

***Regular Meeting of the Building
Inspection Commission***

April 15, 2026

Agenda Item 7



April 8, 2026

Building Inspection Commission
49 South Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94103

Re: Housing Code – Structural Maintenance Inspections (File No. 260295)

Honorable Members of the Commission:

On April 8, 2026 the full Code Advisory Committee (CAC) met to consider File No.260295 amending the San Francisco Housing Code Structural Maintenance Inspections to be more in line with the State of California Health and Safety Code Section 17973. After a presentation by Tate Hanna, Legislative Affairs Manager for the Department of Building Inspection, the CAC voted unanimously to recommend the Building Inspection Commission approve the adoption of File No. 260295 with minor changes.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Fessler
DBI Technical Services
Secretary to the Code Advisory Committee

cc. David Kane, S.E. Interim Director
Jimmy Cheung, Acting Deputy Director
Mary Wilkinson-Church, Permit Services Manager
Christine Gasparac, Assistant Director
Tate Hanna, Legislative Affairs Manager
Vivian Huang, Technical Services Manager
J. Edgar Fennie, Chair, Code Advisory Committee

Attach: File No. 260295 Housing Code – Structural Maintenance Inspections

1 [Housing Code - Structural Maintenance Inspections]

2
3 **Ordinance amending the Housing Code to revise qualifications and deadlines for**
4 **conducting structural maintenance inspections; and affirming the Planning**
5 **Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act.**

6 NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.
7 **Additions to Codes** are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.
8 **Deletions to Codes** are in *strikethrough italics Times New Roman font*.
9 **Board amendment additions** are in double-underlined Arial font.
10 **Board amendment deletions** are in ~~strikethrough Arial font~~.
11 **Asterisks (* * * *)** indicate the omission of unchanged Code
12 subsections or parts of tables.

13 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

14 Section 1. Findings.

15 (a) The Planning Department has determined that the actions contemplated in this
16 ordinance comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (California Public Resources
17 Code Sections 21000 et seq.). Said determination is on file with the Clerk of the Board of
18 Supervisors in File No. ____ and is incorporated herein by reference. The Board affirms this
19 determination.

20 (b) On _____, the Building Inspection Commission considered this
21 ordinance at a duly noticed public hearing pursuant to Charter Section 4.121 and Building
22 Code Section 104A.2.11.2. A copy of a letter from the Secretary of the Building Inspection
23 Commission regarding the Commission's recommendation is on file with the Clerk of the
24 Board of Supervisors in File No. _____.

25 (c) No local findings are required under California Health and Safety Code Section
17958.7 because the amendments to the Housing Code contained in this ordinance do not

1 regulate materials or manner of construction or repair, and instead relate in their entirety to
2 administrative procedures for implementing the code, which are expressly excluded from the
3 definition of a “building standard” by California Health and Safety Code Section 18909(c).

4
5 Section 2. Chapter 6 of the Housing Code is hereby amended by revising Section 604,
6 to read as follows:

7 **SEC. 604. STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE.**

8 (a) **Affidavit Required.** All wood and metal decks, balconies, landings, exit
9 corridors, stairway systems, guardrails, handrails, ~~fire escapes,~~ **fire escapes,** or any parts thereof
10 in weather-
11 exposed areas of apartment buildings and hotels shall be inspected by *(i)* a licensed general
12 contractor with a minimum of five years’ experience holding the “A,” “B,” or “C-5” license
13 classifications (or any combination thereof) issued by the Contractors State License Board and a
14 minimum of five years’ experience in constructing multistory wood frame buildings, or (ii) an
15 individual certified as a building inspector or building official from a recognized state, national, or
16 international association, ~~or a structural pest control licensee,~~ or (iii) a licensed professional
17 architect or licensed professional civil or structural engineer, verifying that the exit system,
18 corridor, balcony, deck or any part thereof is in general safe condition, in adequate working
19 order, and free from hazardous dry rot, fungus, deterioration, decay, or improper alteration.
20 Licensed general contractors or any other individuals hired to complete this inspection shall not be
21 employed by the City and County of San Francisco while performing the inspection. Property owners
22 shall provide proof of compliance with this subsection by submitting an affidavit form (provided
23 by the Department) signed by the responsible inspector to the Housing Inspection Services
24 Division every six ~~five~~ years. Properties subject to California Health and Safety Code Section 17973
25 may delay or advance the submittal deadline for the affidavit required by this subsection to align with
the timelines required for Section 17973 inspection reports. This alteration of the affidavit timeline

