



FLORIDA FIRE CODE: IN-BUILDING SIGNAL COVERAGE REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

The Florida Fire Prevention Code requires local jurisdictions to mandate in-building radio signal strength levels to assist first responders. As a December 31, 2019 deadline approaches, it's time to determine what your local government requires and plan out next steps.

Background

NATIONWIDE

Both the ICC International Fire Code and the NFPA Fire Code recommend requirements related to emergency responder radio coverage in new and existing buildings. First responders need to be able to communicate with each other and response time is critical. Although improvements are continuously being made to responders' communications equipment, an increasing number of states are mandating that buildings ensure certain minimum levels of radio signal strength.

FLORIDA

The Florida Fire Prevention Code, Florida Statutes §633.202(18), specifies that local authorities "shall determine the minimum radio signal strength for fire department communications in all new high-rise and existing high-rise buildings." It also sets the dates for compliance; legislation approved in 2016 established the current timeframe, in order to provide properties additional time to prepare for potential related costs.

Timeframe

January 1, 2022 - Existing high-rise buildings are required to comply with minimum radio strength for fire department communications and two-way radio system enhancement communications.

December 31, 2019 - Any existing building that is **OVER 75' IN HEIGHT** (calculated by measuring from the ground floor to the floor of your highest occupied floor) that is not currently in compliance with the requirements must apply by this date for an appropriate local permit for the required installation and must demonstrate that the building will become compliant by 2022. Please note that residential buildings are on different timeframe compliance; they are required to apply for a permit by 12.31.22 and to comply by 01.01.25.

Action Steps

1. Contact your local fire code official (AHJ – Authority Having Jurisdiction) to determine how this requirement is being enforced in your jurisdiction.
2. Arrange with an appropriate provider to measure the current signal strength in your building. Check with your current life safety vendor or consult with our BOMA Life Safety Members to determine if they can help determine your signal strength and what it will take to comply.
3. Although the deadline for full implementation may not have arrived, some jurisdictions may require full implementation to improve the signal strength prior to closing out a current permit or certificate of occupancy. This may be triggered if there is significant renovation to the building or for large floor renovations.
4. If your jurisdiction requires an improved signal, prepare a plan to meet the deadline.