

City of Philadelphia



(Bill No. 160130)

AN ORDINANCE

Amending Title 4 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled “The Philadelphia Building Construction and Occupancy Code,” by amending Subcode “B” (The Philadelphia Building Code), and thus amending the PA Uniform Construction Code for Philadelphia, to add sections requiring contractors, design professionals and developers to add additional fire-resistant material to structures containing truss construction and other light frame construction, under certain terms and conditions.

WHEREAS, Published reports have documented that fire fighters are at risk of falling through fire-damaged floors supported by exposed trusses and engineered wood I-joists. Fire burning underneath such floors can degrade the floor system, resulting in sudden collapse with little indication to fire fighters working above; and

WHEREAS, Such published reports have recommended that builders, contractors and owners should consider protecting truss supported floor systems and engineered wood I-joists by covering the underside with fire-resistant materials or consider protecting buildings which utilize such floor systems by installing sprinkler systems; and

WHEREAS, The International Residential Code and the Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code now provide for such required protections; and

WHEREAS, The International Building Code and Pennsylvania Uniform Construction Code do not currently require protecting truss-supported floor systems and engineered wood I-joists in all commercial buildings; now, therefore

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. Title 4 of The Philadelphia Code is hereby amended to read as follows:

**TITLE 4. THE PHILADELPHIA BUILDING CONSTRUCTION AND OCCUPANCY
CODE**

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SUBCODE “B” (THE PHILADELPHIA BUILDING CODE)

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CHAPTER 7. FIRE AND SMOKE PROTECTION FEATURES

SECTION B-701 GENERAL

* * *

B-701A PHILADELPHIA MODIFICATIONS TO CHAPTER 7 OF THE INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE

B-701A.1 Fire protection of floors. *Floor assemblies that are not required elsewhere in this code to be fire-resistance rated, shall be provided with a 1/2-inch (12.7 mm) gypsum wallboard membrane, 5/8-inch (16 mm) wood structural panel membrane, or equivalent on the underside of the floor framing member. Penetrations or openings for ducts, vents, electrical outlets, lighting, devices, luminaires, wires, speakers, drainage, piping and similar openings or penetrations shall be permitted.*

Exceptions:

- 1. Floor assemblies located directly over a space protected by an approved automatic sprinkler system.*
- 2. Floor assemblies located directly over a crawl space not intended for storage or fuel-fired appliances.*
- 3. Portions of floor assemblies shall be permitted to be unprotected where the aggregate area of the unprotected portions does not exceed 80 square feet (7.4 m²) per story.*
- 4. Wood floor assemblies using dimension lumber or structural composite lumber equal to or greater than 2-inch by 10-inch (50.8 mm by 254 mm) nominal dimension, or other approved floor assemblies demonstrating equivalent fire performance.*

SECTION 2. The Philadelphia Fire Department shall utilize available data from the Department of Licenses and Inspections to implement into the Philadelphia Fire Department's dispatching information services so as to make first responders aware of the potential hazards when arriving at an emergency call as they would relate to structures that may contain light-frame construction.

SECTION 3. The provisions of this Ordinance are subject to review under the Pennsylvania Construction Code Act (Act 45 of 1999, P.L. 491, as amended) and shall

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not become effective until the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry certifies approval of this Ordinance or the City Solicitor certifies to the Chief Clerk of Council that the requirements of Section 503 of Act 45 of 1999, as amended (35 P.S. sec. 7210.503), have otherwise been satisfied so as to permit the Ordinance to go into law.

Explanation:

Italics indicate new matter added.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Bill, Passed by the City Council on April 28, 2016. The Bill was Signed by the Mayor on May 10, 2016.



Michael A. Decker
Chief Clerk of the City Council