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## FIRE ESCAPE STAIRWAYS AND BALCONIES

The New Jersey Division of Fire Safety has taken the necessary steps to address the issues of poor or non-existent maintenance of fire escape stairways and balconies by making a change to the Fire Code. No more scrape and paint – call it a day. There have been instances where balconies have come loose from buildings because bolts have sheared off. In the case of wooden fire escape stairways and balconies, this will apply also. This does not apply to 1 & 2 Family Owner/Occupied dwellings as the fire code is not enforceable under the statute. It does however, apply to everything else, multi-family (3 or more units), residential above commercial, apartment buildings, etc.

2018 IFC NJ Edition Section 1031.7.3 Examination; specifically states, *Fire escape stairways and balconies shall be examined for structural adequacy and safety by a registered design professional every 5 years. An inspection report shall be submitted to the fire code official after such examination.*

A design professional is either a Licensed Professional Engineer or Architect.

In 2025, as the Fire Inspectors perform their inspections around the City, they will be asking the owners and property managers to have this done. Should there become a need to repair or replace these stairways or balconies, a design professional's plans are required with construction code permits, and a final report put forth to this office.

*Fred Filla*