

# LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



## FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU

### ORDINANCE RELATING TO EMERGENCY LIGHTING IN R-1 OCCUPANCIES

An ordinance amending Section 91.3300 and adding Sections 91.3313 and 91.8606 to the Los Angeles Municipal Code relating to emergency lighting standards in Residential Buildings.

Whereas, the City of Los Angeles, located in a high intensity seismic zone, has been and expects to be impacted by massive earthquakes, and therefore, must provide greater safety requirements than cities in areas of less seismicity; and

Whereas, although the January 1994 Northridge earthquake was centered in the suburban community of Northridge, it caused severe damage throughout the entire Los Angeles basin, thus necessitating special safety precautions citywide; and

Whereas, the City of Los Angeles has many large, older buildings built before current emergency exit safety standards were adopted; and

Whereas, some 10,000 Group R, Division 1 Occupancy buildings containing five or more units and having an enclosed exit pathway or corridor of at least 50 feet in length are not equipped with emergency egress lighting systems; and

Whereas, as a result of the January 1994 Northridge Earthquake, residents of those 10,000 buildings found themselves plunged into darkness, in able to identify safe egress pathways, resulting in a safety hazard due to consternation, confusion, personal injury, and, in some instances, terror; and

Whereas, to mitigate this potentially life threatening situation and to provide for public safety in the event of a disaster, the Los Angeles City Council finds and determines that these 10,000 buildings should be retrofitted with battery powered emergency egress lighting systems; and

Whereas, the cost of retrofitting these 10,000 buildings with emergency lighting systems is minimal in comparison to the safety benefit of providing illumination in hallways, exit corridors and enclosed stairwells in the event of an emergency,

**NOW THEREFORE,**

**THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

**DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1**

Section 91.3300 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is hereby amended to read:

**SEC. 91.3300. BASIC PROVISIONS**

Chapter 33 of the U.B.C. is hereby adopted by reference with the following exceptions: Sections 3308 of the U.B.C. is not adopted; Sections 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304, 3305, 3306, 3307, 3309, 3310, 3313, 3314; 3315, and 3320 of the U.B.C. are not adopted, and in lieu thereof, Sections 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304, 3305, 3306, 3307, 3309, 3310, 3313, 3314; 3315, and 3320 are modified as provided herein. Sections 3320.1 and 3326 of the C.B.C. are adopted by reference. Table 33-A is amended as provided herein. For additional requirements for doors, corridors, stairways, and ramps for the accommodation of physically disabled persons, refer to the requirements in Title 24, Part 2, California Code of Regulations. (California Building Code, C.B.C.)

**Section 2**

Section 91.8606 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is hereby added to read:

**SEC. 91.8606. EMERGENCY LIGHTING STANDARDS FOR EXISTING RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS, GROUP R, DIVISION 1 OCCUPANCIES.**

- (a) Scope. The provisions of this Section apply to all existing buildings which contain the following:
1. five or more dwelling units; and,
  2. an enclosed exit corridor or pathway that is 50 feet in length or greater on any single floor.

**EXCEPTIONS:**

1. The provisions of this Section shall not apply to R-1 occupancies which currently have emergency lights in the

corridors and stairwells that are connected to a generator, central battery system or individual battery powered unit.

2. The provisions of this Section shall not apply to corridors located inside individual dwelling units.
3. The provisions of this Section shall not apply to R-1 occupancies which do not contain enclosed exit corridors, lobbies, passageways, or other common interior pathways that are part of the exiting system.

**(b) Definition**

1. The owner is that legal owner of an apartment building, congregate residence, hotel, and in those instances where a building is a condominium, the association of owners or the association of owners and the owner of each unit.
2. The legal owner of a building is that person, firm, corporation, partnership, or other entity whose name or title appears in the last equalized assessment roll in the Office of the County Recorder, as well as all successors or assignees of these owners.

**(c) Requirements**

1. All buildings required to comply with this section shall be provided with:
  - (i) permanently connected, emergency, battery operated exit corridor and exit sign illumination installed in the required exit pathway; or,
  - (ii) the required emergency exit corridor and exit sign illumination powered from a central battery system or an emergency generator complying with Article 700 of the NEC.
2. **Plan Check.** Plans for the emergency exit corridor and exit sign lighting systems shall submitted to the Department of Building and Safety for review and approval prior to obtaining a permit. Plans shall provide the information specified in section 93.0207 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code (E1ectrical Code)

**EXCEPTION:**

Existing buildings having less than four stories and containing fewer than 50 dwelling units are exempt from the requirement to submit electrical plans.

