

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2025 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Banking and Insurance

CS/CS/HB 551 — Fire Prevention

by Intergovernmental Affairs Subcommittee; Industries & Professional Activities Subcommittee; and Rep. Borrero and others (CS/CS/CS/SB 1078 by Rules Committee; Community Affairs Committee; Banking and Insurance Committee; and Senator McClain)

The bill clarifies the simplified permitting process for certain fire alarm and fire sprinkler system projects. The bill also enhances several key provisions relating to fire alarm or fire sprinkler system permitting, inspection processes, and enforcement of local ordinances.

Simplified Permitting Process

The bill requires local governments to establish a simplified permitting process that complies with the minimum requirements of the Florida Building Code's (Building Code) simplified permitting process for fire alarm or sprinkler system projects of 20 or fewer alarm devices or sprinklers, or the replacement of an existing fire alarm panel using the same make and model as the existing panel.

The bill:

- Requires a local enforcement agency to issue a permit within 2 business days and allows a contractor to commence work that is authorized by the permit immediately after submission of a completed application.
- Specifies the local enforcement agency must provide an inspection within 3 business days after such inspection is requested.
- Clarifies that a contractor must make fire alarm project plans and specifications available to the inspector on site at each inspection.
- Requires a contractor to provide copies of any documentation requested from the local enforcement agency for recording purposes within a specified time and prohibits such agency from requiring documentation for areas or devices outside the scope of permitted work.
- Requires a local government to refund 10 percent of the original permit fee amount for each business day after the permit issuance or inspection deadlines are not met unless the local government and contractor agree in writing to a reasonable extension of time, the delay is caused by the applicant, or the delay is attributable to a force majeure or other extraordinary circumstances.
- Requires a local enforcement agency to establish a simplified permitting process that complies with s. 553.7932, F.S., by October 1, 2025.
- Defines "alteration" to mean "add, install, relocate, replace, or remove." This clarifies the definition of "fire alarm system project" which is also amended to include the replacement of an existing fire alarm panel using the same make or model as the existing panel.

Ordinance Compliance under the Florida Fire Prevention Code

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The bill provides that a county or municipality may enforce only an ordinance that has been sent to the Florida Building Commission and the State Fire Marshal as of the date that the permit was submitted.

Inspection Report Improvements

The bill:

- Requires that a uniform summary inspection report for fire protection system and hydrant inspections must include the total quantity of deficiencies separated into critical and noncritical categories and a brief description of each impairment deficiency.
- Requires a contractor's detailed inspection report to be submitted with the uniform summary inspection report.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-2