



Fire Code Inspections

As the Province of Ontario continues with its Re-Opening Plan, the Covid-19 pandemic continues to create challenges for some condominium corporations as relates to Fire Code¹ compliance.

The Fire Code makes condominium corporations responsible for carrying out the provisions of the Fire Code at the condominium property. This includes periodic common element and ***in-suite*** system inspections. These obligations can be challenging in circumstances where residents are self-isolating or quarantining as directed by public health to help control the spread of the coronavirus, and some residents may identify as higher risk, making them uncomfortable with suite access.

Corporations should be aware that throughout the pandemic, though ***some*** fire chiefs and captains have previously agreed to postpone annual in-suite inspections, various municipal fire departments have generally continued with Fire Code enforcement measures, expecting all life safety system testing and inspections to be conducted. The Fire Code is safety legislation and is not viewed as having to take a back seat to other equally important public health and safety directives. In fact, fire safety may be ***even more important*** during the pandemic. In the first few weeks of the lockdown, the number of residential fires in Toronto jumped by 17% according to Toronto Fire Chief Matthew Pegg. As of April, fatalities from fires in Toronto were almost double what they were in 2019.² Therefore, the focus of the various fire chiefs and captains is on ensuring Fire Code obligations continue to be met alongside public health directives relating to Covid-19.

Corporations should ensure that building staff is aware of health and safety precautions to be taken during in-suite inspections and should also include this information when communicating with owners. This can help to limit concerns about in-suite access. In some cases, it might be necessary to consult with their fire safety experts on how they can modify their fire safety plans to ensure they adapt to Covid-19 conditions while continuing periodic and annual life safety system inspections as required under the Fire Code.

¹ Fire Code O. Reg. 213/07, which is a regulation made under the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997*.

² See: Stay at Home Measures Contribute to Spike in Residential Fires, <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2020/04/25/stay-at-home-measures-contribute-to-spike-in-residential-fires.html>