

Florida Fire Prevention Code (FFPC) requires codes and standards-compliant public safety communication coverage inside buildings (*new and existing*). Florida Statutes provide additional requirements and processes to what is codified in FFPC. FFPC specifies signal strength, quality, and percentage of general and critical areas covered. The systems typically used to enhance in-building coverage are called Emergency Communication Enhancement Systems (ERCES), or as they are referred to in the statutes, two-way radio communication enhancement system.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- **FFPC requires coverage in new and existing buildings**, except for the following exceptions which either have no requirement or where temporary exemption is granted:
 - **Extension:** Existing High-Rise buildings (Commercial and Residential) had an exemption until Jan 1, 2025, but if a system is needed must have applied for permits by Jan 1, 2024. (*No exemption for new buildings*).
 - **Exempt:** Apartment buildings 75 feet or less in height that are constructed using wood framing, provided that the building has less than 150 dwelling units and that all dwelling units discharge to the exterior or to a corridor that leads directly to an exit.
 - **Exempt:** Apartments and transient public lodging establishments that are less than three stories and that have direct access from the apartment or guest area to an exterior means of egress.
 - **Exempt:** One and two-family dwellings and townhouses.
 - **Exempt:** Buildings of less than 12,000 total gross square feet with no underground areas.
- **Prohibits the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) from withholding a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO)** solely on the need for an ERCES.
- **If a building has inadequate coverage, the building owner must get a contractor with an appropriate Florida license to submit an ERCES design**, and system must be installed within 12-months of TCO issuance.
- **Limits the frequency that an assessment of radio coverage is required for buildings:**
 - not more frequently than once every 3 years for existing high-rise buildings and existing buildings over 12,000 total gross square feet, and once every 5 years for all other existing buildings, **unless**:
 - Such building undergoes Level III building alteration or rehabilitation as defined in the Florida Building Code;
 - Such building undergoes reconstruction as determined by the Florida Fire Prevention Code;
 - A public safety agency reports to the local authority having jurisdiction that the agency's communication devices failed to function correctly inside a building due to poor signal coverage; or
 - A building is determined to be an imminent life safety threat to first responders.
- **Consent of the FCC license holder** (jurisdiction's radio system operator) is required for the installation or modification of any system.
- If a local **authority having jurisdiction modifies its public safety emergency communication system** such that modifications to existing two-way radio communication enhancement system installations are required, the local authority having jurisdiction must give owners of the existing two-way radio communication enhancement systems at least 180 days' notice before requiring any modification.
 - If a modification is required per the above, building owner has 1 year to complete the retrofit starting from the date of a notice of violation for non-compliant coverage.
- **If signal strength or DAQ is inadequate at the exterior of the building**, an enhancement system is not required
- **Local AHJ may not enforce requirements that are more stringent than those specified in the Florida Fire Prevention Code** with respect to the requirement for, design of, or installation of a two-way radio communication enhancement systems.

CODE and STATUTE EXCERPTS

Florida Fire Prevention Code 8th Edition (2023) (Based on NFPA 1 – 2021)

(Scan QR code to see the FFPC reference page)

11.10 Two-Way Radio Communication Enhancement Systems.

11.10.2 In all new and existing buildings, minimum radio signal strength for emergency services department communications shall be maintained at a level determined by the AHJ, and based on the existing coverage levels of the public safety communication systems utilized by the jurisdiction, measured at the exterior of the building.

11.10.2.1 Where existing coverage at the exterior of the building does not meet or exceed delivered audio quality of 3.4 or greater for analog or digital systems, two-way radio communication enhancement systems shall not be required.

<https://www.myfloridacfo.com/division/sfm/bfp/florida-fire-prevention-code>

- Incorporates NFPA 1221 – 2019 by reference
- AHJ may accept NFPA 1225 – 2022 upon request

Florida Statutes: HB 1575 (2023) effective July 1, 2023

(Scan QR code to see the full bill text)

§ 553.79 Permits; applications; issuance; inspections.—

(23) If an assessment of a new building's interior radio coverage and signal strength under the Florida Fire Prevention Code determines that installation of a two-way radio communication enhancement system is required, a contractor having the appropriate license issued by the department must submit a design to the local authority having jurisdiction for a two-way radio communication enhancement system to correct noncompliant radio coverage. The local authority having jurisdiction may not withhold issuance of a temporary certificate of occupancy for the building based solely on the need for a two-way radio communication enhancement system. Upon approval of the design by the local authority having jurisdiction, the jurisdiction must require the installation of the two-way radio communication enhancement system within 12 months after the issuance of a temporary certificate of occupancy. An extension for a temporary certificate of occupancy may not be unnecessarily withheld.

§ 633.202 Florida Fire Prevention Code (18) - Changes are too numerous to provide here. Use QR code to download the entire bill.

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2023/1575/BillText/er/PDF>



Scan for HB 1575