

SOFT STORY

Mandatory Retrofit Program

What Is It?

The Mandatory Soft Story Ordinance requires the retrofit of wood-framed, soft story multi-unit, residential buildings with two or more stories over a soft story or under floor area and contain five or more dwelling units permitted for construction prior to January 1, 1978.

Soft story buildings are buildings where the bottom story is weaker than the stories above, leaving the building at a high risk for collapse in an earthquake. These buildings were identified as a great risk to public safety and the resilience of San Francisco by the CAPSS Study.

The CAPSS study or Community Action Plan for Seismic Safety, was a ten-year analysis to understand, describe, and mitigate the risks San Francisco faces to earthquakes. The study also included a community and expert created plan to address this risk. That plan became the Earthquake Safety Implementation Program (ESIP). This ordinance is one of the tasks of the ESIP 30 year plan.

This ordinance is designed to both make San Franciscans safer and make San Francisco more resilient in the next earthquake.

The program began by issuing notices with a screening form to all buildings that are found in City records to be within the scope (seen right) of the ordinance. The owner must then retain a design professional to complete the screening form, which will determine if the building is actually within the program and, if so, which tier the building is within.

At that point the owner must obtain a building permit and retrofit their building, meeting the engineering standards within the ordinance in the amount of time their tier allows (below).

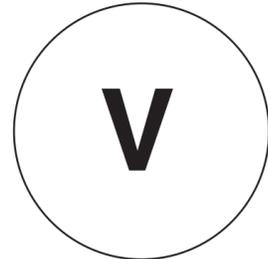
Buildings with previous retrofit work that meets the level of the ordinance standards will not be required to retrofit. And, the ordinance exempts a building for 15 years once the work has been completed.

The cost of this work is permitted by the Rent Ordinance to be passed through to tenants. For residents that can demonstrate financial hardship, please contact the Rent Board at 415-252-4600.

For other questions, please contact the Department of Building Inspection at 415-581-6699

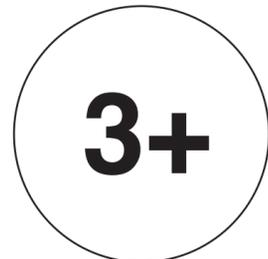
Who Is Required?

Buildings that are all of the following are subject to the ordinance.



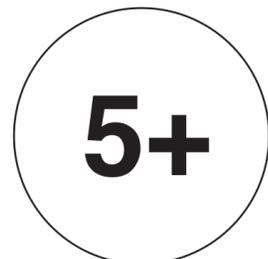
Wood Frame

Buildings that are of type-V wood frame construction.



Three Or More Stories

Buildings containing two or more stories over a weak story or weak under floor area or basement.



Five Or More Units

Buildings containing five or more residential dwelling units.



Pre-1978

Buildings permitted for construction or built prior to January 1, 1978.

When?

Notices were sent on **September 15, 2013**

Notices include screening forms that an owner-retained engineer or architect will use to verify a building's status in the program. The screening form is also used to determine in which tier a building will fall--that tier determines how long the permitting issuance and work may take to complete.

Compliance Tiers

September 15 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020

Tier I

Buildings containing occupancies A, E, R-2.1, R-3.1, or R-4 on any story.



Tier II

Buildings containing 15 or more dwelling units.



Tier III

Buildings not falling within another tier.



Tier IV

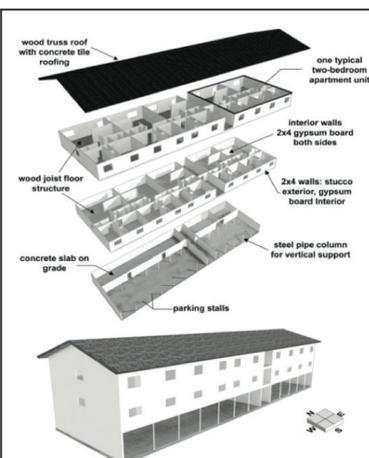
Buildings containing occupancies B or M, or buildings in a mapped liquefaction area.



Screening Form Submitted

Permit Application Issued

Work Complete & Inspected



This diagram explains a soft story condition. The first story of the building has much less support than the upper stories, leaving the story and then building weak.

How?

Engineering Criteria

This ordinance brings a building which has been built before more modern engineering standards to a safer level of performance in the next earthquake. This will also make the building more likely to be usable after the quake. The following criteria accomplish this:

- FEMA P-807
- ASCE 41-13
- ASCE 41-06
- IEBC Appendix A-4
- Any other rational design basis deemed acceptable by the Building Department.

Tenants and Property Owners

Any costs from work that is directly related to complying with the requirements of this program can be passed through to tenants, per the San Francisco Rent Ordinance. These passthroughs are processed by the Rent Board, and hardships may be granted based on a tenant's financial situation. The City has worked with tenant advocates and the apartment owning community to develop modifications to the passthrough process, making it easier on all involved, especially tenants that require a hardship. For questions about passthroughs and complying with the Rent Ordinance during construction, please contact the Rent Board at 415-252-4600.