



Legislation Text

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A Local Law to amend the administrative code of the city of New York, in relation to requiring all firefighters to be equipped with personal safety ropes.

Be it enacted by the council as follows:

Section 1. Declaration of legislative findings and intent. As first responders to fires, public safety and medical emergencies, disasters and terrorist acts, firefighters protect the lives and property of New York City residents and visitors. Firefighting is perhaps one of the most dangerous and hazardous occupations, especially in New York City. Each time firefighters respond to an emergency, they are faced with the risk of serious bodily injury or even death. In order to adequately protect the health and safety of all firefighters, it is imperative that they be provided with equipment appropriate for the nature of the risk to which they will be exposed.

The deaths of two New York City firefighters during a Bronx fire on January 23, 2005, exemplified the value of firefighters having personal safety ropes. This Bronx fire was the first time the absence of the personal safety ropes had been a factor in a firefighter's death since their elimination in 2000. The compact nature of the city's housing makes personal safety ropes especially valuable in New York. The fire where Lieutenant Curtis Meyran and firefighter John Bellew died was in the rear of a building on a dense block with neighboring structures just feet from each wall. In places like the Bronx that have larger multiple dwellings it may be very difficult to get ladders to the backs or the sides of those types of buildings. Where in other places a fire truck's ladder reaches stranded individuals, in New York, personal safety ropes can often be firefighters' only safe

means of fleeing.

Until 2000, every New York City firefighter had a personal safety rope and harness issued by the fire department. Because of their bulk and rising costs, and the department's belief that firefighters' safety would not be compromised, the FDNY stopped disbursing these ropes. However, after the deadly blaze in the Bronx, the value of personal safety ropes has become clear. Therefore, legislation which ensures that all firefighters are provided with a personal safety rope and harness is necessary in order to safeguard firefighters from the dangerous or harmful consequences that may result if firefighters do not have such devices when responding to an emergency situation.

§ 2. Chapter 1 of title 15 of the administrative code of the city of New York is amended by adding new section 15-120.1 to read as follows:

§ 15-120.1 Personal safety ropes. Each firefighter and fire officer shall be provided with a personal safety rope and harness, the grade, quality, size, and weight of which shall be determined by the commissioner.

§ 3. This local law shall take effect sixty days after it shall be enacted.

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