

[Health Code - Enhanced Ventilation Requirements for Urban Infill Sensitive Use Developments]

Ordinance amending the Health Code to clarify the City's enhanced ventilation standards by codifying the requirement that all new buildings and major renovations of buildings that contain a sensitive use certify that the building's ventilation system is capable of maintaining positive pressure; limiting applicability of the City's enhanced ventilation standard to single family homes, effective January 1, 2026, to align with state law; making findings under the California Health and Safety Code; affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act; and directing the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors to forward this Ordinance to the California Building Standards Commission upon final passage.

NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.
Additions to Codes are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.
Deletions to Codes are in ~~*strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*~~.
Board amendment additions are in double-underlined Arial font.
Board amendment deletions are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.
Asterisks (* * * *) indicate the omission of unchanged Code subsections or parts of tables.

Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

Section 1. General Findings.

(a) The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in this ordinance comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq.). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 250806 and is incorporated herein by reference. The Board affirms this determination.

1 (b) On August 20, 2025, the Building Inspection Commission considered this
2 ordinance at a duly noticed public hearing pursuant to Charter Section 4.121 and Building
3 Code Section 104A.2.11.1.1. A copy of a letter from the Secretary of the Building Inspection
4 Commission regarding the Commission's recommendation is on file with the Clerk of the
5 Board of Supervisors in File No. 250806.

6
7 Section 2. Findings Regarding Local Conditions.

8 (a) California Health and Safety Code Sections 17958.7 and 18941.5 provide that local
9 jurisdictions may enact more restrictive building standards than those contained in the
10 California Building Code, provided that the local jurisdictions make express findings that each
11 change or modification is reasonably necessary because of local climate, geologic, or
12 topographical conditions and that the local jurisdictions file the local amendments and
13 required findings with the California Building Standards Commission before the local changes
14 or modifications can go into effect.

15 (b) The Board of Supervisors hereby finds and declares that the following
16 amendments to the San Francisco Health Code and implemented through the Building Code
17 are reasonably necessary because of local climatic, topological, and geological conditions as
18 discussed below.

19 (1) The topography of San Francisco leads to development of high density of
20 multi-unit buildings on small lots, and often in close proximity to major roadways, necessitating
21 special provisions for ventilation.

22 (2) The City's geography and weather patterns create microclimates,
23 influenced by fog, topography, and urban development, which can exacerbate air pollution
24 and trap pollutants in certain areas, necessitating special provisions for ventilation.

1 (3) Positive pressure in units and habitable spaces protects public health by
2 reducing the infiltration and exposure of air pollution entering indoors through gaps in walls,
3 floors, and windows.

4 (c) Pursuant to the applicable California Health and Safety Code Sections, the
5 Board of Supervisors finds and determines that these local conditions give rise to the need for
6 modification to the ventilation provisions in the Building Code published by the Building
7 Standards Commission. Further, the Board finds and determines that the proposed
8 modifications are reasonably necessary based on these local conditions.

9
10 Section 3. Article 38 of the Health Code is hereby amended by revising Sections 3804,
11 3807, and 3809, to read as follows:

12 **SEC. 3804. DEFINITIONS.**

13 For the purposes of this Article 38, the following words shall have the following
14 meanings:

15 "Air Pollutant Exposure Zone" means those areas within the City which, by virtue of
16 their proximity to air pollution emissions sources, including Freeways, have substantially
17 greater concentrations of air pollutants. The Air Pollutant Exposure Zone shall be modeled
18 according to specific risk factors defined in the Rules and Regulations, and will include at a
19 minimum, criteria for maximum allowed excess cancer risks and maximum PM2.5
20 concentrations; these criteria shall be more stringent in Health Vulnerable Locations, as
21 defined below.

22 "Balanced Pressure" means the maintenance of air pressure inside a specific area
23 equal to the air pressure outside.

24 "Building" means a building that contains a "Sensitive Use" and that is either:

- 25 (1) a new building; or

1 (2) a building undergoing a "Major Alteration to Existing Building" as defined by
2 the San Francisco Green Building Code; or

3 (3) a building undergoing a Planning Department permitted change of use.

