

1 [Requirements for automatic sprinklers in residential hotels.]

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3 **Ordinance amending the San Francisco Fire Code Section 9001.1.3 and the San**  
4 **Francisco Housing Code Section 904 to modify the requirements regarding installation**  
5 **of automatic sprinkler systems in residential hotels, as defined in the ordinance;**  
6 **providing findings as to local conditions pursuant to the California Health and Safety**  
7 **Code; and making this Ordinance retroactive to June 30, 2002.**

8 Note: Additions are *single-underline italics Times New Roman*;  
9 deletions are *strikethrough italics Times New Roman*.  
10 Board amendment additions are double underlined.  
Board amendment deletions are ~~strikethrough normal~~.

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

12 Section 1. Findings. The City and County of San Francisco is unique among  
13 communities generally in California with respect to its residential hotels in that, among other  
14 things, (1) due to the age of San Francisco itself, many of the City’s residential hotels are of a  
15 greater average age than those located in other communities in California, (2) due to its  
16 relatively limited geographic area and unique topographical conditions, San Francisco has  
17 significantly more residential hotels per square mile than found in many other communities in  
18 California, and such hotels are typically directly adjacent to other such hotels as well as other  
19 types of occupancies, (3) as does San Francisco itself, the City’s residential hotels reflect a  
20 wide range of construction techniques and materials, styles, and features, and therefore San  
21 Francisco is presented with a wide range of potential fire safety risks not necessarily found  
22 throughout California generally, and (4) San Francisco’s residential hotels are intermingled  
23 with the City’s residential, commercial, industrial, and other uses to a greater extent than is  
24 generally the case in many other communities in California, and this also presents a variety of  
25 fire safety risks not necessarily found in other areas of California.

1 Over the past several years, the City has experienced a near epidemic of residential  
2 hotel fires, resulting in significant loss of life, injuries, the loss of many residential units, and  
3 significant property damage. The causes of these fires, to the extent such causes have been  
4 determined, vary from case to case. However, it appears that smoking and cooking by  
5 residents, and either carelessness or malicious behavior by residents, ex-residents and  
6 property owners accounts for the majority of the reported fires. The incidence of reported fires  
7 in residential hotels appears to be far greater than occurs in residential occupancies of other  
8 types within the City.

9 In many cases, the residential hotels subject to fires were not equipped with sprinklers,  
10 or were equipped with sprinklers that were inoperable or inadequate to protect human life and  
11 property. The Fire Marshal, after investigation of several of these fires, has concluded that  
12 the presence of adequate and operational sprinkler systems would likely have significantly  
13 mitigated the damages caused by fire.

14 There is a severe shortage of decent, safe, sanitary and affordable rental housing in  
15 the City and County of San Francisco and this shortage affects most severely the elderly, the  
16 disabled, families, and low-income persons. Many of the elderly, disabled and low-income  
17 persons and families reside in residential hotel units. A housing emergency exists within the  
18 City and County of San Francisco for its elderly, disabled and low-income households and  
19 families, which is exacerbated by the loss of residential hotel units from the rental housing  
20 market due to fire. The loss of such residential hotel units affects those persons who are least  
21 able to cope with displacement in San Francisco's housing market.

22 Recognizing the above-stated unique fire safety characteristics of San Francisco as  
23 presented by the City's residential hotels, requiring the fire protection measures reflected in  
24 this ordinance is intended to address the potential fire safety risks pertaining to residential  
25 hotels. Further, it is the purpose of this ordinance to benefit the general public by minimizing

1 adverse impact on the housing supply and on displaced families and low income, elderly, and  
2 disabled persons resulting from the loss of residential hotel units through fire.

3 California Health and Safety Code Section 17958.5 requires the City to furnish specific  
4 reasons to the California Building Standards Commission for changes to the California Fire  
5 Code, the California Building Code and/or the Uniform Housing Code, based upon local  
6 conditions. Changes to the California Fire Code and California Building Code must be based  
7 upon local conditions related to climatic, geologic, or topographical conditions. On July 20,  
8 2001, the Board of Supervisors adopted Ordinance No. 165-01 (File No. 010224) to address  
9 the conditions described above. Since that time, the Board of Supervisors has determined  
10 that the requirements need to be modified to address additional safety issues and  
11 implementation concerns expressed by members of the public and affected property owners.  
12 Consequently, the Board of Supervisors finds and determines that the conditions described  
13 above continue to constitute a general summary of the most significant local conditions giving  
14 rise to the need for and justifying variance from the California Fire Code, California Building  
15 Code and Uniform Housing Code. Further, this legislation is more restrictive in part than the  
16 California Fire Code, the California Building Code and the Uniform Housing Code, requiring  
17 existing buildings to comply with current building standards. The Clerk of the Board of  
18 Supervisors is hereby directed to transmit this legislation, upon its final passage, to the  
19 California Building Standards Commission and the State Fire Marshal for filing, pursuant to  
20 the applicable provisions of State law.

21 Section 2. Article 90 of the San Francisco Fire Code is hereby amended by amending  
22 Section 9001.1.3, to read as follows:

23 Sec. 9001.1.3 [for SF] Local Standards for Existing Group R, Division 1 Occupancies.

24 (a) Sprinklers Required. An automatic sprinkler system shall be installed  
25 throughout ~~the residential occupancy of~~ every residential hotel building existing on the effective

1 date of this Section and which is three or more stories in height or contains 20 or more guest  
2 rooms, as defined in the California Building Code. "Residential Hotel" for purposes of this  
3 Section shall mean each and every hotel for which a Certificate of Use for any residential units  
4 has been issued pursuant to San Francisco Administrative Code Chapter 41.

