



DEPARTMENT OF LICENSES & INSPECTIONS

Municipal Services Building - Concourse Level
1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102

Fire Escape Inspection Reporting

Information regarding the inspection reporting requirements of the Philadelphia Fire Code

Visit our website at www.phila.gov/li

The City of Philadelphia’s Property Maintenance Code requires all building owners to maintain their buildings in good repair, structurally sound and sanitary so as to not impose a threat to the public. Additionally, the Fire Code establishes specific requirements for periodic inspections of fire escapes and fire escape balconies and the filing of reports of such inspections. This document serves to inform the public of the method of reporting those inspections to the Department.

See Section **F-1011.1** of the Philadelphia Fire Code for more details.

IMPORTANT:

The owner of any building with fire escapes or fire escape balconies shall be responsible for retaining a Professional to conduct periodic inspections of the fire escapes and fire escape balconies, and to prepare and file a report on such inspection with the owner. All fire escapes and fire escape balconies must be inspected and the reports submitted by July 1, 2017.

A summary of that inspection must be submitted to the Department of Licenses and Inspections on a form titled “Summary Inspection Report Form”.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

WHO DOES THE FIRE ESCAPE PROGRAM COVER?

The owner of a building with fire escapes or fire escape balconies.

WHAT IS A FIRE ESCAPE BALCONY?

A balcony that projects from the building face, made of any material including but not limited to wood, metal or concrete, and is intended for use in conjunction with a fire escape, an exit stair or an area of refuge.

WHAT MUST A PROPERTY OWNER DO TO COMPLY WITH F-1011.1?

The owner of a building with fire escapes or fire escape balconies shall be responsible for retaining a Professional to conduct periodic inspections of the fire escapes or fire escape balconies for structural adequacy and safety and to file a report on such inspection as required by Code. The Professional must be a professional engineer licensed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and be experienced in the practice of structural engineering.

WHERE CAN I OBTAIN THE REQUIRED form “Summary Inspection Report Form”?

Visit www.phila.gov/li under Permits & Certificates to download a copy of the form. This form is only a summary of the full report which must be given to the owner of the building.

HOW DO I SUBMIT THE FORM TO L+I?

Forms are to be submitted online using eCLIPSE. The *Summary Inspection Report Form* submitted **must have the correct address of the structure inspected** as designated by the City’s Office of Property assessment. The correct address can be found on the property tax bill. There is currently no fee for submittal of this form to the Department.

WHAT MUST THE BUILDING OWNER DO IF AN UNSAFE CONDITION IS FOUND?

Within twenty-four (24) hours of being notified of an unsafe condition by a Professional, the owner of the building shall take any and all actions necessary to protect public safety including, but not limited to, posting notice of the unsafe condition in a prominent location inside the building near every exit to an exterior fire escape.

If the fire escape or fire escape balcony encroaches upon a public right-of-way, such notice shall be posted in a prominent location visible from the right-of-way and the right-of-way shall be protected by installation of a sidewalk shed or other approved means. Such actions shall be considered part of an effort to remedy an emergency situation, and applications for any required permit shall be filed with the Department of Licenses and Inspections within three (3) days of notification. Within ten (10) days of the receipt of a report identifying an unsafe condition, the owner of a building shall commence work to correct the condition, and work shall continue without interruption until the unsafe condition has been corrected. Where required, the building shall either be evacuated or an approved fire watch shall be provided until the fire escape has been made safe and approved for use.

WHAT MUST THE PROFESSIONAL DO IF AN UNSAFE CONDITION IS FOUND?

The owner must be notified immediately and shall within twelve (12) hours of such discovery, notify the fire code official. When a fire escape or fire escape balcony is determined to be unsafe and such condition is considered imminently dangerous by the Professional, the Professional shall notify the code official immediately. A full copy of the inspection report identifying the unsafe condition must be delivered within 24 hours to:

L+I Emergency Services Unit
11th floor of the Municipal Services Building
1401 JFK Boulevard, Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-686-2480

This office will also handle inspections to correct conditions, requests for any extensions to repairs and receipt of reports related to the removal of unsafe conditions.

Within two (2) weeks after the unsafe condition has been corrected, the Professional shall re-inspect the fire escape and fire escape balconies and file with the fire code official a detailed amended report concerning their condition.

WHAT MUST I DO IF CONDITIONS ARE FOUND THAT ARE SAFE WITH A REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAM?

The owner of a building is responsible for ensuring that the conditions described in the report as Safe with a Repair and Maintenance Program are repaired and the actions identified by the Professional are completed within the time frame designated in the report, or by such time necessary to prevent a condition from becoming an unsafe condition, whichever is sooner.

WHAT MUST I DO IF A SAFE CONDITION IS FOUND?

Once the Professional has determined that the condition is safe, the Professional shall post, upon the fire escape, a tag or placard (made of weather-resistant reflective material) that clearly and legibly states the date of the inspection and the date by which a new inspection is required (5 years after the date of inspection), and the name, address and telephone number of the Professional or fire escape inspection business on the tag or placard.

WHAT IF MY BUILDING IS HISTORICAL AND THE FIRE ESCAPE NEEDS REPAIR?

Philadelphia Historical Commission (215-686-7660) approval is needed before a building permit can be issued.

THE FIRE ESCAPE ON MY BUILDING WAS RECENTLY RENOVATED. HOW CAN I OBTAIN A WAIVER?

If the fire escape of your building was substantially restored within the past one (1) year you must submit a written request to the Department for a waiver of the inspection requirements for the current inspection cycle. The request must include copies of any building permits related to the restoration work.

I DON'T BELIEVE MY FIRE ESCAPE NEEDS INSPECTION. WHAT CAN I DO?

The Code requires an inspection of any fire escape on any building. Exceptions to this requirement based upon particular conditions must be appealed to the Board of Safety and Fire Prevention.

Philadelphia Fire Department
Board of Safety and Fire Prevention
240 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123-2991