

RESOLUTION NO. 23-24

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA, ADOPTING COUNTYWIDE MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR RADIO FREQUENCY TESTING IN NEW AND EXISTING HIGH-RISE STRUCTURES; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Chapter 633, Florida Statutes, every three years the State Fire Marshal adopts in Rule Chapter 69A-60, Florida Administrative Code, an updated statewide minimum fire safety code known as the Florida Fire Prevention Code, which incorporates Florida editions of National Fire Protection Association Code 1 (“NFPA 1 Fire Code”) and National Fire Protection Association 101 (“NFPA 101 Life Safety Code”); and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Chapter 633, Florida Statutes, the updated Florida Fire Prevention Code shall be deemed adopted by, and shall be enforced by, local governments with fire safety responsibilities as the minimum fire safety code; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Chapter 633, Florida Statutes, the authority having jurisdiction shall determine the minimum radio signal strength for fire department communications in all new and existing buildings. Two-way radio communication enhancement systems or equivalent systems may be used to comply with the minimum radio signal strength requirements. However, two-way radio communication enhancement systems or equivalent systems are not required in apartment buildings 75 feet or less in height that are constructed using wood framing, provided that the building has less than 150 dwelling units and that all dwelling units discharge to the exterior or to a corridor that leads directly to an exit as defined by the Florida Building Code. Evidence of wood frame construction shall be shown by the owner providing building permit documentation which identifies the construction type as wood frame. Existing high-rise buildings

as defined by the Florida Building Code are not required to comply with minimum radio strength for fire department communications and two-way radio communication enhancement systems as required by the Florida Fire Prevention Code until January 1, 2025. However, by January 1, 2024, an existing high-rise building that is not in compliance with the requirements for minimum radio strength for fire department communications must apply for an appropriate permit for the required installation with the local government agency having jurisdiction and must demonstrate that the building will become compliant by January 1, 2025. Existing high-rise apartment buildings are not required to comply until January 1, 2025. However, existing high-rise apartment buildings are required to apply for the appropriate permit for the required communications installation by January 1, 2024.

WHEREAS, the Legislature enacted Chapter 73-600, Laws of Florida which created the Pinellas County fire protection authority whose governing body and membership shall be the Board of County Commissioners of Pinellas County; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 73-600 assumed ordinance status pursuant to the Pinellas County Charter and is presently codified as Article II, Chapter 62 of the Pinellas County Code; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article II, Chapter 62 of the Pinellas County Code, the Pinellas County fire protection authority shall exercise specific powers, including determining minimum service levels, for each municipal and volunteer fire department and fire protection district within the county, and to compel such departments to take any action necessary to ensure that they are operating at the minimum level prescribed by the authority.

WHEREAS, Pinellas County Safety & Emergency Services staff along with municipal fire chiefs desire to establish a new countywide minimum standard for testing of radio signal strength; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners of Pinellas County hereby determines that said new standard for minimum radio signal strength will serve the public interest and general welfare.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA, in a meeting duly assembled this 11th day of April, 2023 that:

1. All fire departments, whether enforcing the fire safety codes within the legal boundaries of incorporated or unincorporated Pinellas County, Florida must require all new and existing high-rise buildings to maintain a minimum signal strength of -102 dBm for all critical and non-critical areas with a Delivered Audio Quality (DAQ) of 3.4 or better.
2. The required radio signal strength and quality tests shall be coordinated with the radio section of the Pinellas County Safety and Emergency Services Department to ensure the appropriate signals are tested.
3. All tests showing compliance shall be submitted to the radio section of the Pinellas County Safety and Emergency Services Department. Buildings requiring two-way radio communication enhancement systems in order to comply with the standards must obtain the provisional retransmission authorization which is required by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Provisional retransmission authorization is issued for initial system activation, optimization, and testing. Final retransmission authorization is issued upon successful commissioning of the system and is valid for a period of five years.
4. The radio section of the Pinellas County Safety and Emergency Services Department will maintain the compliance records for all required radio signal strength testing of new and

existing high-rise buildings and will maintain a database of the location of all two-way radio communication enhancement systems.

5. The radio section of the Pinellas County Safety and Emergency Services Department will have the authority to monitor the radio signal to mitigate any interference that is created by the improper design, installation or subsequent malfunction of two-way radio communication enhancement systems including the removal of the authorization for devices to retransmit, when necessary.

Commissioner _____ Peters _____ offered the foregoing resolution and moved its adoption, which was seconded by Commissioner _____ Flowers _____, and upon roll call, the vote was:

Ayes: Long, Peters, Eggers, Flowers, Latvala, and Scott.

Nays: None.

Absent and Not Voting: Justice.

APPROVED AS TO FORM

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By: Cody J. Ward
Office of the County Attorney

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