5 (b) Design Criteria. The design criteria for the installation of the sprinkler  
6 system shall be approved by the Fire Department and shall comply with NFPA 13 (1999  
7 edition). Where sprinklers previously have been installed in a building subject to this Section,  
8 the design criteria for such existing sprinkler system may be approved or modified by the  
9 Chief.

10 (c) Compliance Date. Residential hotels subject to this Section must come  
11 into compliance with this Section by ~~June 30, 2002~~ December 31, 2004.

12 (d) Property owners who are subject to the requirements of this Section shall be  
13 prohibited from relocating tenants for the sole purpose of complying with this Section.

14 Section 3. Chapter 9 of the San Francisco Housing Code is hereby amended by  
15 amending Section 904, to read as follows:

16 SEC. 904. AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER SYSTEM. (a) Where Required. In any  
17 apartment house or hotel, any compartment or room in the basement containing more than  
18 1,800 square feet of floor area, or any compartment or room in such a building used for  
19 storing or using combustible or flammable materials, shall be equipped with an automatic  
20 sprinkler system of a type designed and installed according to the provisions of Chapter 9 of  
21 the Building Code. Automatic sprinkler systems designed and installed according to the  
22 provisions of Chapter 9 of the Building Code shall be furnished and installed in all hotels as  
23 required by this Code.

24 EXCEPTIONS:  
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1 (1) Any automatic sprinkler system required by this Section to be installed in an  
2 existing hotel pursuant to this Code shall not be required to have an on-site water supply.

3 (2) Any automatic sprinkler system required by this Section to be installed in an  
4 existing hotel pursuant to this Code may utilize existing standpipes as approved by the  
5 Director and the Bureau of Fire Prevention and Public Safety.

6 (3) Any automatic sprinkler system required by this Section to be installed in a  
7 maid's closet, or similar area, or a floor containing guest rooms in a hotel shall meet the  
8 following criteria: (a) Such system may be connected to a domestic water system, regardless  
9 of the number of maids' closets, or similar areas, in the hotel, as long as there is a minimum  
10 pressure of 15 p.s.i. at each sprinkler head; (b) only one sprinkler head need be installed in  
11 each such maid's closet, or similar area; and (c) no such system need be connected to the  
12 building's sprinkler alarm system.

13 (4) Any automatic sprinkler system required by this Section to be installed in an  
14 existing hotel pursuant to this Code (a) shall, in the event that such existing hotel is already  
15 equipped with a supervised automatic sprinkler system, be connected to such existing other  
16 system for purposes of supervision only, or (b) shall, in the event that such existing hotel is  
17 not already equipped with a supervised automatic sprinkler system, be connected to a local  
18 alarm located at the front desk or other approved location.

19 (b) Domestic Water System. The sprinkler system in an area having less than  
20 1,800 square feet may be connected to a domestic water system if the water supply and  
21 pressure conform to the provisions of Chapter 9 of the Building Code.

22 (c) Exceptions. (1) Boiler rooms, central heating rooms and bank vaults are  
23 excluded from this Chapter. (2) Compartments or rooms in the basement of apartment houses  
24 containing four or less dwelling units, provided that there are no mattresses, upholstered  
25 furniture, or loose storage contained therein, are excluded from this Chapter.

1 (d) In existing Group R, Division 1 Occupancies with enclosed stairways in which an  
2 approved partial automatic sprinkler system is to be installed to satisfy the requirements of the  
3 Housing Code, the design of the system shall be based on all the following additional design  
4 criteria:

5 (1) The computations shall be based upon the most remote locations of sprinkler  
6 heads.

7 (2) The sprinkler water service size and riser size shall be determined by adding the  
8 total number of sprinkler heads on the floor requiring the greatest number of heads, plus one-  
9 half of the total number on the floor with the same or next greatest number of heads, plus the  
10 total number of all heads in all open stairwells.

11 (3) The maximum water supply required will be that necessary to supply 13  
12 sprinkler heads.

13 (4) There shall be a minimum pressure of 15 p.s.i. at each sprinkler head and  
14 delivery shall be a minimum of 22 g.p.m. from each head.

15 (5) Piping and spacing of sprinkler heads shall be based on ordinary Hazard  
16 Schedule of NFPA 13, in accordance with the Building Code.

17 (e) Residential Hotels. An automatic sprinkler system shall be installed  
18 throughout ~~the residential occupancy of~~ every residential hotel building existing on the effective  
19 date of this Subsection and which is three or more stories in height or contains 20 or more  
20 guest rooms, as defined in the California Building Code. "Residential Hotel" for purposes of  
21 this Subsection shall mean each and every hotel for which a Certificate of Use for any  
22 residential units has been issued pursuant to San Francisco Administrative Code Chapter 41.  
23 The design criteria for the installation of the sprinkler system shall be approved by the San  
24 Francisco Fire Department and shall comply with NFPA 13 (1999 edition). Where sprinklers  
25 previously have been installed in a building subject to this Section, the design criteria for such

1 existing sprinkler system may be approved or modified by the Chief of the San Francisco Fire  
2 Department or his/her authorized representative. Property owners who are subject to the  
3 requirements of this Subsection shall be prohibited from relocating tenants for the sole purpose of  
4 complying with this Subsection. Residential hotels subject to this Subsection must come into  
5 compliance with this Subsection by ~~June 30, 2002~~ December 31, 2004.

6 Section 4. This Ordinance shall not be applicable to a residential hotel, as defined  
7 herein, where the City has approved a hotel conversion permit on or prior to December 31,  
8 2003, in accordance with the San Francisco Administrative Code Chapter 41 in effect on the  
9 effective date of this Ordinance.

10 Section 5. This Ordinance shall be retroactive to June 30, 2002.

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APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
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By: \_\_\_\_\_  
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