4 "City" means the City and County of San Francisco.

5 "Department" means the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

6 "Director" means the Director of the San Francisco Department of Public Health or the
7 Director's designee.

8 "Enhanced Ventilation" means a ventilation system capable of achieving the protection
9 from particulate matter (PM2.5) equivalent to that associated with a Minimum Efficiency
10 Reporting Value (MERV) 13 filtration (as defined by American Society of Heating,
11 Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) standard 52.2), ~~and capable of~~
12 ~~maintaining Positive Pressure in dwelling units and habitable spaces from the external~~
13 ~~environment.~~

14 "Freeway" refers to freeways as defined in the San Francisco General Plan,
15 Transportation Element.

16 "Health Vulnerable Locations" means those San Francisco zip codes, census tracts or
17 other defined locations having the highest percentage of health vulnerable residents, based
18 on criteria such as State discharge data from respiratory and cardiovascular related
19 hospitalizations, non-accident mortality, or other criteria as determined by the Director and
20 specified in the Rules and Regulations enacted under this Article.

21 "Positive Pressure" means the maintenance of higher air pressure inside a specific area than
22 the air pressure outside, which reduces the infiltration and exposure of air pollution entering indoors
23 through gaps in walls, floors, and windows.

24 "PM2.5" means solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air, that are less than or
25 equal to 2.5 micrometers (µm) in diameter.

1 "Sensitive Use" means:

2 (1) any building or facility designed for residential use, including but not
3 limited to those defined by City, state or federal law and regulations, excluding Tourist Hotels,
4 except that effective January 1, 2026, the definition of "sensitive use" under this subsection (1) shall
5 mean single family residential buildings only;

6 (2) any facility serving specific populations, including but not limited to
7 California Department of Social Services (CDSS)-licensed Adult Day Care Centers, Adult
8 Support Centers, Child Care Centers, Family Child Care Homes, Infant Care Centers, School-
9 Aged Child Care Centers, and Community Treatment Centers;

10 (3) any California Department of Education (CDE)-licensed schools;

11 (4) any California Department of Public Health (CDPH)-licensed Health Care
12 Facilities with 24-hour care, except for CDPH-licensed hospitals, which are subject to specific
13 regulations;

14 (5) any ~~California~~ Building Code Section 305-defined occupancies of
15 Educational Group E; and

16 (6) any ~~California~~ Building Code Section 308-defined occupancies of
17 Institutional Group I; ~~and~~

18 ~~—— (7) — any California Building Code Section 310-defined occupancies of~~
19 ~~Residential Group R.~~

20 "Site" means a parcel of land as defined in the San Francisco Building Code.
21

22 **SEC. 3807. ENHANCED VENTILATION REQUIREMENT.**

23 (a) Any person or entity to whom this Article 38 applies, as defined in Section 3805,
24 shall submit to the Director an Enhanced Ventilation Proposal, prepared by, or under the
25 supervision of, a licensed mechanical engineer or other individual authorized by the California

1 Business and Professions Code Sections 6700-6799 (Professional Engineers Act) to design
2 mechanical ventilation systems that meet the requirements of this Article 38 and Section
3 1202.6 of Chapter 12 of the San Francisco Building Code ~~Section 1203.5~~. An Enhanced
4 Ventilation Proposal shall include the name, title and license number of the person submitting
5 such proposal.

