

[First Reprint]
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STATE OF NEW JERSEY
222nd LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2026 SESSION

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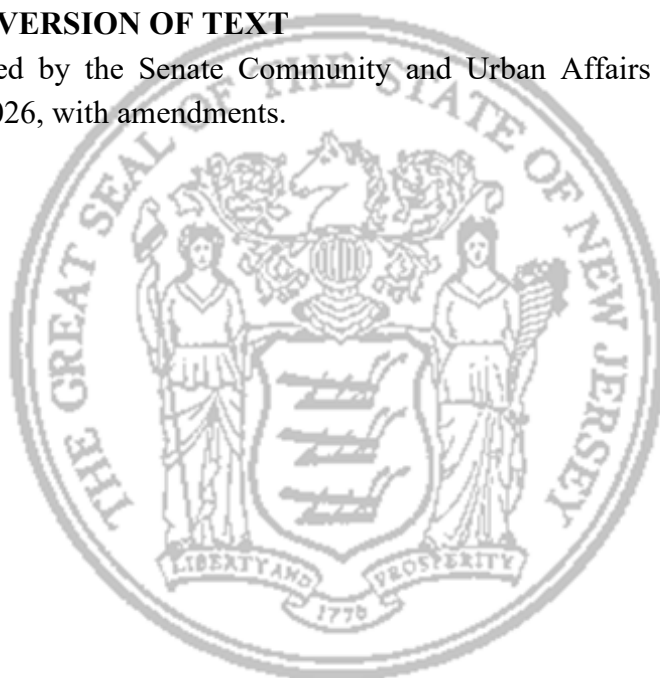
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SYNOPSIS

Provides that only registered design professionals or employees with certified fire escape contractors are authorized to install, service, repair, inspect, and maintain fire escapes.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee on October 1, 2026, with amendments.



1 AN ACT concerning fire escape contractors and amending P.L.2001,
2 c.289 ¹**[and P.L.1983, c.383]**¹.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*
6

7 1. Section 1 of P.L.2001, c.289 (C.52:27D-25n) is amended to
8 read as follows:

9 1. As used in sections 1 through 19 of P.L.2001, c.289
10 (C.52:27D-25n et seq.):

11 "Architect" means an individual who, through education,
12 training, and experience, is skilled in the art and science of building
13 design and has been licensed by the New Jersey State Board of
14 Architects to practice architecture in the State of New Jersey.

15 "Business entity" means a proprietor, corporation, partnership or
16 company operating as a fire protection contractor.

17 "Carbon dioxide fire protection system" means a special hazard
18 fire suppression system that uses carbon dioxide as its extinguishing
19 agent.

20 "Certificate of certification" means a certificate issued by the
21 commissioner that authorizes a person to engage in the fire
22 protection equipment business to the degree indicated on the
23 certificate.

24 "Certificate holder" means a person who is certified to engage in
25 the fire protection equipment business.

26 "Clean agent fire suppression system" means a special hazard
27 fire suppression system that uses an extinguishing agent that will
28 not damage the contents of the hazard.

29 "Combination fire and smoke damper" means a device that
30 meets both the fire damper and smoke damper requirements.

31 "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Community
32 Affairs.

33 "Committee" means the Fire Protection Equipment Advisory
34 Committee created by section 2 of **[this act]** P.L.2001, c.289
35 (C.52:27D-25o).

36 "Dedicated smoke control system" means a smoke control
37 system and components that are installed for the sole purpose of
38 providing smoke control and that upon activation of the systems
39 operate specifically to perform the smoke control function.

40 "Director" means the Director of the Division of Fire Safety in
41 the Department of Community Affairs.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Senate SCU committee amendments adopted October 1, 2026.

1 "Division" means the Division of Fire Safety in the Department
2 of Community Affairs.

3 "Engineered fire suppression system" means a fire suppression
4 system which is designed individually to suit a particular purpose or
5 hazard. Such a system requires individual calculation and design to
6 determine the flow rates, nozzle pressures, pipe size, area or volume
7 to be protected by each nozzle, quantities of extinguishing agent
8 and the number and types of nozzles and their placement in a
9 specific system.

