



# Fact Sheet: High-Rise Buildings Current Sprinkler Requirements

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## ***What are the current sprinkler requirements for existing high-rise apartment and business buildings?***

The OSFM currently has adopted the 2000 edition of the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Life Safety Code. This code requires all existing high-rise apartment and business buildings to be protected throughout by an approved, supervised automatic sprinkler system unless the building has passed an engineered life safety system approved by the authority having jurisdiction. Also, if an existing high-rise apartment building provides an exterior (balcony) travel path to a code compliant stairway from each apartment, sprinklers are not required.

## ***How long have these high-rise sprinkler requirements been in place?***

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) adopted the 2000 edition of the NFPA Life Safety Code (NFPA 101) into Illinois Administrative Code effective January 1, 2002. This is when the current requirements for sprinkler protection in existing high-rise apartment and business buildings took effect

## ***What is an Engineered Life Safety System?***

Both the apartment building and the business occupancy chapters of the Life Safety Code allow for an "engineered life safety system" to serve in lieu of automatic sprinkler protection in existing high-rise buildings. An engineered life safety system is an evaluation conducted in accordance with NFPA 101A "Guide on Alternative Approaches to Life Safety". NFPA 101A utilizes a "Fire Safety Evaluation System" (FSES) that can be applied to evaluate a building's safety as compared to the requirements of NFPA 101 (Life Safety Code). Successfully passing a FSES is the equivalent to passing a Life Safety Code inspection. Note: the OSFM does not recognize the Chicago Life Safety Evaluation (LSE) as an acceptable process for proving equivalent safety to the Life Safety Code.

## ***So if a FSES is conducted for our high-rise building we will not need sprinkler protection?***

Simply conducting a NFPA 101A FSES analysis is not enough. The building must successfully pass the FSES analysis to demonstrate equivalent safety under the requirements of the Life Safety Code.