

Updated requirements for Sprinkler Systems for new buildings and older buildings undergoing renovations

ATTENTION ~ General Contractors and Business Owners

Revisions to Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L.) [chapter 148, section 26G](#) will become effective on **January 1, 2010**. The law, which requires the installation of automatic sprinkler systems in all new buildings 7,500 square feet in aggregate area or greater irrespective of use group and certain existing buildings undergoing major renovations and/or addition, was previously a local option law. Among other changes, [Chapter 508 of the Acts and Resolves of 2008](#) causes the law to be effective statewide, not by local option.

The [Automatic Sprinkler Appeals Board \("ASAB"\)](#) has issued a [guidance document](#) in the hopes of affecting a smooth transition into new requirements of the law. Please take time to review the document by clicking on the highlighted link to become familiar with the new changes/requirements.

Little, if anything, will change with regard to the building permit process once the revised law becomes effective. Section 110 of [780 CMR](#) will still require the filing of a building permit application, and specifically, Section 110.8 will continue require the transfer of plans to head of the municipal fire department. However, it is important to note that provisions of the law outweigh requirements of the Building Code. Therefore, on or after January 1, 2010, although the Building Code may allow a business use occupancy building of up to 12,000 square feet before a sprinkler system is required, the general law requires the installation of a sprinkler system at 7,500 square feet in the aggregate (different from the Building Code, building areas are calculated from outside wall to outside wall dimensions). The DFS guidance document provides more specificity with regard to major renovations, additions and jurisdictional authority.