3. Exit corridor illumination shall be provided for the enclosed exit corridor and pathway as required in Section 91.3313 of this Code.
4. Lighted exit signs shall be provided as required in Section 91.3313 of this Code.
5. Emergency battery powered units shall be capable of operating for a minimum one and one-half hours.
6. The provisions of this Section shall not authorize modifying emergency lighting systems in existing buildings or portions thereof which provide a greater degree protection than the minimum requirements established by this section.
7. When the residential portion of a mixed occupancy building falls within the scope of this section, the non-residential portions of that building must also comply with the provisions of this section.

**(d) Enforcement**

1. **Notification.** Whenever the Department of Building and Safety or the Fire Department determines by inspection or review of City records that an R-1 multi-family residential building containing five or more dwelling units does not conform to the minimum requirements of this Section, either Department shall prepare a written order directing the owner to repair and modify the building so as to conform to the minimum requirements of this Section.

The order shall specify the manner in which the building fails to meet the minimum requirements of this Section. The order shall direct the owner of the building to submit plans, if required, to the Department of Building and Safety, obtain necessary permits and complete the work specified in the order.

Service of the order shall be accomplished in the following manner:

- (i) The Department of Building and Safety and/or the Fire Department may personally serve the order upon the owner; or,
- (ii) The Department of Building and Safety and/or the Fire Department may serve the order by certified or registered mail upon the owner.

In addition, the person in real or apparent charge or control of the building or unit of the building may be served in the manner prescribed by this Section.

2. **Time for Compliance.** Whenever an order is issued pursuant to Subsection (d) Paragraph 1 above, the owner shall:

- (i) Submit all building plans required by the order to the Department of Building and Safety within two years of the effective date of the order; and,
- (ii) Obtain permits required by the order from the Department of Building and Safety as a result of the order within three years of the effective date of the order; and,
- (iii) Complete the work required by the order within five years of the effective date of the order.

3. **Penalties.** Any person who fails to comply with an order issued pursuant to this Section, within each of the time periods set forth in Subsection (d) Paragraph 2 above, or who causes or permits another person to fail to comply with such an order, is guilty of a misdemeanor which is punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000.00 and/or six months imprisonment in the County Jail. For purposes of penalties, the phrase "any person" includes an owner, lessor, sublessor, manager, or any person in charge or control of a building subject to this Section.

In addition to any other remedy available by law, if the owner or other person in charge or control of the subject building fails to comply with an order issued pursuant to this Section within the time periods set forth in Subsection (d) of Paragraph 2 of this Section, the Department of Building and Safety or the Fire Department may refer the violation to the State Franchise Tax Board as a substandard residential building and/or refer the building to the Rent Escrow Account Program (REAP).

### **Section 3**

Section 91.331 of the Los Angeles Municipal Code is hereby added to read:

#### **SEC.91.3313. EXIT ILLUMINATION.**

- (a) Subsection (a) of Section 3313 of the U.B.C. IS hereby adopted by reference.
- (b) **Separate Sources of Power.** The power supply for exit illumination shall normally be provided by the wiring system. In the event of this failure, illumination shall be automatically energized from an emergency power system for Group I, Divisions 1.1 and 1.2 occupancies, for all Group R, Division 1 occupancies with enclosed exit corridors or pathways that are 50 feet in length or greater where the R-1 occupancy contains five or more dwelling units, and for all other occupancies where the exiting system serves an occupant load of 100 or more.

For high-rise buildings, see Section 91.3300 of this Code and Section 1807 of the U.B.C. For smoke proof enclosures, see Section 91,3300 of this code and Section 3310 (g) 9 of the U.B.C,

Emergency lighting systems shall be supplied from storage batteries or an on-site generator set. The system shall be installed in accordance with the requirements of the Electrical Code.

### **Section 4**

The City Clerk shall certify to the passage of this ordinance and cause the same to be published in some daily newspaper printed and published In the City of Los Angeles.