



Changes to the NYC construction code are set to go in effect early November 2022 - by Frank Szalajda

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The 2022 New York Construction Code is set for implementation on Monday, November 7th. Enhancements in this revision will primarily account for development in technology and safety standards since the code was largely revised in 2014.

Local Law 99/2005 sets in motion requirements for regular revisions of the NYC Construction Code to incorporate the latest international code council (ICC) criteria and life safety concerns specific to the unique density of New York City. This ensures higher safety standards for both the public and

properties within the five boroughs. Notable revisions are the addition of cross laminated timber, provisions for combustible exterior walls, and tenant protection plans, elevator safety and operation, alarm systems, sidewalk sheds, the inspection of EIFS (exterior insulation finishing systems), structural systems, and chimneys. Here, we will focus on the first three provisions:

Provisions for cross laminated timber. (CLT) must be recognized for use in construction. Cross laminated timber is a large scale, prefabricated, solid engineered wood panel that is lightweight, yet strong, with good acoustic, fire, seismic, and thermal performance.

Key points are:

CLT is used as Type IV construction.

Buildings must be sprinklered with NFPA 13 systems.

Building heights may be up to 85' or seven stories.

CLT must be manufactured per ANSI/APA PRG 320.

Columns & beams are not permitted with CLT.

Roof decks must be at least three inches and continuous from support to support.

Floor construction must be at least four inches and continuous from support to support.

Interior wall or partitions must be at least four inches with a one-hour fire-resistance rating.

Exterior walls must be at least six inches with a two-hour fire-resistance rating, and exterior surface protected by approved means (gypsum, noncombustible material, etc.).

Provisions for combustible exterior wall. All exterior walls made from combustible material must undergo testing and inspection to industry standards regardless of size or location. Inspections must be performed to assure and verify that construction matches the approved design details.

Key points are:

All exterior walls made of combustible material will require sections of non-combustible fire blocking installed to prevent and contain flame spread.

An approved thermal barrier is required to prevent heat transfer and flame spread between the building interior and the exterior wall assembly.

Exterior walls are not permitted to use combustible materials in the immediate vicinity of the building's balconies or other outdoor accessible spaces.

Existing buildings without full building sprinkler systems that desire to retrofit the exterior using combustible materials must install a three-foot horizontal band made of brick to separate each floor to contain fire to a single floor.

Code prohibits using exterior walls made from combustible materials in combination with new wood construction types such as mass timber, structural composite lumber, cross-laminated timber.

Provisions for tenant protection plan compliance. A tenant protection plan outlines the steps a contractor and the building owner will take to protect tenants when construction or renovation occurs during building occupancy. It works to both limit service disruptions and soften the potential of negative impact on tenants. The 2022 construction code has added a new special inspection to verify compliance with these requirements, as well as contractor alignment regarding tenant protection during construction operations.

Key points are:

Tenant protection plan compliance is not required where the scope of work is limited to a three-family house, owner-occupied single dwelling under specific conditions, or the interior of a single dwelling unit of an occupied multiple dwelling that is three stories or less in height.

Special inspections should be performed throughout the duration of the tenant protection plan at sufficient periodic intervals to verify compliance throughout the course of the project.

A written record of the special Inspections performed shall be maintained in a log prepared by the special inspector. Log entries should include each inspection and indicate work is performed in accordance with the tenant protection plan. Copies of the log shall be maintained at the job site and the office of the special inspector.

A comprehensive reading of the 2022 New York City Construction Code is needed for a complete rendering.

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