

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Administrative Code - Fire Code Technical Advisory Council]

Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to establish the Fire Code Technical Advisory Council to evaluate and advise the Board of Supervisors, the Mayor, and the Fire Department, on the criteria and types of evidence the Fire Marshal should consider in determining whether to waive, modify, or delay certain compliance requirements under the Fire Code that certain existing high-rise residential buildings have sprinkler systems; and to set forth the membership and duties of the Fire Code Technical Advisory Council.

Existing Law

San Francisco Fire Code Section 1103.5.4, requires certain existing high-rise residential buildings to install an automatic sprinkler system by January 1, 2035. Section 1103.5.4.4 authorizes the Fire Marshal to approve modifications and alternate methods and materials for the automatic sprinkler system retrofit when it is clearly evident that a reasonable degree of fire safety is provided. In such cases, the Fire Marshal may, among other things, (a) waive specific individual requirements if it can be shown that such requirements are not physically possible, require disproportionate effort, or pose an undue hardship with little increase in life safety, and (b) grant necessary extensions of time when it can be shown that the specific time periods are not physically practical or pose an undue hardship.

Amendments to Current Law

This ordinance would establish the Fire Code Technical Advisory Council. The Council would evaluate, further define, and advise the Board of Supervisors, Mayor, and the Fire Department, on the criteria and types of evidence the Fire Marshal should consider in determining whether to approve alternate methods and materials, waive specific individual requirements, and grant necessary extensions of time, as permitted in Section 1103.5.4. In addition, the Council would develop definitions for the following terms used in Section 1103.5.4.4: “reasonable degree of fire protection”; “alternative protection”; “not physically possible”; “disproportionate effort”; and “undue hardship.” The Council would consist of 11 voting members. The Council would submit to the Board of Supervisors, the Mayor, and the Fire Department its findings and recommendations.