

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2015 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1179 (Delegate Beitzel)  
Rules and Executive Nominations

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**Sprinkler System Requirements - Tents - Exemption**

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This emergency bill specifies that a “tent” is exempt from the requirement to have a sprinkler system if the tent is not (1) used for lodging; (2) serviced by a public water system; and (3) attached to or incorporated as part of a building that is required to have a sprinkler system. “Tent” means a structure the covering of which is made of pliable material that achieves its support by mechanical means such as beams, columns, poles, or arches or by rope or cables, or both. The term includes a yurt, tepee, or any other similar structure.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** The bill does not affect State operations or finances.

**Local Effect:** The bill does not affect local operations or finances.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential meaningful.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law/Background:** The Department of Housing and Community Development is required to adopt, as the Maryland Building Performance Standards, the most recent version of International Building Code (IBC) along with applicable modifications authorized in Title 12 of the Public Safety Article. Under IBC, a tent is considered a “temporary structure” if it is erected for a period of less than 180 days in a 12-month period. While a tent must comply with the International Fire Code, a tent is exempt from the requirement to have a sprinkler system under IBC.

Under Maryland's Public Safety Article, in a jurisdiction in which building permits are issued, a sprinkler system must be installed in (1) each newly constructed dormitory, hotel, lodging, or rooming house, or multifamily residential dwelling for which the initial building permit is issued on or after July 1, 1990 and (2) each newly constructed townhouse for which the initial building permit is issued on or after July 1, 1992. In a jurisdiction in which building permits are *not* issued, a sprinkler system must be installed in (1) each dormitory, hotel, lodging, or rooming house, or multifamily residential dwelling on which construction begins on or after July 1, 1990 and (2) each townhouse on which construction begins on or after July 1, 1992.

Dwelling units not serviced by public water systems are exempt from the requirement to have a sprinkler system.

The State Fire Marshal or a local authority may grant an exemption to the sprinkler system requirement under specified circumstances. A person who knowingly violates the requirement is guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 10 days or a fine not exceeding \$1,000 or both.

**Small Business Effect:** A small business that owns and builds a tent that is not already exempt from sprinkler system requirements and qualifies for the bill's exemption avoids the costs associated with the purchase and installation of well-water sprinkler systems.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** SB 845 (Senator Edwards) - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Housing and Community Development; Department of State Police; Kent, Montgomery, Washington, and Worcester counties; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 17, 2015  
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