

Philadelphia Facade Ordinance Summary

YEAR ENACTED

2010; revised 2014

ORDINANCE OR LAW

PM-315, Periodic Inspection of Exterior Walls and Appurtenances of Buildings

CODE

Philadelphia Building Construction and Occupancy Code

SECTION

Subcode "PM," Philadelphia Property Maintenance Code, Chapter 3

ADMINISTERED BY

Licenses and Inspections (L&I)

ADDRESS

1401 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, 11th Floor
Public Services Concourse
Philadelphia, PA 19102-1687

TELEPHONE NUMBER

215.686.8686

NUMBER OF BUILDINGS AFFECTED

Licenses and Inspections estimates that the enacted legislation affects over 650 buildings as of March 2010.

FREQUENCY AND DUE DATE OF REPORTS

For affected buildings, required inspections shall be conducted and reports completed no later than:

| Construction Date | Initial Report | Next Report | Next Report |
|-----------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Prior to and including 1950 | June 30, 2011 | June 30, 2016 | June 30, 2021 |
| 1951-1970 | June 30, 2012 | June 30, 2017 | June 30, 2022 |
| 1971-1980 | June 30, 2013 | June 30, 2018 | June 30, 2023 |
| 1981-1990 | June 30, 2014 | June 30, 2019 | June 30, 2024 |
| 1991-2005 | June 30, 2015 | June 30, 2020 | June 30, 2025 |
| 2006 and later | See below | See below | See below |

For all other buildings, the first inspection shall be conducted, and required report shall be filed, within ten years after the issuance of a certificate of occupancy. Following the Initial Inspection, an Affected Building shall be re-inspected, and the required report shall be filed, on a five-year cycle based on the original schedule. For example, per the ordinance, a building constructed in 2009 would be required to be inspected, and reports filed, in 2019, 2024, etc.



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WHICH BUILDINGS ARE SUBJECT TO COMPLIANCE?

Philadelphia's facade ordinance is applicable to all buildings six or more stories in height, all buildings with any appurtenance in excess of sixty feet in height, and any building, other than one- or two-family dwellings, greater than two stories located in specific areas that are yet to be determined. A waiver may be applied for if all facades of an affected building have been "substantially restored" within the five-year cycle preceding a required inspection.

ACCEPTABLE INSPECTORS

A professional is required to be a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania licensed Professional Engineer experienced in the practice of structural engineering, or a licensed Registered Architect knowledgeable in the design, construction, and inspection of building facades.

EXTERIOR WALL SUBJECT TO INSPECTION

Exterior walls and appurtenances of subject buildings shall be periodically inspected except for those parts of any exterior wall, which are less than twelve inches from the exterior wall of an adjacent building.

METHOD OF INSPECTION

The inspection is to be conducted and witnessed by or under the supervision of "a professional" as defined by the ordinance. A physical, hands-on inspection shall be performed from a scaffold or other observation platform at a representative sample of the exterior wall. The professional shall determine what constitutes a representative sample, based upon the known history of the building, the nature of the materials used, and the conditions observed. The professional shall determine the methods employed in the inspection, but need not be physically present at the location where the inspection is made.

REPORT

The report requires the inspector to classify the facade as Safe, Safe with Repair and Maintenance Program, or Unsafe. The facade inspection report submitted is to include seventeen items of specific information as described in the ordinance.

FINES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE

Violations are considered to be a Class III offense, which is a \$2,000 fine under Section 1-109 of the Philadelphia Code.



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