



## **New proposed rules for fire safety guides, checklists and close the door signs will save lives - by Evan Lipstein**

September 17, 2019 - Design / Build

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There are special areas of concern when it comes to fire safety in apartment buildings. Families in apartment buildings live close together; affecting each other's risks associated with fire. While the chances of a fire starting in an apartment are about the same as in a private home, apartment fires have the potential to spread fire, heat and smoke throughout the building affecting the safety of all occupants.

Since 2000, New York City has required apartment building owners to print and distribute residential fire safety guides to apartment building residents and building staff, and to post fire safety notices on the inside of dwelling unit entrance doors and in building lobbies. The purpose of these fire safety guides and notices is to promote fire safety and fire prevention in apartment buildings; help educate residents and building staff about the design and construction of their building, including construction type, fire protection systems and means of egress; and outline emergency procedures to assist residents in the event that they are confronted by a fire and need to determine what action to take to protect themselves and their families.

The fire department is proposing a new rule which requires distribution of an emergency preparedness/evacuation planning checklist to apartment residents; and requires posting of "Close The Door" signs in the lobby and on stairwell doors of apartment buildings.

The FDNY working the Department of Emergency Management and the mayor's office for people with disabilities an emergency-planning checklist. The checklist is to be provided to all apartment building residents, including individuals with limited mobility, other disabilities or special needs, to assist in the development of each building's individualized emergency evacuation plans. It will inform residents about the availability of evacuation assistance devices and other means of evacuation. It will also outline recommended measures that individuals with disabilities or limited mobility can proactively take to prepare to safely evacuate a building in case of emergency, such as identifying neighbors who can provide assistance in an emergency.

Get ready for new close the door signs. The FDNY will also require apartment buildings to post a

sign indicating that those escaping a fire should close all doors behind them. The proposed sign would read: "In a Fire, Close All Doors Behind You! Keep Fire and Smoke Out of Building Hallways and Stairs. Keep Apartment and Stairwell Doors Closed at All Other Times. Protect Your Neighbors and Your Home!" The proposed rule will establish the design and content of a "Close the Door" sign and will require posting in building lobbies and on the public hallway side of stairwell doors. The purpose of the "Close the Door" sign is to provide a clear, visible reminder to building residents of the importance of closing each door as one exits one's apartment and building during a fire. Closing these doors serves to contain the fire and smoke within the apartment, assist in firefighting operations and prevent smoke from entering the stairwells through which building residents may need to evacuate.

Hyline Safety Company offers assorted signs and consulting services needed to comply with assorted local law requirements. Please reach out if you need our assistance.

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