10 "Fire alarm system" means a system which provides a warning
11 alarm signaling the presence of fire conditions and may be capable
12 of initiating an action to suppress a fire condition.

13 "Fire damper" means a device installed in ducts and air transfer
14 openings designed to close automatically upon detection of heat and
15 resist the passage of flame. Fire dampers are classified for use in
16 either static systems that will automatically shut down in the event
17 of a fire, or in dynamic systems that continue to operate during a
18 fire. A dynamic fire damper is tested and rated for closure under
19 elevated temperature airflow.

20 "Fire escape" means an additional means of egress installed on
21 an existing building when more than one exit is required and there
22 is not sufficient space for an exterior stair within the lot line.

23 "Fire escape contractor" means a person or business entity that
24 offers to undertake or represents itself as being able to undertake, or
25 does undertake the installation, service, repair, inspection, or
26 maintenance, of fire escapes. The person shall be a ¹**[licensed]**
27 registered¹ design professional or an employee with a fire escape
28 contractor certified in accordance with the rules and regulations
29 adopted by the commissioner.

30 "Fire protection equipment" includes fire alarm systems, fire
31 sprinkler systems, standpipe systems, clean agent fire suppression
32 systems, special hazard fire suppression systems, carbon dioxide
33 fire protection systems, foam fire protection systems, kitchen fire
34 suppression systems, portable fire extinguishers, or any other
35 equipment designed to detect, suppress **[or]**, or extinguish a fire.

36 "Fire protection subcode official" means a qualified person
37 appointed by the appropriate appointing authority or the
38 commissioner pursuant to the authority of the "State Uniform
39 Construction Code Act," P.L.1975, c.217 (C.52:27D-119 et seq.).

40 "Fire protection contractor" or "contractor" means a person or
41 business entity that offers to undertake or represents itself as being
42 able to undertake, or does undertake the installation, service, sale,
43 repair, inspection or maintenance of fire protection equipment.

1 "Fire protection contractor business permit" means a permit
2 issued by the commissioner to a business entity to operate as a fire
3 protection contractor.

4 "Fire sprinkler system" means an automatic fire suppression
5 system that includes an automatic water sprinkler system or a
6 standpipe system and related system components, including
7 detection.

8 "Fire suppression system" means an engineered or pre-
9 engineered system that suppresses a fire using an extinguishing
10 agent distributed through fixed piping and nozzles that are activated
11 either manually or automatically. The system may include
12 containers, nozzles, controls, automatic detection, manual releases,
13 equipment shut downs and alarms. In such systems, an
14 extinguishing agent is discharged through fixed pipes and nozzles
15 into or over a potential fire hazard.

16 "Foam fire protection system" means a special hazard fire
17 suppression system that uses foam as its extinguishing agent.

18 "Kitchen fire suppression system" means a pre-engineered
19 system which is designed specifically to protect the hood, duct, and
20 cooking appliances of a kitchen. The system, which may include
21 containers, nozzles, controls, automatic detection, manual release,
22 cooking appliance shutdown equipment, and alarms will have an
23 extinguishing agent discharged through fixed pipes and nozzles
24 over and into the fire hazard area.

25 "Maintenance" means the function of keeping equipment in such
26 a condition that it will perform as it originally was designed to do.

27 "Portable fire extinguisher" means a portable device, carried or
28 on wheels and operated by hand, containing an extinguishing agent
29 that can be expelled under pressure for the purpose of suppressing
30 or extinguishing fire.

31 "Pre-engineered system" means a fire suppression system
32 having predetermined flow rates, nozzle pressures, detection and
33 quantities of extinguishing agent. Such a system has the specific
34 pipe size, maximum and minimum pipe lengths, flexible hose
35 specifications, number of fittings and types of nozzles prescribed by
36 a testing laboratory. The hazards protected by such a system are
37 specifically limited as to type and size by a testing laboratory based
38 upon actual fire tests. Limitations on hazards which can be
39 protected by such a system are contained in the manufacturer's
40 installation manual which is referenced as a part of the listing.

41 "Registered design professional" means an architect or a
42 licensed professional engineer.

43 "Smoke control system" means an engineered system that
44 includes all methods that can be used singly or in combination to

1 modify smoke movement, including engineered systems that use
2 mechanical fans to produce pressure differences across smoke
3 barriers to inhibit smoke movement.

