

Department of Community Affairs

Division of Fire Safety

Division Administration



TO: Fire Protection Contractors

FROM: Richard J. Mikutsky, Director/State Fire Marshal

DATE: June 2, 2020

SUBJECT: Routine Maintenance and Repairs to Fire Protection Equipment

During the last several weeks, the Division of Fire Safety (Division) has received numerous inquiries from business owners, fire officials, and fire protection equipment contractors concerning fire protection equipment maintenance and repairs. During the COVID-19 epidemic, as in normal times, fire officials and fire protection equipment contractors must ensure fire protection equipment and life safety systems are maintained and in working order. These systems and equipment are essential in safeguarding the public, occupants of the businesses, and firefighters.

On Wednesday, May 13, 2020, Governor Murphy issued Executive Order 142 (EO 142) which permitted the resumption of non-essential construction beginning Monday, May 18, 2020. Public and private contractors and employees who perform the inspection, maintenance and other responsibilities for fire protection equipment and life safety systems are included in EO 142. We are sending this memo to industry associations and local government partners to provide clarification and guidance to all parties who perform these essential duties. It is imperative that all buildings maintain fully operational fire protection equipment and life safety systems and perform routine testing and maintenance as required by Code.

The Uniform Fire Code Statutes and Regulations remain in effect. Requirements for testing and maintenance of fire protection systems and life safety equipment found in the 2015 International Fire Code New Jersey Edition remain unchanged. It is important to remember that the building's fire protection systems and life safety systems protect not only the building's occupants, but the firefighters that must respond to an emergency at the property. It is for this reason that fire protection equipment and life safety equipment must be maintained in vacant and unoccupied buildings as well as occupied buildings.

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The current public health emergency has created several challenges to being able to maintain these systems. It has been the position of the Division throughout this emergency that property or business owners must make repairs needed to keep systems operational. Many routine inspections were not completed over the last several weeks. This was due to buildings being closed, contractors not performing inspections, or business owners being hesitant to allow contractors in their buildings. Given these circumstances, we are working with business owners when it comes to enforcing the various fire protection and life safety equipment inspection requirements. We ask that Local Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) do the same. Additionally, we are currently reviewing applicable statutory and regulatory requirements to see if any need to be temporarily relaxed. One thing that we can all agree on is the importance and necessity of maintaining fire protection equipment and life safety systems.

The entire Division of Fire Safety staff is working diligently to ensure the continuity of operations and government throughout this pandemic event, while protecting the health of our staff and the public we serve. The Department of Community Affairs and the Division of Fire Safety is committed to adhering to all guidelines that have been promulgated.

Please feel free to contact Louis Kilmer at louis.kilmer@dca.nj.gov or by phone at 609.306.2871 if you have any questions or if further clarification is needed. Thank you for your continued support.

For COVID-19 updates, Information Bulletins and State guidance, you may reference <https://covid19.nj.gov> or visit our website at <https://www.state.nj.us/dca/divisions/dfs/>