



STEP 1: REVIEW YOUR APPROVED LIFE SAFETY EVALUATION (LSE) REPORT

(The report contains upgrades to your life safety systems that are required to pass the final LSE inspection.)

These upgrades will be different for every building, depending on the report your building submitted to the City. They may include but are not limited to:

- installing a one-way/two-way voice communication system,
- providing one hour fire doors for stair openings,
- fire-stopping and sealing of holes,
- penetrations or missing areas in stair enclosures,
- adding smoke detectors to corridors and units,
- repairing emergency lighting.

IMPORTANT: A building will **NOT PASS** the final LSE Inspection unless **ALL** of the required upgrades contained in a building's LSE report are completed at the time of the inspection.

SUGGESTION: The Department of Buildings recommends buildings review their LSE reports with a design professional as well as have a design professional pre-inspect in order to verify the completion of the required upgrades. Only schedule a final LSE Inspection when all of the required Life Safety upgrades are in place and functioning properly.

STEP 2: REVIEW KEY LIFE SAFETY AREAS / COMPONENTS IN YOUR BUILDING

City Inspectors will inspect and spot test key life safety areas and components of your building.

IMPORTANT: **ALL** components **MUST** be installed/functioning properly to pass the LSE inspection.

SUGGESTION: Be sure to take the time to self-inspect and ensure everything is working properly prior to the inspection.

STEP 3: SCHEDULE YOUR RESIDENTIAL HIGH-RISE BUILDING'S LSE INSPECTION:

Please email DOBLSE@cityofchicago.org when you are ready to schedule your building's LSE inspection.

- You will receive an e-mail response and a short questionnaire about your building's inspection readiness.
- You must fill out the e-mail questionnaire and e-mail your response to the Department of Buildings at DOBLSE@cityofchicago.org.
- If your e-mail response indicates that your building is fully ready to be inspected, an appropriate inspector will contact you to arrange a date and time for your building's LSE Inspection.

PRE-INSPECTION CHECKLIST

(complete this list prior to scheduling a LSE inspection)

Key Life Safety Areas / Components Include:

Rated fire doors and rated door frames

MUST be in place, undamaged, and without holes or ventilation grills (“louvers”) in ALL stair enclosures, fire escapes, and doors between “mixed use” separations (ie: entrances from a building into a parking garage or adjacent commercial space). MUST have their fire rating LABELS VISIBLE and free of paint or other coverings. MUST have SELF-CLOSING DEVICES intact and functional. MUST automatically close fully and latch. ANY vision panels/windows must be compliant with the Chicago Fire Code.

- **IMPORTANT:** LAUNDRY ROOM DOORS must be free of air grilles or other openings; be either 1-3/4 inch thick solid wood core doors or have a fire rating label of 20-minutes minimum. Laundry-room doors must also have an AUTOMATIC door closure and be closed at all times.

Stairwell door-locking hardware

Door-locking hardware in stairwells must meet the requirements of the Chicago Building Code. Occupants using a building’s enclosed fire /exit stairs must be able to leave the stair and re-enter a public corridor; the door to the fire/exit stairs must NOT AUTOMATICALLY LOCK.

- **IMPORTANT:** Doors that open into a building’s enclosed fire/exit stairs, as well as dwelling unit doors that open directly into a stairwell, must NOT BE SELF-LOCKING. An occupant using the building’s fire/exit stairs or using stairs that connect directly with a unit must be able to leave the stairs and RE-ENTER either the corridor or dwelling unit in the event of an emergency.

Required exit doors

Required exit doors must be operable in the DIRECTION OF EGRESS, WITHOUT the use of KEYS, tools, unusual strength or special knowledge. SECURITY DEVICES or locks that are not approved by the Chicago Building Code and/or ones that make exiting difficult or impossible must be permanently REMOVED.

Self-closing device for dwelling unit doors in the corridor

Individual dwelling unit doors that lead into building corridors, lobbies or other vestibules must be equipped with door SELF-CLOSING devices. City inspectors will spot-check these doors to verify that the doors self-close and LATCH when released from an open position.

- **IMPORTANT:** Dwelling unit doors that lead directly into enclosed stairwells must have a one-hour fire rating and will be tested for self-closing and automatic latching.

Battery-pack operated emergency lights

Emergency light battery pack will be tested by City inspectors.

Battery-operated smoke detectors

Battery-operated smoke detectors must be maintained and in GOOD WORKING ORDER. Building managers or OWNERS are responsible for those located throughout the building common areas and TENANTS are responsible for maintaining those inside dwelling units.