6 (b) The Enhanced Ventilation Proposal shall explain how the project will achieve the
7 standards mandated by this Article 38 and accompanying ~~the~~ Rules and Regulations as
8 described and updated according to Section 3809 of this Article 38, Section 1202.6 of Chapter
9 12 of the San Francisco Building Code ~~Section 1203.5~~, and any relevant amendments or
10 revisions thereto. The Enhanced Ventilation Proposal shall include a statement signed by the
11 person who prepared it, in accordance with the requirements of Section 3807(a), certifying
12 that in ~~his or her~~ the person's judgment, the ventilation system proposed will be capable of
13 achieving the protection from particulate matter (PM2.5) equivalent to that associated with
14 MERV 13 filtration (as defined by ASHRAE standard 52.2) and the maintaining Positive
15 Pressure within dwelling units and habitable spaces requirement for Enhanced Ventilation.
16 Where maintaining Positive Pressure within residential units dwelling units and habitable spaces
17 is infeasible and only Balanced Pressure is able to be maintained, the person submitting the
18 Proposal shall provide documentation of the infeasibility, and shall certify that the ventilation system
19 proposed will be capable of achieving maintaining Positive Pressure in all adjacent common areas.

20 ~~In updates to the Rules and Regulations, the Director may specify additional or alternative~~
21 ~~protective equivalents as technology and research dictate.~~

22 (c) The Director shall review the Enhanced Ventilation Proposal and may require
23 additional modification or justification prior to the Director's approval. The Director shall issue
24 a letter to the Department of Building Inspection Permit Services Energy/Mechanical Plan
25

1 Review Section identifying and attaching the letter describing the approved Enhanced
2 Ventilation Proposal.

3 (d) Building permit documents submitted to the Department of Building Inspection
4 shall incorporate all designs and details necessary for the construction of the approved
5 Enhanced Ventilation system. The Department of Building Inspection shall review submitted
6 plans to assure compliance with the Director-approved Enhanced Ventilation proposal and
7 shall not issue permits for the construction, installation, or modification of the Enhanced
8 Ventilation systems unless it is in compliance with the approved proposal.

9
10 **SEC. 3809. VENTILATION STANDARDS; RULES AND REGULATIONS.**

11 (a) ~~Within 90 days after the effective date of Ordinance No. 224-14, amending Article 38,~~
12 The Director shall issue Rules and Regulations necessary to effectuate the purposes of this
13 Article and to protect public health and safety. Any person or entity as defined in Section 3805
14 shall comply with this Article, the Rules and Regulations, and all applicable local, state, and
15 federal laws.

16 * * * *

17 (d) Rules and Regulations shall, at a minimum, meet the following standards and
18 criteria:

19 * * * *

20 (5) Certification and/or licensing requirements for the persons who prepare the
21 Enhanced Ventilation Proposals pursuant to Section 3807. The Enhanced Ventilation
22 Proposal must be prepared by, or under the responsible charge of, a person who is
23 ~~authorized by California Business and Professions Code Sections 6700-6799 (Professional~~
24 ~~Engineers Act), or any successor provisions, to design mechanical ventilation systems that~~

1 ~~meet the requirements of this Article 38 and Section 1202.6 of Chapter 12 of the San~~
2 ~~Francisco Building Code Section 1203.5 and either:~~

3 (A) a licensed mechanical engineer, or

4 (B) an individual authorized by California Business and Professions Code
5 Sections 6700-6799 to design mechanical ventilation systems that meet the requirements of
6 this Article 38 and Section 1202.6 of Chapter 12 of the San Francisco Building Code ~~Section~~
7 ~~1203.5.~~

8 * * * *

9
10 Section 4. Effective Date

11 This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after enactment. Enactment occurs
12 when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the ordinance unsigned or does not
13 sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board of Supervisors overrides the
14 Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

15
16 Section 5. Scope of Ordinance. In enacting this ordinance, the Board of Supervisors
17 intends to amend only those words, phrases, paragraphs, subsections, sections, articles,
18 numbers, punctuation marks, charts, diagrams, or any other constituent parts of the Municipal
19 Code that are explicitly shown in this ordinance as additions, deletions, Board amendment
20 additions, and Board amendment deletions in accordance with the "Note" that appears under
21 the official title of the ordinance.

22
23 Section 6. Directions to Clerk. Upon enactment of this ordinance, the Clerk of the
24 Board of Supervisors is hereby directed to transmit this ordinance to the California Building
25 Standards Commission pursuant to the applicable provisions of State law.

By: /s/
ADAM RADTKE
Deputy City Attorney

Mayor Lurie
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS