed 2016 San Francisco Fire Code carries forward the 2013 San Francisco Fire Code without substantive modification. The primary changes and new requirement are described below.

FILE NO.

Section 102.3.1 of the proposed Fire Code sets a requirement that all new Group E occupancies (private and public schools) register with the Bureau of Fire Prevention prior to occupancy to ensure that the Bureau has completed a safety inspection prior to placing student in the school and they will be added to the current list for annual safety inspections.

The proposed Fire Code updates and adds new procedures and enforcement as introduced by Supervisor Wiener and recently adopted by the Board of Supervisors in Section 109, Violations. Section 109.4 requires that the fire code official shall issue a Notice of Violation within 15 days if any violation of the code is found, while also distinguishing if the violation is a “priority complaint” or a “standard complaint”. Posting the Notice of Violation in a “conspicuous location” is set in Section 109.4.1. Section 109.4.3 requires the fire code official to conduct a hearing on a “Notice of Violation” (NOV) within 60 days if the person responsible to correct a violation fails to do so within the time specified in the NOV. The section sets notice and service requirements, procedures and timelines for the hearing, requirements related to the decision and order after the hearing, and penalties for violating the decision and order. Section 109.9 establishes that the City may institute civil proceedings for injunctive and monetary relief.

Section 109.5.2 of the proposed Fire Code has added San Francisco Fire Code Section 901.8 (Removal or Tampering with Equipment) to the list violations for an Administrative Citation with fees set at \$1000 due to the seriousness of the violation.

Section 109.7 of the proposed Fire Code has added the exempt position of Assistant Fire Marshal (H-42) and removed the position of Fire Protection Engineer (5215) as a designated officer or employee with the authority to issue a citation.

The proposed Fire Code adds new procedures and enforcement as introduced by Supervisor Tang and recently adopted by the Board of Supervisors as Section 409- Fire Safety Information Disclosure. The new procedures include providing “Disclosure Information” to each resident (409.2), posting safety information in the building accessible to all residents (409.3), requiring building owners of 16 or more units to offer annual fire safety training (409.4), and establishing penalties and enforcement (409.6).

The proposed Fire Code removes Section 503.4 which allows a portion of 6” curbed sidewalk, adjacent to the street and without fixed obstructions, to be calculated as required street width for maneuvering fire apparatus on City streets. This use is in conflict with both the fire department’s desire not to cause damage the valuable fire apparatus and the safety of the pedestrians who consider the sidewalk or bulb-out a safety zone away from vehicles.

The proposed Fire Code establishes a required 5-foot clear space around fire hydrants (507.5.5) and cistern openings (507.5.3.1) to assist with firefighting operations, unless approved otherwise.

FILE NO.

Section 507.7 of the proposed Fire Code establishes that new developments shall comply with both the Subdivision Regulations and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission requirements for the installation and modification of the Auxiliary Water Supply System.

The 2016 California Fire Code requires emergency responder radio coverage systems to be installed, but does not specify the standard for installation and maintenance, leaving this matters to the local jurisdiction. The Fire Department has determined that NFPA 1221 (2016), Sections 5.10 and 9.6 are the appropriate standards for San Francisco, and set that standard in Section 510.1.1.

Section 905.4 of the proposed Fire Code maintains the same location requirements that were in the 2013 Fire Code. The 2016 California Fire Code removed the requirement for standpipes on exterior stairs which are necessary for our local firefighting operations.

The proposed Fire Code updates and adds new procedures and enforcement introduced by Supervisor Campos and recently adopted by the Board of Supervisors in Section 907 for fire alarm systems. The new procedures include the requirement that building owners provide tenants with annual smoke alarm information disclosures (907.2.11.10), requires annual filing of a fire alarm "Statement of Compliance" with the fire department to be posted on a website, and establishes posting, enforcement, and recordkeeping requirements (907.8.5).

The proposed Fire Code establishes requirements for the construction and maintenance of the integrity of the fire pump room ensuring the room is used solely for the fire pump and related equipment (913.2.3) and defines which equipment shall be independent of each other when redundant fire pumps are required (914.3.1.2.2).

Water tanks are a required and are an essential part of the fire suppression system of a high-rise building when, in a fire emergency, the City water supply is unavailable due to a damaged water main. Section 914.3 establishes the following requirements to maintain integrity of the tank: forbidding the routing of lines or electrical conduit through the tanks (914.3.2.1), routing of drains of the tanks (914.3.2.2), and provides requirements for drain ejector pumps (914.3.2.2.1).

Section 914.12 of the proposed Fire Code has added the "F"-occupancy (fabrication/factory) to the already required "A"-occupancy (assembly) as occupancy that shall also be required to be sprinklered if established on a pier due to the difficulty of firefighting on piers over water.

The proposed Fire Code adds the following occupancies to those already not permitted per the 2016 California Fire Code to use horizontal sliding doors as egress doors due to firefighting operations of the fire department: A, E, R and high-rise buildings (1010.1.2 and 1010.1.4.3).

Sections 905.3.4, 1013.1.1, and 1030.1.1 of the proposed Fire Code adds those fire code sections for stage fire hose requirements, fire escape signs, and egress passageways from

FILE NO.

housing units in back of lots that are in the San Francisco Building Code for uniformity of the two codes.

The proposed Fire Code incorporates 2015 International Fire Code Appendix D Section D105, which sets minimum street widths for Fire Department access roads around new buildings over 30 feet in height (new developments only). The increase of 6 feet of width for these roads will insure that aerial ladder trucks have room to operate. Minimum street widths will only pertain to newly developed streets. The proposed Fire Code also incorporates 2015 International Fire Code Appendix I in its entirety. The current Fire Code requires maintenance of fire suppression systems. Appendix I sets requirements to correct fire suppression systems that are not maintained properly. Incorporating this Appendix will assist the Fire Department in explaining the importance of maintenance and will help ensure system corrections.

Background Information

Generally, the State of California adopts a new California Fire Code every three years, with the new code going into effect 180 days after publication. The 2016 California Fire Code will go into effect on January 1, 2017.

Local jurisdictions are required to enforce the California Fire Code. In addition, local jurisdictions may enact more restrictive building standards than those set in the California Fire Code, where those more restrictive standards are reasonably necessary because of local conditions caused by climate, geology or topography. Local jurisdiction may also impose additional requirements not set in the California Fire Code. The Board of Supervisors must make express findings regarding the local conditions to support the more restrictive building standards. Local amendments to building standards are not effective until the required findings are adopted and sent to the California Building Standards Commission.

As in past code cycles, San Francisco will repeal its existing Fire Code and enact a new Fire Code. The San Francisco amendments are not integrated into the text of the California Fire Code but rather are separately printed. Therefore, the user must consult both the California Fire Code and the San Francisco Fire Code to determine the complete code requirements.