

SAFER BUILDINGS COALITION

CODE ADVISORY – UPDATED July 1, 2021

Florida Fire Code: Existing Buildings Timetable

Florida Fire Prevention Code (NFPA 1) requires in-building coverage. Certain building types (high-rise commercial and residential apartments) have been granted an extension.

DISCUSSION:

Florida Fire Prevention Code provides that AHJ (Authority Having Jurisdiction) can require maintaining adequate fire department radio signal strength inside any building (new or existing). Florida Statute § 633.202 provides for compliance extensions for certain building types. **These statutory extensions apply to high-rise commercial and residential apartment buildings only. They do not apply to buildings less than 75 feet tall.**

KEY DATES:

- **Existing hi-rise buildings** are required to comply by the Florida Fire Prevention Code beginning **January 1, 2025**
- By **January 1, 2024**, an existing hi-rise commercial building that is not in compliance with the requirements for minimum radio strength for fire department communications must apply for an appropriate permit and must demonstrate that the building will become compliant by January 1, 2025
- **Existing 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**

NEXT STEPS:

1. Determine if sufficient fire department radio signal exists in your building. Qualified in-building wireless systems integrators (and others) can assist with this testing.
2. Contact your local Fire Code Official (AHJ, Authority Having Jurisdiction) to find out how this code is being enforced in your jurisdiction.
3. If coverage is insufficient and the AHJ is enforcing this requirement, prepare a plan (design, permits, etc.) by the deadline listed for your property type.

CONFUSION AROUND INTERPRETATION of the FLORIDA STATUTE:

Some of the wording of Florida Statute § 633.202 is ambiguous – particularly as to whether the extensions granted to high-rise commercial and residential properties apply to other property types. Florida issued a Declaratory Statement [Case No. 217787-17-DS, Filed April 18, 2018] that clearly states that the extensions granted by Florida Statute § 633.202 to high-rise commercial and residential buildings does not apply to buildings under 75' in height.

CODE EXCERPTS

Florida Fire Prevention Code (NFPA 1)

11.10 Two-Way Radio Communication Enhancement Systems.

11.10.1 In all new and existing buildings, minimum radio signal strength for fire department communications shall be maintained at a level determined by the AHJ

11.10.2 Where required by the AHJ, two-way radio communication enhancement systems shall comply with NFPA 72.

§ 633.202 Florida Statute

18) The authority having jurisdiction shall determine the minimum radio signal strength for fire department communications in all new high-rise and existing high-rise buildings. Existing buildings are not required to comply with minimum radio strength for fire department communications and two-way radio system enhancement communications as required by the Florida Fire Prevention Code until January 2025. However, by January 1, 2024, an existing 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 . Existing apartment buildings are not required to comply until January 1, 2025. However, existing apartment buildings are required to apply for the appropriate permit for the required communications installation by January 1, 2024.

§ 718.1085 (EXCERPT)

...the term "high-rise building" means a building that is greater than 75 feet in height where the building height is measured from the lowest level of fire department access to the floor of the occupiable level.

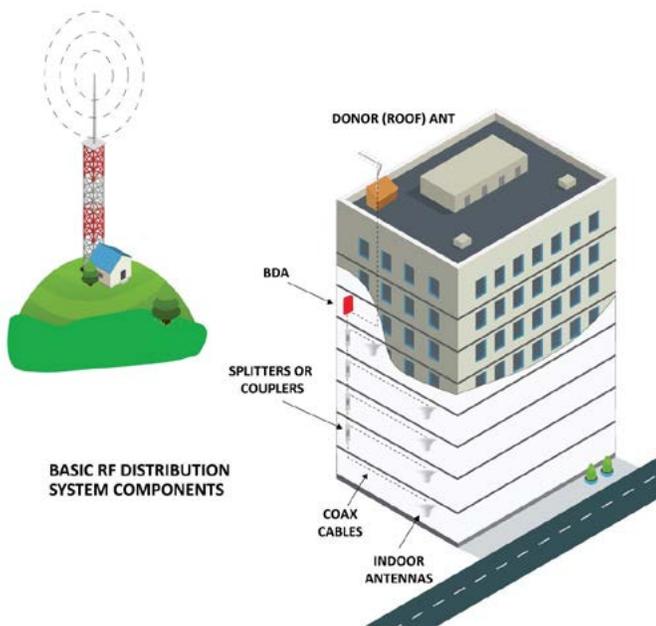
State of Florida Declaratory Statement Excerpt:

"...the Department concludes section 633.202(18), Florida Statutes, does not apply to the enforcement of NFPA 1, section 11.10, in buildings under 75 feet in height."

Distributed Antenna Systems (DAS) / Bi-Directional Amplifiers (BDA)

Why is a Public Safety DAS System (Distributed Antenna System) Important?

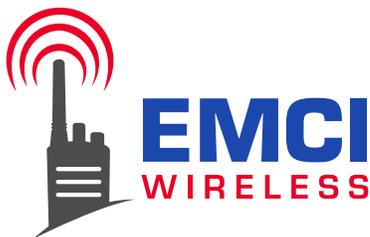
Professionals that respond to emergencies, such as firefighters, first responders, or police officers, are increasingly reliant on wireless communication devices. In emergency situations they cannot afford signal loss or delay caused by attenuation, interference, or reflection. Installation of a public safety BDA or DAS system (distributed antenna system) is important for public safety professionals. When emergency responders enter a building, they need to know that they can call for support or coordinate with fellow responders. It's quite simply a matter of life and death. Since 2009 national building codes have mandated that emergency responder communications systems shall be installed in new and existing construction to assure that our Fire, Police, and EMS professionals have the communications they need inside buildings.



Our Solutions include:

- Distributed Antenna Systems (DAS)
- Fiber Optic BDAs
- Bi-directional Amplifier (BDAs)
- Signal Boosters
- Repeaters
- Filters
- In House IBWave Design
- Baseline Testing
- Performance Testing
- Service Testing
- PIM-Sweep-Fiber
- Onsite Technical PM
- Self-Perform Install Crews
- BTS & RRU Installs
- Maintenance Management

EMCI Wireless (Electronic Maintenance & Communications Inc.) was established in 1975 and is one of the largest solution providers for mission-critical and commercial wireless communications networks. Throughout our 40 years in business, we have been dedicated to developing strong, trusted relationships with our customers and industry partners.



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