- **IMPORTANT:** Smoke detectors that are hardwired and part of a fire alarm or elevator re-call system will NOT be spot tested by the Department of Buildings. These are inspected by the Chicago Fire Department.

Illuminated “Exit” and “Stair” signs

Illuminated “exit” and “stair” signs in corridors must be intact, functional, and readable.

Stair Signage

Every stairwell entrance must be LABELED by floor number and location both in the corridor and in the stairwell.

- **IMPORTANT:** Entrances to the “scissor” type stairwells must be differentiated by indicating “A” and “B” stairs, NOT by geographical location. (Do not label ‘north’ or ‘south’.) A colored stripe or graphic may also be used to differentiate each individual stair in “scissor” type staircases.

Fire-escape stairs

Fire-escape stairs must be maintained in good structural repair and condition.

Obstructions on enclosed exit stairs

Any obstructions or potential obstacles to exiting must be PERMANENTLY REMOVED from enclosed exit stairs. Possible obstructions include furniture, stored items, storage racks, shelving or other built-in obstructions, cleaning supplies, bicycles, strollers, or trash/recycling receptacles.

Obstructions on fire escape stairs and landings

Any obstructions or potential obstacles to exiting, such as air-conditioning units, furniture, grills, or flowerpots, must be PERMANENTLY REMOVED from the fire escape egress path. Additionally, the moveable portion of a fire escape (usually the bottom ladder) must be functional and able to land; it must not be obstructed by items such as parked cars or trash containers on the ground.

Garbage Chute Doors

Garbage chute doors must automatically CLOSE and LATCH. Every trash chute, as well as the main building garbage room (usually located on the ground or lowest floor) must be equipped with fire SPRINKLERS.

- **IMPORTANT:** If a building’s garbage chute(s) are abandoned, the garbage chute door(s) must be permanently sealed shut. Any gaps between the chute door and the wall of the chute must be sealed with fire-rated caulk

Open holes

Holes that lead into a building's exit stair enclosures or trash chutes, as well as penetration holes made by piping or conduit into stair enclosures, must be sealed and FIRE-STOPPED using fire stopping assemblies or systems. Proper fire-stopping assemblies use materials such as: fire-rated caulk with mineral wool back-up, intumescent collars or seal bags filled with intumescent material. The fire-rating of the fire-stopping assembly must match the fire-rating of the wall or floor to which it is connected.

For exit stairs that are in a "scissor" formation, the STANDPIPE and holes around the standpipe must be fire-stopped on each stair landing.

- **IMPORTANT:** Holes and penetrations made through walls or floors that separate MIXED-USE spaces must also be sealed and fire-stopped with proper fire-stopping assemblies or systems. Fire-ratings for various separations between mixed-used spaces are as follows:
 - Between a parking garage and the residential portion of a building: 4-hour required fire rating.
 - Between individual dwelling units in the residential portion of a building: 1-hour required fire rating
 - Between walls / floors of residential portion of a building and a commercial space like a retail store or office: 1-hour fire rating
 - Between walls / floors of a residential portion of a building and a commercial space like a restaurant: 1-hour or 2-hour fire rating, depending on the size of the restaurant.
 - Fire separation of laundry room walls: 1- hour required fire rating.
 - Fire separation of trash chute shaft walls: 2 -hour required fire rating.
 - Fire separation of electrical closet walls: 2- hour required fire rating.
- **IMPORTANT:** A fire "vestibule," or small hallway, is required between a building's garage and residential portions of the building. The two doors that open into and out of the vestibule have a 3-hour required fire-rating. The label on the door must be visible; do not paint or otherwise cover it.
- **IMPORTANT:** APPROVED fire-stopping assemblies and systems have been tested in laboratories in accordance with national technical standards. These assemblies and systems have listed FIRE-RATINGS for specific types of openings or penetrations. Many companies worldwide manufacture and distribute these products. Your building may wish to consult with a fire-stopping contractor or a vendor of fire-stopping materials and systems for technical advice or assistance.

Boiler Rooms and Mechanical Penthouses

Carbon monoxide detectors, smoke detectors, emergency lighting, and fire stopping for floor and wall penetrations must be provided for boiler rooms and rooftop mechanical penthouses. If a buildings exit stair enclosure connects to a rooftop mechanical penthouse or boiler room, a one-hour fire rated door must be in place between the stair and the mechanical space. The door must be equipped with a self-closing device and must function (automatically swing shut).

Technical questions pertaining to LSE Inspections may be e-mailed to:

DOBLSE@cityofchicago.org

For more information, log onto <http://www.cityofchicago.org/buildings>