



BILL SYNOPSIS

Committee: Economic and Community Development

Bill: 21-0085

Baltimore City Fire Code - Telephone Access to 9-1-1 Emergency System

Sponsor: City Council President (Administration) – Fire Department

Introduced: May 17, 2021

Purpose:

For the purpose of requiring that certain multiple-line telephone systems allow for the direct dial of 9-1-1; defining certain terms; authorizing certain inspections; providing for certain fines; and generally relating to access to the City’s 9-1-1 emergency system.

Effective: The 30th day after the date it is enacted.

Agency Reports

City Solicitor	Favorable
Planning Department	No objection/Defers to HCD and Fire
Department of Housing and Community Development	
Department of Transportation	No Objection
Fire Department	Comments
Department of Public Works	Favorable
Department of General Services	Not Opposed
Board of Municipal and Zoning Appeals	No Comment
Department of Finance	Not Opposed

Analysis

Current Law

Article - Building, Fire, and Related Codes, Section 8-102 (IFC § 110.7) and Section 8-102 (IFC § 916), Baltimore City Revised Code, (2018 Edition); and Article 1 - Mayor, City Council, and Municipal Agencies, Section 40-14(e)(6), Baltimore City Code (Edition 2000).

Background

In 2015, the State of Maryland enacted Kari's Law requiring that multiple-line telephone systems (MLTS) be configured to allow users to dial 9-1-1 directly, without first having to dial a prefix. Instead of having to dial a 1 and then 9-1-1, emergency callers must be able to dial 9-1-1 and immediately connect to emergency support. The 2015 law, enacted by the State, became Federal law in 2018. According to the Maryland Public Safety Article, Section 1-314, each county and Baltimore City are responsible for enforcing Kari's Law.

Baltimore City's MLTS system is compliant with State law. Emergency responders can be reached by dialing 9-1-1 or 9-9-1-1.

If approved, Bill 21-0085 would amend the Baltimore City - Building, Fire and Related Codes to:

- clarify that the law is for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and welfare to ensure that any person using a Multiple-Line Telephone System (MLTS) can direct dial 9-1-1- without having to dial another number first,
- specify that if a person installs or operates a MLTS. it shall ensure that the system is connected to the public switched telephone network and does not require the user to dial any other number when calling 9-1-1,
- authorize the Fire Department to inspect the installation and operation of the MLTS and enforce compliance, and
- define the term "Multiple-Line Telephone System" to have the same meaning as stated in Maryland Public Safety Article, Section 1-314, which reads as follows:

'In this section, "multiple-line telephone system" means a system that:

(1) consists of common control units, telephone sets, control hardware and software, and adjunct systems, including network and premises-based systems; and

(2) is designed to aggregate more than one incoming voice communication channel for use by more than one telephone.'

Violations

Violators will incur a penalty of \$100 for the first (1st) offense and \$200 for the second (2nd) and each subsequent offense.

Additional Information

Fiscal Note: Not Available

Information Source(s): Reporting Agencies, Bill 21-0085

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