



COMMUNIQUÉ

OFFICE OF THE FIRE MARSHAL
BUREAU DU COMMISSAIRE DES INCENDIES

December 18, 2024

No. 2024-08

Approval of Targeted Regulatory Exemption to the Ontario Fire Code Compliance Deadline for Sprinklers in Designated Long-Term Care (LTC) Homes

On December 4, 2024, the Solicitor General of Ontario approved Ontario Regulation [505/24](#) - Compliance Extension for Long-Term Care Homes - made under the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997* (FPPA).

The regulation will come into force on January 1, 2025 and will extend the sprinkler installation deadline for designated long-term care (LTC) homes by 18 months (from January 1, 2025, to July 1, 2026) while ensuring consistent application of fire safety criteria that an LTC home must meet during the interim period.

The regulatory exemption will apply to specifically defined LTC homes that qualify under one of three categories established by the Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC):

- Those that have a contract to install sprinklers in an existing building by July 1, 2026.
- Those that are party to an approved agreement to redevelop the home or beds at an existing or different location which will result in the home or beds being sprinklered by July 1, 2026.
- Those that are in the process of closing (with an MLTC-approved closure agreement).

The regulation would not apply to those LTC homes that are already in compliance with the sprinklering requirements of the Ontario Fire Code (whether compliance is achieved by meeting the code's technical requirements or by having in place a Chief Fire Official-approved Alternative Solution or Life Safety Study).

To ensure staff and resident safety while the unsprinklered LTC homes work toward achieving compliance, additional fire safety criteria will apply to the LTC homes covered by the regulation:

- At least one supervisory staff to be on duty and present on each floor of the home at all times with at least one of those supervisory staff to be assigned to fire watch

- duty to ensure that means of egress are kept clear and that fire hazards are noted and addressed.
- Prescribed supervisory staff to complete designated online fire safety training on or after January 31, 2025 and submit certificate of completion to local Chief Fire Official within 15 days of completion.
 - More frequent observed fire drills for supervisory staff for an approved scenario on a cost recovery basis where applicable (frequency: every three months).
 - More frequent fire safety inspections by local fire department on a cost recovery basis where applicable (frequency: every three months).
 - Enhanced testing/maintenance for existing building fire alarm and voice communication systems and submission of records to local Chief Fire Official within 15 calendar days of receipt from service provider.
 - A portable fire extinguisher to be provided at each nurses' station.

During the interim period, all designated LTC homes will still be required to comply with both the Ontario Fire Code and MLTC requirements related to resident safety. Compliance will be enforced by local fire officials and/or MLTC inspections.

To further support this initiative, the OFM has revised Fire Marshal Directive 2016-001 by updating the contact points for MLTC and the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA) to ensure that they continue to be made aware of serious fire risks in long-term care homes and retirement homes.

Fire departments with enquiries regarding O. Reg. 505/24 may contact their fire protection adviser or email askofm@ontario.ca.