

Attention News Editors:

## Ontario To Require Fire Sprinklers In New Condos And Apartments

McGuinty Government Improving Fire Safety Standards

TORONTO, June 18 /CNW/ -

NEWS

Ontario is increasing the fire-safety of new large residential buildings. Changes to the Building Code will require sprinkler systems in new condos and apartments higher than three storeys.

The changes will come into force on April 1, 2010. Building permit applications for multiple-unit residential buildings higher than three storeys submitted on or after that date must comply with the new fire sprinkler requirements.

Residential fire deaths in Ontario have declined steadily since the Building Code was introduced in 1975, and Ontario has one of the lowest rates of residential fire deaths in Canada.

The changes will bring the Building Code into greater harmony with the model National Building Code of Canada and the codes in force in most Canadian and American jurisdictions.

QUOTES

"We are making our safe buildings even safer. These changes to the Building Code will ensure residents of new high-rises will have the same fire protection as all other jurisdictions in Canada," said Jim Watson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

"The experience of other jurisdictions across North America is clear: residential sprinklers significantly reduce injuries, deaths and property loss due to fire. This requirement is a huge step forward in the protection of citizens of this province from fire," said Pat Burke, Fire Marshal of Ontario

"Ultimately, residential sprinklers will provide a safer working environment for the brave men and women who put their lives on the line to protect us," said Linda Jeffrey, MPP for Brampton-Springdale, a long-time advocate for sprinklers in residential settings.

QUICK FACTS

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- The Building Code is a regulation under the Building Code Act, 1992. The code applies to the construction of new buildings, and the renovation and change of use of existing buildings.
- The effective date of April 1, 2010 will ensure there are sufficient numbers of trained technicians available to install the newly required sprinkler systems.
- The model National Building Code of Canada is published by the National Research Council of Canada. Provincial and territorial governments, however, are responsible for building regulation and

adopt their own codes.

#### LEARN MORE

Read Ontario's Building Code website. ([www.ontario.ca/buildingcode](http://www.ontario.ca/buildingcode))

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#### BACKGROUNDER

##### RESIDENTIAL FIRE SPRINKLERS

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The Building Code Act, 1992 is the legislative framework governing the construction, renovation and change of use of buildings. The Building Code is a regulation authorized by the Act, and sets out detailed administrative and technical requirements. The Province is amending the Building Code to enhance fire safety for Ontarians and to further harmonize Ontario's Building Code with the model National Building Code.

#### NEW REQUIREMENTS

The Building Code changes require fire sprinklers in multiple-unit residential buildings higher than three storeys. The changes come into effect on April 1, 2010.

The new requirements apply to new construction, additions to existing buildings, floors of existing buildings that undergo a change of major occupancy, and floor areas that undergo extensive ("gut") renovation. Sprinkler requirements apply throughout the building, including residential suites, service areas and common areas, such as corridors.

The new requirements also cover the residential portions of mixed-use buildings higher than three storeys.

The new requirements do not apply to smaller residential buildings, including houses, or to the renovation of portions of floors. Certain forms of four-storey stacked townhouses having specific fire safety features, such as independent exits, are also exempt.

The Building Code does not mandate the retrofit of existing buildings where no construction is proposed.

The changes replace some Building Code requirements that acted as alternatives to sprinklering. However, the Code amendments also specify that unsprinklered buildings undergoing renovation will still have to meet current Ontario-specific requirements, unless the renovated area is sprinklered.

The changes also increase the maximum size of live-work units from 150m(2) to 200 m(2).

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing intends to work with the building sector to review potential Building Code changes that could increase design flexibility and reduce costs, while maintaining high standards of safety.

#### ONTARIO'S BUILDING CODE

Ontario's Building Code is a regulation under the Building Code Act, 1992. It sets technical and administrative requirements that govern the construction, renovation and change of use of buildings.

Fire safety is an objective of the Building Code.

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ONTARIO MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING - More on this organization



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