

Chicago High-Rise Fire Fact Sheet

- A fire sprinkler system could have prevented the two deaths in the residential high-rise fire at 2626 N. Lakeview Avenue.
- January 2001: The Illinois State Fire Marshal's Office adopted NFPA Life Safety 101 2000 Edition requiring existing high-rise buildings in excess of 75 feet in height, to be equipped with fire sprinkler systems. The code was effective January 2, 2002.
- October 17, 2003: Six people died in the Cook County Administration building fire, 69 W. Washington Street.
 - The Cook County Administration Building Fire Report (prepared by Judge Mikva) concludes that fire sprinklers could have prevented the six deaths and recommended that the City of Chicago adopt a retrofit ordinance.
 - State of Illinois commissioned James Lee Witt Associates to conduct an independent review of the Cook County building fire. Witt report concludes that fire sprinklers could have prevented deaths and recommends that City of Chicago require installation of automatic fire sprinkler systems in all high-rise buildings.
- Ald. Edward Burke (14th) proposed a mandate requiring all Chicago high-rise buildings (commercial and residential) be retrofit with fire sprinkler systems. Mayor Richard Daley proposed a mandate requiring fire sprinklers be retrofit in all commercial buildings.
- December 6, 2004: Fire at 135 North LaSalle Street, The LaSalle Bank Building injures 37, 22 of the injured were firefighters.
- December 15, 2004 The Chicago City Council passes Mayor Daley's ordinance requiring all commercial buildings be retrofit with fire sprinkler systems. All residential high-rise buildings must pass a City of Chicago Life-Safety Evaluation. All LSE's must be complete by Jan. 1, 2006.
- According to an analysis commissioned by the Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board, the City of Chicago's LSE has distinct differences in the levels of significance assigned to various life safety systems compared to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) evaluation. NIFSAB states that a building using the Chicago LSE with a passing score does not necessarily mean that the building is "safe."
- Currently, at the state level, there are attempts to remove the Office of the State Fire Marshal's adoption of NFPA's Lifesafety 101 code.