NYC GREEN CODES
LEGISLATION AT A GLANCE

GCTF Proposal
Increase Lighting Efficiency in Apartment Buildings

Implemented
Local Law 52 of 2010

Summary
The current lighting requirements in the Housing Maintenance Code for hallways, stairs, and common laundry facilities reference an old technology for lighting: the use of incandescent lights. They also imply that the lights in hallways, stairs, and common laundry facilities should always be fully on.

This law specifies minimum light levels in public areas within apartment buildings and allows the use of automatic lighting controls, including daylight-harvesting systems, which can reduce energy consumption. The law encourages the use of efficient lighting by removing references to incandescent lamps.

New Requirements or Changes

Effective: January 1, 2011. These changes do not apply retroactively; they are only triggered when construction activity requires a permit for work covered by this section of the Administrative Code (Housing Maintenance Code).

Amendments to Section 27-2038 of The Administrative Code

• An average one (1) foot-candle minimum light level, as measured at the floor, must be provided by artificial and/or daylight within all stairs, public hallways, fire stairs and fire towers at ALL times. The same applies to common laundry rooms during times of occupancy.

• This minimum lighting must be provided during all daylight hours within fire stairs and fire tower, as well as all stairways and public halls that have no window opening onto a street, court, yard, setback or shaft.

• Allows the use of fail-safe daylight sensors in public halls and stairwells, provided the available daylight contribution or combination of daylight and artificial lighting meets the code minimum level.

• Allows the use of fail-safe occupancy or daylight sensors in laundry rooms, provided the minimum light levels are met when occupied, the sensor has a maximum time-out period of 30 minutes, and the sensors operates only the lighting within the area it can detect occupancy.

Enforcement
These new and revised provisions are a standard part of the Administrative Code, as applied to The Housing Maintenance Code. They will be enforced by the Department of Buildings in the same manner as any other element of the code.

Implementation

There are no known issues for implementation of this Local Law. Compliance with the code encourages efficient lighting design and will have minimal to building owner cost, while ensuring safe operating conditions are provided at all times.

*Special thanks to Michael Mehl (Jaros, Baum, and Bolles), co-Chair of the NYC Green Codes Task Force Committee on Lighting, for his assistance in preparing this summary.*