

HOUSE BILL 149

E4

(PRE-FILED)

6lr1591

CF 6lr1592

By: **Delegate Charkoudian**

Requested: October 31, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Fire Prevention – Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High-Rise**
3 **Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians**

4 FOR the purpose of authorizing a county or municipal corporation to designate certain fire
5 marshals with the approval of the State Fire Marshal or to request that the State
6 Fire Marshal designate certain fire marshals and requiring the State Fire Marshal
7 to adopt certain regulations governing the qualifications, training, standards, and
8 certification of designees; requiring installation of certain fire prevention in certain
9 high-rise residential buildings; requiring the State Fire Prevention Commission to
10 adopt certain regulations relating to fire alarm system technicians; and generally
11 relating to fire safety.

12 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

13 Article – Public Safety

14 Section 6–304, 9–102, 9–901, and 9–902

15 Annotated Code of Maryland

16 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

17 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

18 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

19 **Article – Public Safety**

20 6–304.

21 (a) (1) A county or municipal corporation of the State may designate **WITH**
22 **THE APPROVAL OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL, OR MAY REQUEST THAT THE STATE**
23 **FIRE MARSHAL DESIGNATE**, a fire marshal or appropriate fire official to serve as

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 assistant State fire marshal to carry out this title, including issuing orders, in that county
2 or municipal corporation.

3 (2) An assistant State fire marshal may not receive compensation from the
4 State.

5 (3) The State Fire Marshal shall carry out this title in a county or
6 municipal corporation that [has not] **DOES NOT HAVE A** designated [an] assistant State
7 fire marshal.

8 (b) (1) [An assistant State fire marshal shall have at least completed National
9 Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1031 – Fire Inspector I, or the equivalent, as
10 determined by the State Fire Marshal.] **THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL SHALL ADOPT**
11 **REGULATIONS ESTABLISHING REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS DESIGNATED**
12 **AS AN ASSISTANT STATE FIRE MARSHAL OR A SPECIAL ASSISTANT STATE FIRE**
13 **MARSHAL UNDER SUBSECTION (A)(1) OF THIS SECTION, INCLUDING:**

14 (I) **MINIMUM TRAINING, CERTIFICATION, AND OTHER**
15 **STANDARDS RELATING TO FIRE INSPECTION;**

16 (II) **MINIMUM TRAINING, CERTIFICATION, AND OTHER**
17 **STANDARDS FOR FIRE PLAN REVIEW, A FIRE PLAN EXAMINER, OR FIRE PLAN**
18 **ENGINEERING STAFF;**

19 (III) **MINIMUM TRAINING, CERTIFICATION, AND OTHER**
20 **STANDARDS RELATING TO FIRE INSPECTION;**

21 (IV) **ACCEPTABLE MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR THE ELIGIBILITY**
22 **OF AN INDIVIDUAL TO SERVE AS AN ASSISTANT STATE FIRE MARSHAL OR A SPECIAL**
23 **ASSISTANT STATE FIRE MARSHAL; AND**

24 (V) **POLICIES FOR APPLICATION FOR, REVIEW OF, EXPIRATION**
25 **OF, RENEWAL OF, AND PROBATIONARY STATUS FOR THE POSITIONS OF ASSISTANT**
26 **STATE FIRE MARSHAL AND SPECIAL ASSISTANT STATE FIRE MARSHAL.**

27 (2) The State Fire Marshal may administer an examination based on
28 NFPA [Standard 1031] **STANDARDS AS RELEVANT FOR THE REQUIREMENTS LISTED**
29 **IN PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION** before designating an individual as an
30 assistant State fire marshal **OR SPECIAL ASSISTANT STATE FIRE MARSHAL.**

31 (c) (1) The State Fire Marshal may designate as a special assistant State fire
32 marshal:

33 (i) a law enforcement officer involved in arson investigations;

(ii) any other suitable individual who meets the standards established under this section; or

(iii) on the advice of an assistant State fire marshal, a member of a fire department if:

10 (2) A special assistant State fire marshal serves at the pleasure of the State
11 Fire Marshal.

12 (3) A special assistant State fire marshal may not receive compensation
13 from the State.

14 (4) Each special assistant State fire marshal shall assist the State Fire
15 Marshal in carrying out the duties of the State Fire Marshal under this title.

16 (d) The Commission may remove an assistant or special assistant State fire
17 marshal for just cause by a majority decision:

18 (1) on the recommendation of the State Fire Marshal; and

19 (2) after an administrative hearing.

20 9-102.

21 (a) (1) In this section, "high-rise building" means a building [for human
22 occupancy that is:

23 (i) seven or more stories above grade level; or

24 (ii) over 75 feet in height] WHERE THE FLOOR OF AN OCCUPIABLE
25 STORY IS GREATER THAN 75 FEET ABOVE THE LOWEST LEVEL OF FIRE DEPARTMENT
26 VEHICLE ACCESS.

27 (2) "High-rise building" does not include:

28 (i) a structure or building used exclusively for open-air parking; or

29 (ii) a building used exclusively for agricultural purposes.

(b) This subtitle applies throughout the State, including Baltimore City.

(c) (1) An automatic smoke alarm shall be provided in each sleeping area in each residential occupancy, including one- and two-family dwellings, lodging or guest houses, hotels, dormitories, and apartment buildings, as defined in NFPA 101: Life Safety Code as adopted by the State Fire Prevention Commission.

