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To: Local and County Governing Bodies, Municipal Clerks, Construction Officials, Fire Officials, and Local Code Enforcement Agencies

From: The Department of Community Affairs, Division of Fire Safety

Date: January 13, 2026

Subject: Fire Inspector Licensure Requirements and Municipal Responsibilities

Overview

This advisory bulletin is intended to clarify municipal obligations pursuant to P.L. 2025, c.19 (the statute) and proposed Department of Community Affairs (DCA) regulations. The statute and subsequent proposed rule modifications, establish uniform statewide requirements governing fire inspections conducted pursuant to the Uniform Fire Safety Act. These changes may affect current inspection practices, particularly those related to Certificates of Smoke Alarms, Carbon Monoxide Alarms, and Secondary Power Source Identification Label compliance (CSACMASPSIL), or portions thereof covered by the “Municipal Certificates of Occupancy”.

Fire Inspector Licensure Requirement

Effective February 3, 2025, unlicensed personnel were no longer authorized to conduct inspections pursuant to the Uniform Fire Safety Act. P.L. 2025, c.19 requires that all inspections authorized under the Uniform Fire Safety Act be conducted exclusively by licensed fire inspectors. The statute establishes uniform licensure standards applicable to all fire inspections, regardless of whether they are conducted by the State, a local or county fire code enforcing agency, or locally pursuant to a property maintenance or other municipal ordinance.

CSACMASPSIL or Certificates of Occupancy for One- and Two-Family Dwellings

When a one- or two-family dwelling undergoes a change of occupancy such as a sale or change of tenant, and a municipality requires a municipal certificate of occupancy or similar approval, the statute provides that no municipal officer or agency responsible for issuance may issue the certificate until it verifies compliance with N.J.S.A. 52:27D-198.1, which governs smoke alarms and secondary power source identification labels.

Municipalities that conduct CSACMASPSIL or municipal certificate of occupancy inspections pursuant to a local ordinance are not exempt from the fire inspector licensing requirements.

Use of Existing Municipal Enforcement Processes

While licensure requirements apply, municipalities may continue to utilize their existing property maintenance or other municipal code enforcement processes to administer inspections and approvals, provided that inspections required under the Uniform Fire Safety Act are performed by properly licensed fire inspectors.

Transitional Licensure Period for Housing Inspectors

The statute recognizes that some inspections have historically been conducted by housing inspectors. Accordingly, existing licensed housing inspectors are granted a two-year period, through **February 3, 2027**, from the effective date of P.L. 2025, c.19 to obtain fire inspector licensure. The two acceptable licenses that fall under this two-year exemption are Inspector of Hotels and Multiple Dwellings, and Housing Code Official. During this transitional period, these licensed housing inspectors may continue performing applicable inspections while pursuing licensure as a fire inspector.

Legislative Intent and Technical Considerations

The licensure requirements were enacted in recognition of the technical complexity of fire safety inspections, which extend well beyond basic functional testing of alarm devices. Proper enforcement requires a working knowledge of the New Jersey Uniform Fire Code and applicable construction codes, including requirements related to alarm placement, power sources, secondary power source identification labeling, interconnection standards, and code-compliant installation.

In addition, buildings must be maintained as originally constructed. As codes evolve and illegal or unsafe modifications occur over time, licensed fire inspectors possess the training and experience necessary to identify noncompliance and ensure corrective action. These competencies are generally outside the scope of unlicensed personnel and are limited among housing inspectors, which is why the statute includes a defined transitional period for licensure.

Recommended Actions

Local governing bodies and enforcing agencies are encouraged to review their current personnel licensing records to ensure compliance with P.L. 2025, c.19. Municipalities should confirm that inspections conducted pursuant to the Uniform Fire Safety Act are performed by licensed fire inspectors and should identify any housing inspectors who will be required to obtain a fire inspector license. The required fire inspector license may be obtained upon successful completion of a minimum 90-hour training course. Such courses are offered statewide through recognized fire academies and county colleges. Governing bodies are encouraged to monitor Department of Community Affairs rulemaking for guidance on final regulatory language.

Questions or concerns regarding this advisory bulletin may be directed to the Division of Fire Safety at (609) 633-6132 or bfcecodeadmin@dca.nj.gov.