4 "Smoke damper" means a device installed in ducts and air
5 transfer openings designed to resist the passage of smoke. The
6 device is installed to operate automatically, controlled by a smoke
7 detection system, and, where required, is capable of being
8 positioned from a fire command center.

9 "Special hazard fire suppression system" means a fire
10 suppression system that uses an extinguishing agent other than
11 water.

12 "Standpipe system" means a fire protection system consisting of
13 an arrangement of piping, valves, hose outlets, and allied equipment
14 installed in a building or structure.

15 "Warranty" means a written guarantee given to a purchaser of
16 fire protection equipment covering a period of one year after the
17 installation of new fire protection equipment.

18 (cf: P.L.2023, c.186, s.6)

19

20 2. Section 4 of P.L.2001, c.289 (C.52:27D-25q) is amended to
21 read as follows:

22 4. a. After the effective date of P.L.2001, c.289, no fire
23 protection contractor shall engage in the installation, service, repair,
24 inspection, or maintenance of fire protection equipment without
25 holding or employing a person who holds a valid certificate of
26 certification issued in accordance with P.L.2001, c.289 (C.52:27D-
27 25n et seq.), except that the commissioner shall determine by rules
28 and regulations the date after which no contractor may engage in
29 the installation, service, repair, inspection, or maintenance of fire
30 dampers, combination fire and smoke dampers, or smoke control
31 systems without holding or employing a person who holds a valid
32 certificate of certification issued in accordance with P.L.2023, c.186
33 (C.52:27D-198.21 et al.). A fire protection contractor who is not a
34 certificate holder shall be required to obtain a fire protection
35 contractor business permit from the commissioner, which shall be
36 issued for three years upon payment of an appropriate fee set by the
37 commissioner and proof that the fire protection contractor employs
38 a certificate holder. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section,
39 persons holding a license to engage in the fire alarm business
40 pursuant to P.L.1997, c.305 (C.45:5A-23 et seq.), or who are
41 electrical contractors as defined in section 2 of P.L.1962, c.162
42 (C.45:5A-2), are exempt from the requirement of obtaining a
43 certificate of certification under this act to engage in the fire alarm
44 business pursuant to this act to the extent that such persons are
45 acting within the scope of practice of their profession or occupation.

1 The certificate required by this section shall define by class the
2 type of work in which a fire protection contractor may engage.

3 Notwithstanding any provision of P.L.2001, c.289, the
4 commissioner shall issue a certificate to any person who has been
5 employed as a fire protection contractor for a period of not less than
6 five years on or before the effective date of this act, upon
7 application with submission of satisfactory proof and payment by
8 that person of the appropriate certification fee within 180 days
9 following the effective date of this act.

10 b. The following certified classifications are hereby
11 established:

12 (1) An "All Fire Protection Equipment Contractor" is authorized
13 to install, service, repair, inspect and maintain all fire protection
14 equipment listed in paragraphs (2) through (6) of this subsection.

15 (2) A "Fire Sprinkler System Contractor" is authorized to install,
16 service, repair, inspect and maintain fire sprinkler systems.

17 (3) A "Special Hazard Fire Suppression System Contractor" is
18 authorized to install, service, repair, inspect and maintain special
19 hazard fire suppression systems and kitchen fire suppression
20 systems.

21 (4) A "Fire Alarm System Contractor" is authorized to install,
22 service, repair, inspect and maintain all fire alarm systems.

23 (5) A "Portable Fire Extinguisher Contractor" is authorized to
24 install, service, repair, inspect and maintain all portable fire
25 extinguishers.

26 (6) A "Kitchen Fire Suppression System Contractor" is
27 authorized to install, service, repair, inspect and maintain all
28 kitchen fire suppression systems.

