

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-010

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF HOWEY-IN-THE-HILLS, FLORIDA, PERTAINING TO FIRE SAFETY; PROVIDING FINDINGS; CREATING NEW CHAPTER 91 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES; ENACTING A SIMPLIFIED PERMITTING AND INSPECTION PROCESS FOR FIRE ALARM SYSTEM AND FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM PROJECTS; REQUIRING CERTAIN DOCUMENT RETENTION BY CONTRACTORS; PROVIDING FOR APPLICATION FEE REFUNDS IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION, SEVERABILITY, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Be it ordained by the Town Council of the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida:

Section 1. Findings. In adopting this ordinance, the Town Council of the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida (the “Town”), finds and declares the following:

(1) The Florida Legislature amended Section 553.7932, Florida Statutes, through session law Chapter 2025-115. The amendments require municipalities to enact ordinances providing simplified permitting processes for fire alarm system and fire sprinkler systems projects.

(2) The Town Council determines that the proposed amendments to the Code of Ordinances set forth in Section 2 of this ordinance are consistent with the amendments to Section 553.7932, Florida Statutes. It is in the interest of the citizens, residents, and property owners of the Town to enact the amendments to the Town’s Code of Ordinances contained in Section 2 of this ordinance.

Section 2. Amendments to the Town’s Code of Ordinances. Chapter 91 of the Code of Ordinances is created as follows (words that are underlined are additions; words that are ~~stricken~~ are deletions):

Chapter 91 – FIRE ALARM AND SPRINKLER SYSTEM PERMITTING

Sec. 91-1. – Definitions.

- (a) “Alteration” means to add, install, relocate, replace, or remove.
- (b) “Component” means valves, fire sprinklers, escutcheons, hangers, compressors, or any other item deemed acceptable by the local enforcing agency. For purposes of this paragraph, a valve does not include pressure-regulating, pressure-reducing, or pressure-control valves.
- (c) “Contractor” means a person who:

1. Is qualified to engage in the business of electrical or alarm system contracting pursuant to a certificate or registration issued by the department under part II of chapter 489; or

2. Is qualified to engage in the business of fire protection system contracting pursuant to a license or certificate issued by the State Fire Marshal.

(d) “Fire alarm system project” means a fire alarm system alteration of a total of 20 or fewer initiating devices and notification devices; the installation or replacement of a fire communicator connected to an existing fire alarm control panel in an existing commercial, residential, apartment, cooperative, or condominium building; or the replacement of an existing fire alarm panel using the same make and model as the existing panel.

(e) “Fire sprinkler system project” means a fire protection system alteration of a total of 20 or fewer fire sprinklers in which the sprinklers are of the same K-factor and located in spaces where there is no change of hazard classification or increased system coverage area, or the installation or replacement of an equivalent fire sprinkler system component in an existing commercial, residential, apartment, cooperative, or condominium building. For purposes of this paragraph, a component is equivalent if the component has the same or better characteristics, including electrical, hydraulic, pressure losses, and required listings and spacing as the component being replaced.

Sec. 91-2. – Permitting process.

(a) A permit application for alteration of any fire alarm system or fire sprinkler system project must include:

1. Identification and credentials of the contractor;
2. Identification of the applicant, if different from the contractor;
3. Applicant’s mailing address;
4. Address of the property on which the alteration is to take place;
5. The reason for the alteration;
6. An application fee in an amount determined from time to time by the Town council; and
7. Any other documentation required by the Building Official.

(b) A contractor who has submitted a completed application may commence work authorized by a permit immediately after submission of the completed application. An incomplete application does not allow for immediate commencement of work, and any such work will be subject to code violations.

- (c) Within 2 business days of receipt of the completed application, the Building Official must issue a permit in person or electronically.

Sec. 91-3. – Inspection.

- (a) Within three days of an inspection request, the Building Official must inspect the fire alarm system or fire sprinkler system to ensure compliance with applicable codes and standards.
- (b) If a fire alarm system or fire sprinkler system fails inspection, the contractor must take corrective action necessary to pass inspection within the time specified by the Building Official.

Sec. 91-4. – Contractor’s retention obligations.

- (a) For a fire alarm system project, a contractor must keep a copy of the plans and specifications at the fire alarm system project worksite and make such plans and specifications available to the inspector for an onsite plans review at each inspection. If the Building Official determines that it needs additional documents for recording purposes, the contractor must provide such documentation in paper or electronic form to the Building Official within 4 business days after the inspection or 4 days after the documentation is requested, whichever is later. The Building Official may not require additional plans, reviews, or documentation of areas or devices outside the scope of permitted work, as needed on permit applications.
- (b) For a fire sprinkler system project, a contractor must keep a copy of the plans and specifications at the fire sprinkler system project worksite and make such plans and specifications available to the inspector at each inspection. If the Building Official determines that it needs additional documents for recording purposes, the contractor must provide such documentation in paper or electronic form to the Building Official within 4 business days after the inspection or 4 days after the documentation is requested, whichever is later. The Building Official may not require additional plans, reviews, or documentation of areas or devices outside the scope of permitted work, as needed on permit applications.
- (c) For a fire sprinkler system project to install or replace a component, a contractor must keep a copy of the manufacturer’s installation instructions and any pertinent testing instructions needed to certify or accept the component at the fire sprinkler system project worksite and make such documents available to the inspector at each inspection.

Sec. 91-5. – Application fee refund.

- (a) A failure by the Building Official to meet the deadlines set forth in sections 91-2 and 91-3 will result in a refund of the application fee by 10 percent for each business day that such failure continues, unless

1. The Building Official and the contractor agree in writing to a reasonable extension of time;
2. The delay is caused by the applicant; or
3. The delay is attributable to a force majeure or other extraordinary circumstance.

(b) Each 10-percent refund is based on the original amount of the permit fee.

Section 3. Codification. The amendments in Section 2 of this Ordinance shall be codified and made part of the official Code of Ordinances of the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills.

Section 4. Severability. If any provision or portion of this ordinance is declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be void, unconstitutional, or unenforceable, then all remaining provisions and portions of this ordinance shall remain in full effect.

Section 5. Effective Date. This ordinance takes effect immediately upon enactment.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Town Council of the Town of Howey-in-the-Hills on the ____ day of _____, 2025.

Town of Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida
By: Town Council

By: _____
Graham Wells, Mayor

Attest:

John Brock
Town Clerk

First Reading:
Advertised:
Second Reading: