

May 2022 BSF Report to the AILG Facilities Committee

Inspections

Boston

Seventeen additional Boston FSILG buildings have been through the pre-inspection (visit and reporting) since last month's AILG Facilities meeting – bringing the total to twenty-three of the twenty-six buildings in Boston. Two of the remaining organizations are on-hold pending the end of COVID-19 quarantines; the third is 165 Bay State Road (unoccupied).

The City of Boston ISD inspections for the ward WEST of Massachusetts Avenue began with four FSILG buildings on April 28. A new (to the ward) inspector, Janet Collins, verbally passed all four locations. In addition to egress paths and verification of up-to-date SAFE* documentation and roof decks certifications and elevator inspections as appropriate, Janet focused her attention in each building on:

- Checking that every emergency light and exit sign was fully functional
- Checking that there were (sufficient) replacement sprinkler heads and a wrench in the sprinkler head box
- Dryer duct safety – she asked for documentation that ducts were cleaned within the past year
 - I spent some time researching any relevant codes, including speaking to the Massachusetts State Fire Safety Office and Code Enforcement, NFPA, and consulting the ICC resources without success. All references related to length, diameter and materials
 - <https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IRC2015/chapter-15-exhaust-systems>
 - 780 CMR 65.00
 - I did find a number of documents encouraging annual cleaning of ductwork
 - <https://whdh.com/news/mass-fire-officials-encourage-cleaning-dryer-vents-to-avoid-potential-danger/>
 - <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/dryer-fire-safety>
 - <https://www.nfpa.org/News-and-Research/Data-research-and-tools/US-Fire-Problem/Home-fires-involving-clothes-dryers-and-washing-machines>
- Fire Escape affidavits – Janet noted that FSILGs should make sure that their fire escape affidavits have been properly submitted to Boston; fire escape documents submitted for inspection purposes need to be marked "PAID". It seems there may be some "processing" issues to address vis a vis Boston's systems and/or vendors and/or FSILGs. It seems even if FSILGs brought their affidavits to 1010 they may not have received a receipt for their payment or a marked affidavit, i.e.: they were *not properly recorded*.
 - She mentioned that Boston is exploring ways to facilitate visually checking valid fire escapes in the future, e.g.: with a medallion affixed to the fire escape.
 - I spent some time speaking with Boston officials, looking through affidavits on file in the SLI locker and speaking with fire escape inspection vendors to learn more about the process and expectations.
 - Original affidavits are mailed to the property owner unless otherwise specified
 - Original affidavits should be brought to 1010 for payment and to be marked and properly recorded
 - Scans of the properly marked affidavits should be sent to FCI for posting in the SLI locker; a copy of the original should be posted on-premises

The next round of Boston ISD inspections for the ward WEST of Massachusetts Avenue is scheduled for Thursday, May 5 and Friday, May 6. COVID incidence rates and quarantine restrictions have already required me to bump some of the inspections originally scheduled for this week. The inspector has requested that everyone attending inspections wear a mask.

I am still working with the inspector for the ward EAST of Massachusetts Avenue to schedule inspections. I will update this committee and those FSILGs in the EAST re developments.

Based on the Boston experience to date, I would ask the following topics be added to new business for an AILG Facilities meeting:

- The need for a project to map device locations and labeling devices (e.g.: emergency lights, exit lights, emergency light battery boxes, extinguishers); mapping inter-connections would also be useful, i.e.: this battery box powers these emergency lights.
- The fire escape affidavit submission process
- Dryer duct maintenance

Licensing is in-process.

Cambridge

I will begin pre-inspections of Cambridge FSILGs next week. I've been in touch with the Cambridge inspector to develop the schedule for inspections. I will update this committee and Cambridge FSILGs re developments.

Licensing is in-process.

Other Projects to Note

- Fire device updates: the last Boston FSILGs who use American Alarm for their fire alarm vendor will have all their outdated (>10 years old) devices replaced this month. The BFD inspector has been kept apprised of the progress.
- Renewal (Egress doors): I continue to host vendors to survey the pilot FSILGs. Initial estimates are under development. Delays from COVID infections. Pam will provide the comprehensive update.
- System and floor signage: I continue to work with UHMs to gather current signage status as the first step to address the BFD inspector's request that FSILGs have a standardized format. I hope to complete this first step this month (postponed).
- Dryer and HVAC/bathroom ductwork: I'm seeing a lot of dryer lint build-up around the backs of machines and dirty bathroom vents during walk-throughs. I am concerned that dryers are not properly vented/connected and that the ductwork likely isn't being cleaned the 1x/year recommended to reduce the risk of fires. I have similar concerns about the other ductwork, i.e.: HVAC and bathrooms, and the potential health and humidity issues that could result. I can provide example photos.
- Alum HM programming: No update