

HOUSE BILL 149

E4

(PRE-FILED)

6lr1591
CF SB 513

By: **Delegate Charkoudian**

Requested: October 31, 2025

Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

Reassigned: Economic Matters, January 23, 2026

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 3, 2026

CHAPTER _____

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**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 6-304.

2 (a) (1) A county or municipal corporation of the State may designate **WITH**
3 **THE APPROVAL OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL, OR MAY REQUEST THAT THE STATE**
4 **FIRE MARSHAL DESIGNATE**, a fire marshal or appropriate fire official to serve as
5 assistant State fire marshal to carry out this title, including issuing orders, in that county
6 or municipal corporation.

7 (2) An assistant State fire marshal may not receive compensation from the
8 State.

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

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

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

20 (II) **MINIMUM TRAINING, CERTIFICATION, AND OTHER**
21 **STANDARDS FOR FIRE PLAN REVIEW, A FIRE PLAN EXAMINER, OR FIRE PLAN**
22 **ENGINEERING STAFF;**

23 (III) **MINIMUM TRAINING, CERTIFICATION, AND OTHER**
24 **STANDARDS RELATING TO FIRE ~~INSPECTION~~ INVESTIGATION;**

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

28 (V) **POLICIES FOR APPLICATION FOR, REVIEW OF, EXPIRATION**
29 **OF, RENEWAL OF, AND PROBATIONARY STATUS FOR THE POSITIONS OF ASSISTANT**
30 **STATE FIRE MARSHAL AND SPECIAL ASSISTANT STATE FIRE MARSHAL.**

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

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

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

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

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

8 1. the designee is a full-time employee of the fire
9 department;

10 2. the designee performs fire inspections or fire
11 investigations for the fire department; and

12 3. the fire department is organized and operates in the State.

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

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

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

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

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

22 (2) after an administrative hearing.

23 9–102.

24 (a) (1) In this section, “high-rise building” means a building [for human
25 occupancy that is:

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

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

1 (2) “High-rise building” does not include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

16 (3) (I) IN THIS PARAGRAPH, “SUBSTANTIAL RENOVATION” MEANS
17 PERMANENT ALTERATIONS THAT:

18 1. ARE INTENDED TO ENHANCE THE VALUE OF A
19 BUILDING; AND

20 2. COST AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN 40%
21 OF THE VALUE OF THE BUILDING AS ASSESSED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF
22 ASSESSMENTS AND TAXATION.

23 (II) BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2026, AUTOMATIC FIRE
24 SPRINKLERS SHALL BE INSTALLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH NFPA LIFE SAFETY
25 CODE AND NFPA STANDARDS IN EACH RESIDENTIAL RENTAL HIGH-RISE BUILDING
26 THAT IS UNDERGOING A SUBSTANTIAL RENOVATION THAT RECEIVES BUILDING
27 PERMITS ON OR AFTER OCTOBER 1, 2026.

28 (III) IN DETERMINING WHETHER A PROPOSED SUBSTANTIAL
29 RENOVATION IS INTENDED TO ENHANCE THE VALUE OF A BUILDING EXCLUSIVE OF
30 LAND VALUE, A COUNTY MAY CONSIDER BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS COMPLETED
31 OVER A 4-YEAR TIME PERIOD FROM THE DATE OF THE INITIAL BUILDING PERMIT.‡

32 1. ~~THE EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITION OF THE RENTAL~~
33 ~~HOUSING;~~

~~2. WHETHER THE EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITION
IMPAIRS OR TENDS TO IMPAIR THE HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SECURITY OF ANY
TENANT;~~

~~3. WHETHER THE DEFICIENCIES IN THE EXISTING
PHYSICAL CONDITIONS COULD INSTEAD BE CORRECTED BY IMPROVED
MAINTENANCE OR REPAIR; AND~~

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

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

1. SMOKE ALARMS ~~OR HEAT DETECTORS~~ IN EVERY
SLEEPING AREA;

2. STAIRWELLS ENCLOSED WITH AT LEAST 2-HOUR FIRE
RESISTANCE RATED CONSTRUCTION WITH AT LEAST 90-MINUTE FIRE RESISTANCE
~~RELATED~~ RATED, SELF-CLOSING, AND SELF-LATCHING DOORS;

3. AT LEAST 20-MINUTE FIRE RESISTANCE RATED
CORRIDOR DOORS ~~UNLESS PARTIAL SPRINKLER PROTECTION IS PROVIDED WITH~~
APPROPRIATELY RATED CORRIDOR WALLS;

4. SMOKEPROOF EXIT ENCLOSURES VIA NATURAL
VENTILATION, MECHANICAL VENTILATION INCORPORATING A VESTIBULE, OR
PRESSURIZING THE STAIR ENCLOSURE;

5. AT LEAST TWO SMOKE COMPARTMENTS ON EACH
FLOOR; AND

6. ~~DECREASED MAXIMUM EXIT ACCESS TRAVEL
DISTANCES~~ INADEQUATE FIRE PUMPS REPLACED WHEN NECESSARY.

(d) Smoke alarms shall:

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

1 (2) be listed and labeled by a nationally recognized testing laboratory to
2 comply with Underwriters Laboratories (UL) 217, “Standard for safety for single and
3 multiple station smoke alarms”;

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

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

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

8 9–901.

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

11 (B) **“FIRE ALARM SYSTEM TECHNICIAN” MEANS A PERSON WHO IS ENGAGED**
12 **IN THE PERFORMANCE, INSTALLATION, DOCUMENTATION, PLANNING, AND**
13 **COORDINATION OF THE PERIODIC INSPECTION AND TESTING OF EXISTING FIRE**
14 **ALARM SYSTEMS AND THEIR COMPONENTS, NOT INCLUDING THE COMMISSIONING**
15 **OF NEW SYSTEMS.**

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

18 9–902.

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

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

22 [(1)] (I) define fire sprinkler contractor;

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

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

26 [(4)] (IV) establish requirements for licensure including professional and
27 technical standards and requirements for liability insurance;

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

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

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

7 **(2) THE STATE FIRE PREVENTION COMMISSION SHALL ADOPT**
8 **REGULATIONS TO:**

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

10 **(II) DEFINE FIRE ALARM SYSTEM IN A MANNER THAT DOES NOT**
11 **CONFLICT WITH § 12-101(L), (M), OR (N) OF THE BUSINESS OCCUPATIONS AND**
12 **PROFESSIONS ARTICLE;**

13 **(III) DESIGNATE AND IDENTIFY EXEMPTIONS TO THE**
14 **REGULATIONS;**

15 **(IV) ESTABLISH REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE, INCLUDING**
16 **PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR LIABILITY**
17 **INSURANCE;**

18 **(V) ESTABLISH A SCHEDULE OF FEES FOR LICENSES THAT WILL**
19 **RECOVER BUT NOT EXCEED THE DIRECT AND INDIRECT COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH**
20 **THE ISSUANCE OF THE LICENSES; AND**

21 **(VI) ESTABLISH PROCEDURES FOR THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL**
22 **TO DENY, SUSPEND, OR REVOKE THE LICENSE OF A PERSON WHO FAILS TO COMPLY**
23 **WITH ANY REGULATION ADOPTED BY THE STATE FIRE PREVENTION COMMISSION**
24 **UNDER THIS SUBTITLE.**

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