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Town of Brookhaven

Department of Public Safety

Division of Fire Prevention



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Emergency Responder Radio Coverage (ERRC) Advisory

This advisory is to provide information regarding the requirements for testing, and if needed, the installation of equipment to ensure adequate coverage of emergency responder radios pursuant to Section 510 of the 2015 edition of the International Fire Code and Section 7.13 of the New York State, Department of State Division of Codes and Standards 2017 Uniform Code Supplement.

<https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IFC2015NY/chapter-5-fire-service-features>

<https://www.dos.ny.gov/dcea/pdf/2017%20Uniform%20Code%20Supplement-10-2017.pdf>

On numerous occasions emergency responders enter a premise that due to the construction characteristics of the building radio transmissions cannot be sent out from, or received in, the building. This can and has left emergency responders at a great disadvantage in performing their duties and in some cases has caused loss of life of the emergency responder and / or the occupants they are there to help. Whether firefighters, police officers or EMS personnel, all rely heavily on radio transmissions to call for assistance, provide direction to other emergency responders and receive vital information that could be the difference between life and death.

Property / building owners are required to ensure emergency responders, which includes fire department, law enforcement and emergency medical services, can transmit and receive radio transmissions from within all portions of a newly constructed building, including editions to existing buildings and those buildings undergoing significant (Level 3) alterations. Existing buildings and those existing buildings undergoing minor (Level 1 or Level 2) alterations are specifically exempt from this code.

The Emergency Responder Radio Coverage (ERRC) requirements were adopted into code by the New York State Department of State, Division of Codes and Standard- Codes Council. Therefore, this is a New York State Code, that by executive law, is enforced by the local municipalities, in this case the Town of Brookhaven, Division of Fire Prevention. Enforcement of this code is within the jurisdiction of the Chief Fire Marshal of the Town of Brookhaven as the fire code official. It is also important to note that although local fire department, law enforcement and EMS agencies will be consulted in this process, they do not have the authority to enforce, nor grant relief from, any of the requirements of this code.

Recommended course of action:

From the very beginning of the design phase of your project, it is important that your New York State licensed design professional who is designing your building recognizes the potential need for a system that enhances emergency responder radio transmissions, and takes a proactive approach; *Unfortunately, testing to determine with absolute certainty if enhancements are needed will not be able to be conducted prior to your building being substantially constructed.* though construction type, construction materials utilized, and size of the building will enable the design professional to hypothesize the potential for the need to enhance ERRC. It is imperative that your design professional obtain the services of a knowledgeable radio communications firm. This firm can provide a preconstruction evaluation based on the building's characteristics, to determine if radio enhancements are likely to be needed. Additionally, these firms can provide the design, testing and in most cases installation services. *Please note the Town of Brookhaven does not recommend nor endorse any firm or products.*

With the above in mind and prior to testing, it may be advantageous to design and install cabling and other auxiliary components prior to the closing of walls and ceiling so if it is determined that ERRC enhancements are required, after testing, installation will be quicker and less destructive to the finished surfaces.

If determined that radio coverage enhancements are needed in a building a final Certificate of Occupancy will be delayed.

It is important to note that if a building is constructed and a determination is made through the prescribed testing methods that radio coverage is inadequate without the installation of equipment to enhance radio coverage, said equipment will need to be installed, tested and operational, prior to the issuance of a final Certificate of Compliance, hence a final Certificate of Occupancy will not be issued.

Permit Required:

A permit will be required for the installation of an ERRC system. Submissions shall include:

- 1. (3) Sets of plans bearing the stamp / seal of a New York State design professional.**
- 2. An explanatory statement describing the system, components, etc.**
- 3. Appropriate fee (see Division of Fire Prevention Fee Schedule)**

Acceptance Testing:

Upon completion of the installation, an acceptance test is required as prescribed by section 510.5.3. Testing shall be conducted by the qualified / FCC license radio technician with a Fire Marshal from the Division of Fire Prevention present.

Annual Testing:

As with all life safety systems, periodic testing is required to ensure the system remains fully functional. ERRC systems shall be tested annually by a qualified / FCC licensed radio technician. Annual testing shall be conducted, and the results of such testing shall be forwarded to the Division of Fire Prevention.

Radio Frequencies:

Your radio communications firm will be able to evaluate the best type of system for your building and design a system to enhance the radio communications for the local fire department, local EMS agency, (if different from the local fire department), as well as the Suffolk County Police Department, while avoiding amplification of other radio frequencies used in the building.