



Press Release

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www.sfboa.org

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Statement on the Champlain Towers South Building Collapse and the roles & responsibilities of your local building official

MIAMI, FL – On, Thursday, June 24, 2021, the 12-story Surfside condo building known as Champlain Towers South collapsed taking the lives of 22 people as of July 2, 2021 and more than 120 remain unaccounted for. In the aftermath of this devastating building disaster, there are many questions about who or what is ultimately responsible for this catastrophe. The South Florida Building Officials Association (SFBOA) is deeply saddened by the collapse and its members are collectively praying for those affected.

Building safety is at the core of the SFBOA mission. Disaster mitigation through the adoption and enforcement of building codes is one of the best ways for communities to prepare and protect against future disasters. Homes and buildings that are built in compliance with building safety codes and the officials who enforce the codes are essential to helping communities minimize the risks of death, injury, and property damage in the event of a disaster. The vision of SFBOA and its parent organization, Building Officials Association of Florida (BOAF), like many of its participating jurisdictions is to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the public through safe building practices.

This tragedy will be thoroughly investigated by qualified forensic engineers, specialists and experts in the coming days and months. This investigation will take time, patience and thoughtfulness, and more time.

Any architect, engineer or consultant can confirm that most buildings are not designed in a day. A licensed, certified general contractor can confirm that most buildings are not constructed in a day. Maintenance technicians, building operators and owners can confirm that most buildings do not deteriorate in a day. Thus, the investigation will not yield closure nor a singular responsible party in a day. SFBOA understands the roles of owners, designers, contractors, and code officials and supports the timely review of all available data and forensic evidence to come to a just and fair conclusion on this event.

The regulation of building construction in the United States dates to the 1700s. Today, the Florida Building Code (FBC), which includes Florida-specific amendments, is developed at the national level by the International Code Council (ICC) for the U.S. and around the world. The ICC codes are the most widely used and adopted set of building safety codes. In addition to the state adopted code, licensed code officials spanning Miami-Dade County and its 34 municipalities adhere to the rigorous standards set forth by the Miami-Dade County Code of

Ordinances as well as the regulatory Board of Rules and Appeals and established relationships with the Board & Code Administration Division of the county.

The 40-year building recertification program that was instituted in Miami-Dade County in 1975 is one of two county programs in the state. Condos, apartments, and commercial buildings with an occupant load greater than 10 people and greater than 2,000 square feet must comply with the recertification upon the 40-year mark. The recertification report is produced for the building owner(s) by a professional engineer or architect with commensurate experience in that type of work and the report is submitted to the authority having jurisdiction within 90 days of initial notice. The engineer's inspection process may include visual examination, instrumentation testing or manual destructive testing. Evaluations are conducted of parking lot lighting, parking lot guardrails, structural systems (concrete, steel, wood, etc.) and loading, floor and roof systems, and glazing/envelope elements. Also, an inspection is conducted by an electrical engineer of the electrical system including service, circuits, raceways, and emergency lighting.

The Building Official (BO) generally receives and archives the engineering report and recommendations. The BO may or may not inspect the site to validate the engineer's report. The BO oversees the plans review, permitting and inspection for any remedial work requiring a permit resulting from the report and issues a certificate of completion or final inspection approval to complete the process.

The South Florida Building Officials Association pledges to continue to raise awareness about the importance of building codes through education of its members, community outreach, and participation in ICC's annual Building Safety Month.

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About the South Florida Building Officials Association

The association is a non-profit member-driven association of building code enforcement professionals. The association provides a gathering place for the sharing of technical information, advocacy, code development and professional networking.