

# City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia  
Office of the Chief Clerk  
Room 402, City Hall  
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 140034)

## RESOLUTION

Calling for joint hearings by the Committee on Public Safety and the Committee on Licenses and Inspections to investigate and explore the need for a third party structural inspection or an engineering report on residential rental units or fire escapes on residential buildings to be submitted with the City's Housing Inspection License (3202), also known as a Housing Rental License and required for any entity that rents any type of housing unit in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, On January 12, 2014, the fire escape partially collapsed on a Philadelphia building constructed in 1906 and converted into an apartment complex in 1944. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places; and

WHEREAS, The resulting failure of the fire escape caused one death and resulted in serious injuries to two others when the balcony of a fire escape collapsed at the fourth floor, causing the individuals to plunge more than 30 feet to the pavement below them; and

WHEREAS, The City quickly responded by immediately requesting that the owners of the building complete an engineering report that specifies what must be done to make the fire escape safe at the building following the collapse on January 12; and

WHEREAS, The City provides no guidance or safety rules to property owners about the structural integrity of fire escapes or the need for regular engineering reports and test loads to ensure safe maintenance of fire escapes; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Deputy Mayor for Economic Development noted that any renter who is concerned about a fire escape should consult the landlord about when it was last inspected; and

WHEREAS, The City does not regularly inspect fire escapes and the property owners are responsible for the maintenance of fire escapes; however, other cities such as New York

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City, Boston, Baltimore, require regular engineer test load reports of fire escapes for residential buildings; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has a duty to protect the safety of all citizens and the general public by providing guidance and rules regulating safety compliance for fire escapes on residential units; to property owners; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council hereby authorizes joint hearings by the Committee on Public Safety and the Committee on Licenses and Inspections to investigate and explore the need for a third party structural inspection or an engineering report on residential rental units or fire escapes on residential buildings to be submitted with the City's Housing Inspection License (3202), also known as a Housing Rental License and required for any entity that rents any type of housing unit in Philadelphia.

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*RESOLUTION NO. 140034 continued*

**CERTIFICATION:** This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twenty-third day of January, 2014.

**Darrell L. Clarke  
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL**

**Michael A. Decker  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL**

Introduced by: Councilmember Jones  
Sponsored by: Councilmembers Jones and Henon