29 (7) A "Smoke Damper, Fire Damper, and Combination Fire and
30 Smoke Damper Contractor" is authorized to install, service, repair,
31 inspect, and maintain all smoke dampers, fire dampers, and
32 combination fire and smoke dampers. In addition to any other
33 requirements adopted by the commissioner, a Smoke Damper, Fire
34 Damper, and Combination Fire and Smoke Damper Contractor shall
35 participate in an approved apprenticeship or skill training program
36 that is registered with, and approved by, the United States
37 Department of Labor or a State apprenticeship agency, as defined
38 by the commissioner in rules or regulations, unless the
39 commissioner determines by rule or regulation that requiring
40 participation in such a program would be substantially detrimental
41 to ensuring that a sufficient number of contractors are certified to
42 conduct the work within the scope of the contractor's certification
43 class Statewide, and shall hold a certification from an organization
44 that has been accredited under or meets the criteria required by the
45 International Organization for Standardization/International
46 Electrotechnical Commission 17024 Personnel Certification
47 standard, or such substantially similar certification as determined by
48 the commissioner in rules or regulations. Notwithstanding the

1 provisions of this section, the commissioner may exempt by
2 regulation persons with related licenses or credentials from the
3 requirement of obtaining a certificate of certification as a Smoke
4 Damper, Fire Damper, and Combination Fire and Smoke Damper
5 Contractor to engage in the initial installation of smoke dampers,
6 fire dampers, and combination fire and smoke dampers to the extent
7 that such persons are acting within the scope of practice of their
8 profession or occupation.

9 (8) A "Smoke Control System Contractor" is authorized to
10 install, service, repair, inspect, and maintain all smoke control
11 systems. In addition to any other requirements adopted by the
12 commissioner, a Smoke Control System Contractor shall participate
13 in an approved apprenticeship or skill training program that is
14 registered with, and approved by, the United States Department of
15 Labor or a State apprenticeship agency, as defined by the
16 commissioner in rules or regulations, unless the commissioner
17 determines by rule or regulation that requiring participation in such
18 a program would be substantially detrimental to ensuring that a
19 sufficient number of contractors are certified to conduct the work
20 within the scope of the contractor's certification class statewide, and
21 shall hold a certification from an organization that has been
22 accredited under or meets the criteria required by the International
23 Organization for Standardization/International Electrotechnical
24 Commission 17024 Personnel Certification standard, or such
25 substantially similar certification as determined by the
26 commissioner in rules or regulations. Notwithstanding the
27 provisions of this section, the commissioner may exempt by
28 regulation persons with related licenses or credentials from the
29 requirement of obtaining a certificate of certification as a Smoke
30 Control System Contractor to engage in the initial installation of
31 smoke control systems to the extent that such persons are acting
32 within the scope of practice of their profession or occupation.

33 (9) A "Fire Escape Contractor" is authorized to install, service,
34 repair, inspect, and maintain fire escapes.

35 c. A certified fire protection contractor shall perform work
36 only within the scope of the contractor's certification class.

37 d. Any change in more than 50 **[%]** percent of the ownership
38 of a fire protection contractor shall require an amended certificate
39 of certification. An application for an amended certificate of
40 certification shall be submitted within 60 days of a change of
41 ownership or change of company name or location. Certificates of
42 certification are non-transferable and shall be displayed
43 prominently in the principal work place. A certificate holder shall
44 not be used to qualify more than one fire protection contractor. The
45 commissioner shall be notified within 30 days if a certificate holder
46 leaves the fire protection contractor or is replaced. Notwithstanding
47 subsection a. of this section, no fire protection contractor shall be
48 denied the privilege of continuing business as a fire protection

1 contractor in the event of death, illness, or other physical disability
2 of the certificate holder who qualified the fire protection contractor
3 for a business permit under this section, for at least six months
4 following the date of such death, illness or other physical disability;
5 provided that the fire protection contractor operates under such
6 qualified supervision as the commissioner deems adequate. If, after
7 six months, the fire protection contractor has failed to employ
8 another certificate holder, then the commissioner shall revoke its
9 fire protection contractor business permit.

10 e. Whenever the commissioner shall find cause to deny an
11 application for a certificate of certification or to suspend or revoke a
12 certificate, he shall notify the applicant or the holder of the
13 certificate and state the reasons for the denial or suspension, as
14 appropriate.

15 f. Whenever the commissioner shall find cause to deny an
16 application for a fire protection contractor business permit or to
17 suspend or revoke a fire protection contractor business permit, he
18 shall notify the applicant or the holder of the business permit and
19 state the reasons for the denial or suspension, as appropriate.

