

# A Brief Overview on New Fire Safety Bills Passed by the NYC Council

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Between December 2017 and January 2018, fire incidents in the Bronx resulted in 15 human casualties and 29 injuries. More recently in April 2018, a luxury apartment in the Trump Tower was completely [destroyed by fire](#), and the owner lost his life. New York City has greatly improved fire safety in high-rise office buildings thanks to [Local Law 26/04](#), which mandates the installation of automatic sprinkler systems by July 1, 2019. However, many residential properties are still vulnerable to fire, as evidenced by recent incidents - fire protection laws for new constructions are demanding, but there is an absence of retroactive laws like LL26 to make old properties safe.

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## Does your building have all the fire protection measures required?

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Early in May 2018, the New York City Council passed a bill package, with the goal of improving fire safety in residential properties. Only some of the requirements in the bills affect property owners directly, but being informed is highly recommended for effective coordination with the NY Fire Department (FDNY). Keep in mind this is just a **brief guide**, not to be used in place of actual NYC laws.

Bill

Introduction    Requirements

No.

599-A

The FDNY must conduct outreach and education for R-2 residential buildings, regarding fire safety and prevention. The tasks required include distributing fire safety guides for apartments, and providing training for building staff. The FDNY must submit annual activity reports, and the first is due on January 31, 2019.

602-A

All doors leading to interior stairways or corridors in R-1 and R-2 residential buildings must be self-closing by July 31, 2021. Failure to keep these doors in working condition is a class C violation of the Housing Maintenance Code.

603-A

The FDNY must inspect all hydrants maintained by the NYC Dept. of Environmental Protection, at least twice per year by June 30 and by December 31. The bill also introduces detailed reporting requirements.

604-A

Modifies the requirements for smoke alarms and detectors in residential buildings, within 20 feet of fixed cooking appliances. All devices of this type in use by January 1, 2021, must be listed according to the following standards:

-UL 217, 8th edition, for smoke alarms.

-UL 268, 7th edition, for smoke detectors.

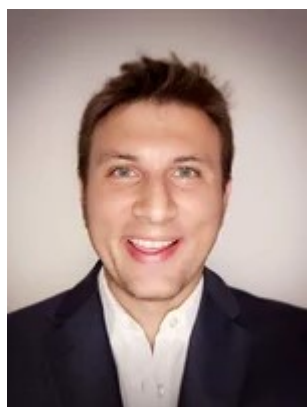
The bill also adds requirements from NFPA 72 (National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code, 2010 edition) to the NYC Building Code, with amendments that are specific for NYC. These requirements are for alarms in general, in residential and non-residential locations.

- 606-A Mandates individualized emergency evacuation plans for persons with special needs. The deadline is March 1, 2019.
- 608-A Complements 602-A. Property owners must post signs indicating tenants to close their doors when escaping from a fire, since that slows down the spread of fire indoors.
- 609-A The FDNY must implement an education plan about fire hazards and prevention measures, targeting children and parents.
- 610-A Property owners must install stove knob covers in all units with children under age six, to keep them from manipulating the stove.

The main requirements that involve an investment from property owners are those dealing with self-closing doors, smoke alarms and detectors, signs telling occupants to close doors and stove knob covers. The rest of the requirements introduced are mostly administrative, or only place responsibilities for NYC public departments, but collaboration with landlords and their staff is required in many cases.

## Final Recommendation

New York City is characterized by its highly demanding [fire protection requirements](#), but they are justified due to the severe consequences of an uncontrolled fire in such a densely populated city. The best way to ensure compliance is working with qualified engineers who are familiarized with NYC building codes.



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