



# Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** BL2024-181, **Version:** 1

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An ordinance to amend Section 16.08.012 of the Metropolitan Code of Laws to amend adopted building codes to allow for certain residential buildings up to six stories to be served by a single exit stairway.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Tennessee Cod Annotated § 68-120-101(b)(2)(C), local governments, including the Metropolitan Government, can adopt amended versions of the International Building Code as long as the provisions are “designed to afford a reasonable degree of safety to life and property from fire and hazards incident to the design, construction, alteration, and repair of buildings or structures within the jurisdiction”; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee Code Annotated § 68-120-106(a) provides that the state’s adopted building standards “supersede all less stringent provisions of municipal ordinances”; and

WHEREAS, the allowance of a single exit stairway in certain residential buildings up to six stories is not less stringent than the state’s adopted International Building Code for the reasons contained in this ordinance; and

WHEREAS, data indicates that fires rarely originate in staircases; and

WHEREAS, the conditions contained in this ordinance provide a shorter travel time to exit the building compared to the distance required for two stair structures; and

WHEREAS, the ordinance further requires the installation of sprinklers, which are shown to be over 90% effective at extinguishing fires; and

WHEREAS, Seattle, Washington, New York City, New York, and Honolulu, Hawaii have implemented single stair reform up to six stories and have not experienced fire safety concerns related to the reform; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Council has determined that allowing residential buildings up to six stories to be served by a single exit stairway is not less stringent than the state standards for fire safety under the conditions contained in this ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. That Section 16.08.012 of the Metropolitan Code of Laws is hereby amended by adding the following as a new Subsection Q as follows:

Q. Section 1006.3.3 of the 2018 Edition of the International Building Code is hereby amended by adding a new condition 6 as follows:

6. Not more than five stories of Group R-2 Occupancy are permitted to be served by a single exit under the following conditions:
  - 6.1 The building has not more than six stories above grade plane.
  - 6.2 The building does not contain a boarding house and is not used for transient occupants.
  - 6.3 There shall be no more than four dwelling units on any floor.
  - 6.4 The building shall be of Type I or IIA construction, not less than one hour fire-resistive construction, and shall also be equipped throughout with an automatic sprinkler system in

accordance with Section 903.3.1.1. Residential-type sprinklers shall be used in all habitable spaces in each dwelling unit.

- 6.5 There shall be no more than two single exit stairway conditions on the same property. Single exit stairway conditions within the same building shall be separated by a two-hour fire rated wall. Single exit stairway conditions within different buildings on the same parcel or on adjacent parcels where the buildings are located within five feet of each other shall be separated by a two-hour fire rated wall.
- 6.6 An exterior stairway or interior exit stairway shall be provided. The interior exit stairway, including any related exit passageway, shall be pressurized in accordance with Section 909.20. Doors in the stairway shall swing into the interior exit stairway regardless of the occupant load served, provided that doors from the interior exit stairway to the building exterior are permitted to swing in the direction of exit travel.
- 6.7 A corridor shall separate each dwelling unit entry/exit door from the door to an interior exit stairway, including any related exit passageway on each floor. Dwelling unit doors shall not open directly into an interior exit stairway. Dwelling unit doors are permitted to open directly into an exterior stairway. Dwelling unit doors shall be 60-minute fire rated and self-closing.
- 6.8 There shall be no more than 20 feet (6096 mm) of travel to the exit stairway from the entry/exit door of any dwelling unit.
- 6.9 Travel distance measured in accordance with Section 1017 shall not exceed 125 feet.
- 6.10 The exit shall not terminate in an egress court where the court depth exceeds the court width unless it is possible to exit in either direction to the public way.
- 6.11 Elevators shall be pressurized in accordance with Section 909.21 or shall open into elevator lobbies that comply with Section 713.14.
- 6.12 Other occupancies are permitted on the first floor above grade of the same building provided they comply with all the requirements of this code. Other occupancies shall not communicate with the Group R occupancy portion of the building or with the single-exit stairway. Exception: Parking garages and occupied roofs accessory to the Group R occupancy are permitted to communicate with the exit stairway.
- 6.13 The exit serving the Group R occupancy shall not discharge through any other occupancy, including an accessory parking garage.
- 6.14 There shall be no openings within 10 feet (3048 mm) of unprotected openings into the stairway other than required exit doors have a one-hour fire-resistance rating.

Section 2. This Ordinance shall take effect from and after its final passage, the welfare of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.