1 may not allow any property to forgo submitting an affidavit for more than seven years, and may only be
2 utilized once per property. For purposes

3 of this subsection, "weather-exposed areas" means those areas which are not interior building
4 areas. The affidavit process shall commence on January 1, 2004.

5 Section 3. Scope of Ordinance. In enacting this ordinance, the Board of Supervisors
6 intends to amend only those words, phrases, paragraphs, subsections, sections, articles,
7 numbers, punctuation marks, charts, diagrams, or any other constituent parts of the Municipal
8 Code that are explicitly shown in this ordinance as additions, deletions, Board amendment
9 additions, and Board amendment deletions in accordance with the "Note" that appears under
10 the official title of the ordinance.

11
12 Section 4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective at 12:00 a.m. on the
13 31st day after enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor
14 returns the ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it,
15 or the Board of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

16
17
18 APPROVED AS TO FORM:
19 DAVID CHIU, City Attorney

20 By: /s/ Robb Kapla
21 ROBB KAPLA
22 Deputy City Attorney

23 4931-6950-2873, v. 1
24
25

File No. 260295 – Deck Inspection Alignment

Department of Building Inspection

April 15, 2026

Existing Law - Local

In 2002, the Board of Supervisors passed an ordinance requiring specified decks, balconies, and other building appendages in **apartment houses and hotels** to be inspected by the owner **every five years**.

The ordinance provides **required qualifications for inspectors hired by the owner**, such as licensed architect or engineer, and establishes an enforcement method based on **affidavit submittals** by building owners verifying structural integrity.

Existing Law - State

In 2018, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 721 (Hill), which requires inspections of **wood-based exterior elevated elements** (decks, balconies, stairways, etc.) by Jan. 1, 2026 and every six years thereafter.

The law also establishes **inspector qualifications**, such as any contractor holding an “A”, “B”, or “C-5” license, and requires a **post-inspection report** to be produced and kept by the owner, unless the report indicates repairs are needed.

Misalignment with State & Local Laws

Although similar in intent, SB 721 and SF Housing Code (SFHC) Section 604 require different classifications of inspectors and function on separate timelines.

This results in building owners having to comply with two requirements, including paying for and scheduling two inspections, potentially within a year or two of one another, despite both serving a similar function.

File No. 260295

File No. 260295 seeks to address this misalignment by altering the inspector qualifications and timelines present in SFHC 604.

The ordinance provides a flexible time period to submit SFHC 604 affidavits, so building owners can self-align timelines between state and local requirements, and requires affidavits every six years moving forward.

Other differences between SB 721 and SFHC 604 inspections, such as inspection criteria and enforcement mechanisms, can be handled by the same inspector during one inspection.

Condominiums

An additional bill, Senate Bill 326 (Hill, 2019), establishes exterior elevated inspection requirements specific to condominiums.

This law requires inspections every nine years, resulting in an inability to provide alignment with SFHC 604 and SB 721 without major amendments.

In order to address the duplicative burden on condominium owners, the Legislature would need to amend the requirements present in SB 326.

Proposed Amendments

The Department is proposing two small amendments:

- Re-inserting fire escapes into the covered building appendages under SFHC 604.
- Clarifying that the extended timeline for SFHC 604 affidavit submittal can only be utilized once per property.

CAC Recommendation

The Housing Code subcommittee and the Code Advisory Committee reviewed this ordinance on April 6 and April 8, respectively.

Both committees provided unanimous recommendations for approval, including the Department's recommended amendments.



THANK YOU