(2) (i) Beginning July 31, 2025, smoke detectors shall be installed in accordance with location and spacing requirements established by the National Fire Protection Association in each interior public corridor in a residential rental high-rise building.

(ii) A county may not require upgrades to fire safety systems not required in subparagraph (i) of this paragraph as a condition of issuing a permit for the installation of smoke detectors required under subparagraph (i) of this paragraph.

(3) (I) IN THIS PARAGRAPH, "SUBSTANTIAL RENOVATION" MEANS
MANENT ALTERATIONS THAT:

1. ARE INTENDED TO ENHANCE THE VALUE OF A

2. COST AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO 40% OF THE VALUE OF ASSESSED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF ASSESSMENTS AND

BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2026, AUTOMATIC FIRE
E INSTALLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH NFPA STANDARDS IN
RENTAL HIGH-RISE BUILDING THAT IS UNDERGOING A
TION

IN DETERMINING WHETHER A PROPOSED SUBSTANTIAL
ADDED TO ENHANCE THE VALUE OF A BUILDING EXCLUSIVE OF
THEY MAY CONSIDER:

1. THE EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE RENTAL

2. WHETHER THE EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITION
TO IMPAIR THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SECURITY OF ANY

3. WHETHER THE DEFICIENCIES IN THE EXISTING
NS COULD INSTEAD BE CORRECTED BY IMPROVED
AIR; AND

4. WHETHER THE PROPOSED RENOVATIONS ARE
OPTIONAL OR COSMETIC CHANGES.

3 (IV) A SUBSTANTIALLY RENOVATED RESIDENTIAL RENTAL
4 HIGH-RISE BUILDING SHALL ALSO HAVE THE FOLLOWING FIRE PROTECTION AND
5 LIFE SAFETY FEATURES:

20 (d) Smoke alarms shall:

21 (1) be installed in accordance with NFPA 72: National Fire Alarm and
22 Signaling Code as referenced by the State Fire Prevention Code;

23 (2) be listed and labeled by a nationally recognized testing laboratory to
24 comply with Underwriters Laboratories (UL) 217, "Standard for safety for single and
25 multiple station smoke alarms";

26 (3) be suitable for sensing visible or invisible products of combustion; and

27 (4) sound an alarm suitable to warn the occupants.

28 (e) Local jurisdictions may adopt smoke alarm regulations that are more
29 stringent than the provisions of this subtitle.

30 9-901.

1 **(A)** In this subtitle[, “fire] THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS
2 INDICATED.

3 **(B)** “FIRE ALARM SYSTEM TECHNICIAN” MEANS A PERSON WHO IS ENGAGED
4 IN THE PERFORMANCE, DOCUMENTATION, PLANNING, AND COORDINATION OF THE
5 PERIODIC INSPECTION AND TESTING OF EXISTING FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS AND THEIR
6 COMPONENTS, NOT INCLUDING THE COMMISSIONING OF NEW SYSTEMS.

7 **(C)** “FIRE sprinkler contractor” means a person who designs, installs, inspects,
8 tests, repairs, or modifies a fire sprinkler system.

9 9–902.

10 (a) **(1)** The State Fire Prevention Commission shall adopt regulations to
11 establish a program to license and regulate fire sprinkler contractors in the State.

12 [(b)] **(2)** The State Fire Prevention Commission shall adopt regulations to:

13 [(1)] **(I)** define fire sprinkler contractor;

14 [(2)] **(II)** define fire sprinkler system[,] in a manner that does not conflict
15 with § 12–101(l), (m), or (n) of the Business Occupations and Professions Article;

16 [(3)] **(III)** designate and identify exemptions to the regulations;

17 [(4)] **(IV)** establish requirements for licensure including professional and
18 technical standards and requirements for liability insurance;

19 [(5)] **(V)** establish a schedule of fees for licenses that will recover but not
20 exceed the direct and indirect costs associated with the issuance of the licenses; and

21 [(6)] **(VI)** establish procedures for the State Fire Marshal to deny, suspend,
22 or revoke the license of a person who fails to comply with any regulation adopted by the
23 State Fire Prevention Commission under this subtitle.

24 **(B)** **(1)** THE STATE FIRE PREVENTION COMMISSION SHALL ADOPT
25 REGULATIONS TO ESTABLISH A PROGRAM TO LICENSE AND REGULATE FIRE ALARM
26 SYSTEM TECHNICIANS AND FIRE ALARM SYSTEM COMPANIES IN THE STATE.

27 **(2)** THE STATE FIRE PREVENTION COMMISSION SHALL ADOPT
28 REGULATIONS TO:

29 **(I)** DEFINE FIRE ALARM SYSTEM TECHNICIAN;

4 (III) DESIGNATE AND IDENTIFY EXEMPTIONS TO THE
5 REGULATIONS;

6 (IV) ESTABLISH REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE, INCLUDING
7 PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR LIABILITY
8 INSURANCE;

12 (VI) ESTABLISH PROCEDURES FOR THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL
13 TO DENY, SUSPEND, OR REVOKE THE LICENSE OF A PERSON WHO FAILS TO COMPLY
14 WITH ANY REGULATION ADOPTED BY THE STATE FIRE PREVENTION COMMISSION
15 UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.

16 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
17 October 1, 2026.