

Questions for the HFD regarding Bill 69, Evaluation Worksheet for High-Rise Residential Buildings User's Guide ("New User's Guide" or 'NUG')

1. Condo and co-op associations believed that the Life Safety Evaluation and the matrix developed to score that evaluation offered choices to fix or upgrade their buildings so that retrofitting their buildings with fire sprinklers would not be necessary. Now those associations are being told that the NUG will not allow their buildings to pass and they are being set up to fail because the NUG requires the professionals doing the evaluations to use the current Honolulu, International and NFPA codes (recommended in the NUG), rather than the building code they passed when those buildings were constructed. Is this true or not.

No, it is not true that condo associations are set up to fail the evaluation. They will still have a choice not to retrofit with fire sprinklers. The evaluation takes into consideration the building codes that were in place when the buildings were permitted. However, the ordinance may require work to be done for various fire protection and notification systems, as needed.

2. Explain Table 1, #1 Resident Evacuation, #2 Occupant Load and how it is scored?

3. "Normal Mobility" is for those who can remove themselves from their apartment to the stairwell, even if they use a wheelchair. This is the category that will most frequently be used.

"Require Assistance" is for people who must be helped to escape, and cannot do it on their own. An example would be someone who must be carried out of the apartment. This category may be used with consideration.

"Not Movable" is for someone who cannot be moved from the apartment. The HFD finds it unlikely for this category to be used, as it would usually somebody requiring the kind of care available in a

hospital. The HFD recommends designers to confer with HFD if considering this category.

Scores from these categories could be mitigated by working with the HFD on evacuation planning and information.

4. Please explain “Fire Compartment”, Zone, Story

A “fire compartment” is a fire code term for an area separated from other areas.

A “zone” is a fire compartment in a building, typically in a high-rise building, this will be one floor of a building.

“Story” refers to the first floor, second floor, etc. of a building.

5. Explain in layman terms, in detail, parameters and parameters values and notes, for the following questions on the Matrix Evaluation Worksheet:

- a. #2, Interior Finishes (Corridors and Exits), what are the different classes and give examples.

For this evaluation, this generally applies to the finish of the walls and ceilings in the corridors. The paint on the cement or drywall should meet flame-spread requirements from the building and fire codes. A Class “A” finish is the normal paint on such walls and ceilings. This does not require checking the finish inside units.

- b. #5, Doors to Corridors,

Doors to corridors should be solid doors, either fire-rated doors or 1 ¾” solid doors, with automatic closers, particularly for buildings that have full-length interior corridors.

- c. #6, Vertical openings, examples needed. In detail, what would make condo fail?

Vertical openings include the stairwell and elevator shafts, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning), ducting, plumbing chases, and electrical conduits that run between floors. These openings are required to be sealed by building code and those that are not can result in a reduction of points. An example of this would be the area surrounding the plumbing pipes, if it is not grouted or sealed with putty. A low score in any one category of the evaluation does not necessarily mean failure of the building, but it may mean addressing building safety by some combination of factors.

- d. #7, Hazardous Areas, explain, including double deficiency/single deficiency/no deficiencies along with “in fire compartment and outside fire compartment what these are and explain how you can fail?

A hazardous area in a high-rise is mostly likely the electrical room or storage room. Deficiencies are building or fire code violations such as walls that do not have the proper fire rating, missing doors, no electrical panel cover, etc. A double deficiency is two code violations in the same area. Most of the time if these rooms have been maintained the way they were designed, there will be no deficiency. This does not apply to consumer products kept within individual apartment units.

- 6. #8 Does the LSE require the professionals to enter the individual units since that would require the unit owner’s permission, which the Associations are not qualified to provide and the ordinance does not expressly authorize. Clarification is required regarding accessing individual units.

The evaluation will not require designers to enter all units, but they may need to audit or spot check some units. This would be done with the condominium association's approval.

- a. #9, Egress Routes, explain what would be deficient and what would cause a condo to fail?

An "Egress Route" is the way out of the building, including the exit pathway, stairwell door assembly, and stairwell. Blocked exits or unsatisfactory doors would cause this category to have a deficiency or be scored lower. The highest score is for those doors that are unlocked for re-entry from the stairwell.

- b. #11, Smoke Detection, define "total smoke detection throughout fire compartment"? What is the difference between smoke detection and smoke alarm.

"Smoke Detection" involves the use of smoke detectors that are hard-wired and notify the fire alarm system. A smoke alarm can be stand-alone and may be battery operated or not connected to the fire alarm system.

- c. What happens when the Matrix score is equal to zero?

Zero is a passing score in each of the five categories of the fire and life safety evaluation.

7. Who designed the Evaluation Worksheet Matrix?

The Fire and Life Safety Evaluation Worksheet was designed by members of the City and County of Honolulu's Residential Fire Safety Advisory Committee (RFSAC).

How was the Matrix put together?

The evaluation is based on national standards such as fire code NFPA 1, life safety code NFPA 101, and the International Existing Building Code. These codes and related standards provide the basis for the structure of the evaluation and the points for the various categories.

Why is there such a big difference between the negative and positive numbers? Example, # 7, Hazardous Areas -11 to 0, # 9, Egress Routes -8 to 1, #6. Vertical Openings -14 to +2.

There are large point differences as found in the international standards and where critical components would cause major fire and life safety risks and danger if not resolved.

8. Will the professional evaluation match the condo evaluation when they have then educational materials from HFD and compute them independently?

Yes, the professionals understand the evaluation and its requirements.

9. Is the evaluation sheet, on HFD website correct and working correctly?

Yes, the evaluation on the HFD website is correct and working properly.

10. Will there be a Matrix for the professionals?

No, the evaluation worksheet on the website is the same one intended for use by licensed designers.

11. HFD confirmed at the hearing on Resolution 18-157 that Bill 69 allows condo and co-ops to opt out by a majority vote of their members or shareholders at an annual meeting. How will an association be able to opt-out and still pass the LSE?

A condo association may opt out of the requirement to retrofit with automatic fire sprinklers and pass the LSE. The opt-out provisions does not provide for the same level of safety as a fire sprinklers. There are many ways to pass the evaluation, however some existing conditions

may need to be addressed, such as providing code compliant unit doors and fire alarm systems.

12. Isn't it true that the NUG was not made available to the Council and the public for review and comment during the hearing process on Bill 69? If you disagree, please state when the NUG was made available to the Council and the public

The guideline was not made available to the Council. It is only explanatory material written to provide clarity and changes no provisions of either the ordinance or the evaluation worksheet.

13. Is there a way to simplify the Worksheet question to be "self-explanatory" as questions # 11, Smoke Detectors, #14, Sandpipe Systems, #15, Elevators, #16, Elevators?

No, there is not.