

Legislation at a Glance

Proposal 4: Remove Barriers to Elevating Buildings and Building Systems

Implemented

Local Law 99 of 2013

Summary

Building owners may wish to elevate building systems, particularly telecommunications systems and fuel oil storage, to avoid flood risks but are sometimes restricted by building regulations. For buildings in flood zones, this law extends the allowable length of outside telecommunications cable inside a building, and permits storage of more fuel oil on higher floors than was previously the case.

New Requirements or Changes

Effective: November 19, 2013

NYC Building Code, Section 27-3025 (NYC amendments to the National Electrical Code)

This section is intended to allow telecommunications systems to be raised above the flood line. Under the previous building code, the cables used to bring telecommunications service to a building were only allowed to extend 50 feet into the building, making it difficult to place equipment anywhere other than in the basement in some cases. Under this law, in flood zones, the length of such cabling may extend beyond 50 feet to provide direct delivery of service above the design flood elevation. Cable length is limited to not more than 10 feet beyond the lowest story whose floor is above the design flood elevation and cable cannot be run in ducts or plenums used for environmental air.

NYC Building Code Appendix G, Section 103.3.1

Exact 500-year flood elevations are not always specified in reference documents provided by FEMA, making it difficult for practitioners to determine the proper design flood elevation. This section allows the 500-year-flood elevation for a particular building to be determined by a registered design professional, using generally accepted methods or data from other government sources.

NYC Building Code Appendix G, Section 307.4

NYC Mechanical Code Section 1305.11.1.3 limits fuel oil storage inside of buildings, but above the lowest floor, to 330 gallons per story. This law permits a greater capacity for fuel storage in designated flood-prone areas, allowing up to 3,000 gallons of fuel oil to be

stored on the lowest story above the design flood elevation. No individual storage tank may store more than the quantity of fuel-oil needed to operate, for 24 hours, the emergency generators served by such tank (or 1,500 gallons, whichever is less). The vault housing each fuel oil storage tank must meet certain structural and fire protection requirements.

Enforcement

The Department of Buildings will enforce these requirements as part of its normal inspection process.

Implementation Notes

There are no known issues with fulfilling the requirements of this legislation.