20 g. Any person subject to certification under paragraphs (1)
21 through (6) of subsection b. of this section shall be exempt from
22 any other State, county, or municipal certification, licensing, or
23 registration requirements for installing, servicing, repairing,
24 inspecting, or maintaining fire protection equipment.

25 (cf: P.L.2023, c.186, s.7)

26
27 ¹[3. Section 12 of P.L.1983, c.383 (C.52:27D-203) is amended to
28 read as follows:

29 a. Each enforcing agency in this State shall enforce **[this act]**
30 P.L.1983, c.383 (C.52:27D-192 et seq.) in all buildings, structures
31 and premises within its jurisdiction, except owner-occupied
32 buildings used exclusively for dwelling purposes and containing
33 fewer than three dwelling units, subject to the control and
34 supervision of the commissioner and in accordance with regulations
35 promulgated by the commissioner. The commissioner shall consult
36 with and advise all local enforcement agencies enforcing the
37 provision of **[this act]** P.L.1983, c.383 (C.52:27D-192 et seq.), and
38 each local enforcement agency shall provide the commissioner with
39 reports, data and information required by the commissioner. To
40 cover the cost to the municipality of conducting inspections under
41 **[this act]** P.L.1983, c.383 (C.52:27D-192 et seq.), the municipality
42 may, by ordinance, establish fees, which shall be paid into the
43 treasury of the municipality to which the local enforcing agency is
44 responsible, and which shall be appropriated by the municipality to
45 the local enforcing agency to pay the cost of enforcing **[this act]**
46 P.L.1983, c.383 (C.52:27D-192 et seq.).

1 b. A local enforcing agency consisting of or employing at least
2 one paid fire inspector who is certified pursuant to subsection c. of
3 this section may elect to inspect high-rise structures and life hazard
4 uses within its jurisdiction, in lieu of inspection by the
5 commissioner. That election shall be made by resolution of the
6 governing body having jurisdiction over the local enforcing agency.
7 If an appropriate resolution has not been received by the
8 commissioner on or before the effective date of **[this act]** P.L.1983,
9 c.383 (C.52:27D-192 et seq.), the department shall perform all
10 inspections under this subsection until such time as the governing
11 body shall adopt and send to the commissioner an appropriate
12 resolution. A local enforcing agency that elects to inspect high-rise
13 structures and life hazard uses may issue the certificates of
14 inspection required to be issued pursuant to section 14 of **[this act]**
15 P.L.1983, c.383 (C.52:27D-205) and may inspect buildings and
16 premises other than high-rise structures and life hazard uses in order
17 to secure compliance with **[this act]** P.L.1983, c.383 (C.52:27D-
18 192 et seq.).

19 c. The commissioner shall certify fire inspectors under **[this**
20 **act]** P.L.1983, c.383 (C.52:27D-192 et seq.) in accordance with
21 such standards as **[he]** the commissioner shall establish by
22 regulation; provided that a fire inspector certificate shall be issued
23 by the commissioner to any person who: on the effective date of
24 **[this act]** P.L.1983, c.383 (C.52:27D-192 et seq.) is, and for at least
25 one year prior to the effective date of **[this act]** P.L.1983, c.383
26 (C.52:27D-192 et seq.) has been, serving as a fire inspector in the
27 fire service; or shall have, within two years of the effective date of
28 **[this act]** P.L.1983, c.383 (C.52:27D-192 et seq.), successfully
29 completed an educational program such as the basic fire prevention
30 code course offered by the Building Officials and Code
31 Administrators International or a recognized equivalent, a fire
32 prevention course offered by an institution of higher education or
33 recognized fire school which has been approved by the
34 commissioner.

35 (cf: P.L.1983, c.383, s.12)**】**¹

36

37 ¹**[4.] 3.**¹ The Commissioner of Community Affairs shall
38 adopt, pursuant to the provisions of the "Administrative Procedure
39 Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), rules and regulations
40 concerning the determination of companies certified to install,
41 service, repair, inspect, or maintain fire escapes necessary to
42 effectuate the purposes of this act.

43

44 ¹**[5.] 4.**¹ This act shall take effect immediately.