NYC GREEN CODES
LEGISLATION AT A GLANCE

GCTF Proposal
Analyze Strategies to Maintain Habitability During Power Outages

Implemented
Building Resiliency Task Force; Special Initiative for Rebuilding and Resiliency

Summary

Following Superstorm Sandy, the Mayor and City Council asked Urban Green Council to convene a Building Resiliency Task Force to consider code and industry practice changes for new and existing buildings that would make them stronger and better able to withstand, among other things, prolonged periods without power. The BRTF’s proposals included changes to the building code, as well as recommendations for best practices in new construction and retrofits that would improve how buildings fare in blackouts. The complete report of the BRTF is available at http://www.urbangreencouncil.org/BuildingResiliency.

The Special Initiative for Rebuilding and Resiliency, a post-Sandy project by the Mayor’s Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability, also generated recommendations targeted to improving the resiliency of individual buildings. The complete SIRR report is available at http://www.nyc.gov/html/sirr/html/report/report.shtml.

Recommendations

From the BRTF:

• Set up cogeneration & solar power systems to function during blackouts
• Remove regulatory barriers to backup generators, including natural gas generators
• Prepare guidelines for and remove regulatory barriers to the use of cogeneration in large buildings
• Encourage use of solar energy by streamlining permitting processes, reducing barriers in project schedules, and increasing the allowable roof area for solar power
• Require installation of external electrical hookups for emergency generators in certain health care facilities; recommend these installations as best practice for other buildings as well
• Require most new multifamily buildings to provide lighting in hallways and stairwells during extended blackouts; require the same of existing multifamily buildings within two years
• Require residential buildings to provide drinking water to a common area, supplied directly through pressure in the public water main
• Require that in new construction, at least one toilet and faucet per bathroom be capable of operating without grid power
• Enhance building water reserves by encouraging building owners to maintain existing water towers and consider using water towers in new construction
• Develop a multiyear strategy for ensuring that new and substantially altered buildings maintain habitable temperatures during utility failures
• Clarify requirements for tightly sealing new windows and doors and upgrading roof insulation during roof replacement
• Develop options for regulating windows that address both child safety and overheating during blackouts

From the SIRR:

• Work with public and private partners to scale up distributed generation and micro-grids
• Expand the City’s capacity to supplement the backup generation needs of critical and public interest customers, including hospitals, nursing homes, police and fire stations, and wastewater treatment plants, as well as gas stations, pharmacies, food supply stores and other private customers that provide critical services