**Bill Number:** HB 551

**Executive Summary**

Fire Prevention:

The bill amends section 553.7932, F.S., to clarify certain aspects of the simplified permitting process for a fire alarm system project and a fire sprinkler system project which includes establishing a specific timeframe for issuing a permit and conducting an inspection, and requiring local enforcement agencies to establish a simplified permitting process by October 1, 2025.

**Bill Effective date:** July 1, 2025

**Impact:**

Florida Building Commission

**Section 1**

The bill amends subsection (1) of section 553.7932, F.S., to provide a definition for the term “Alteration” to mean to add, install, relocate, replace, or remove.

The bill amends paragraph (d) of subsection (1) of section 553.7932, F.S., to expand the definition for “Fire alarm system project” to include replacement of an existing fire alarm panel using the same make and model as the existing panel.

The bill amends subsection (3) of section 553.7932, F.S., to require a local enforcement agency to issue a permit for a fire alarm system project or a fire sprinkler system project within 2 business days after submission of a complete application and to authorize a contractor to commence work immediately after submission of a completed application.

The bill amends subsection (4) of section 553.7932, F.S., to clarify if a local enforcement agency requires an inspection for a fire alarm system project or a fire sprinkler system project, the local enforcement agency must provide such an inspection within 3 business days after such inspection is required. In addition, the proposed bill removes the requirement requiring at least one inspection of a fire alarm system or a fire sprinkler system project to ensure compliance with the applicable codes and standards.

The bill amends paragraph (a) of subsection (5) of section 553.7932, F.S., to clarify if the local enforcement agency determines that it needs additional documentation, the contractor must provide such documentation in paper or electronic form to the local enforcement agency within 4 business days after the inspection. In addition, the proposed bill prohibits a local enforcement agency from requiring additional plans reviews or documentation of areas or devices outside the scope of permitted work.

The bill amends paragraph (b) of subsection (5) of section 553.7932, F.S., to remove the reference to alteration of an existing fire protection system and to prohibit a local enforcement agency from requiring additional plans reviews or documentation for areas or devices outside the scope of permitted work.

The bill adds subsection (6) as a new section to provide that a local government that fails to meet a deadline under this section must reduce the permit fee by 10 percent for each business day after such failure, unless the parties agree in writing to a reasonable extension of time, the delay is caused by the applicant, or the delay is attributable to a force majeure or other extraordinary circumstances. Each 10-percent reduction must be based on the original amount of the permit fee, unless the parties agree to an extension of time.

The bill adds subsection (7) to require that by October 1, 2025, a local enforcement agency must establish a simplified permitting process that complies with this section.

**Implementation:**

The Florida Building Commission would need to amend section 105.3.1.2 of the 8th Edition (2023) Florida Building Code, Building to reflect the bill’s code related changes.

**Draft Code Language:**

**8th Edition (2023) Florida Building Code, Building**

CHAPTER 1 SCOPE AND ADMINISTRATION

Revise section 105.3.1.2 (Item 4) to read as follows:

4. Any specialized mechanical, electrical, or plumbing document for any new building or addition which includes a medical gas, oxygen, steam, vacuum, toxic air filtration, halon, or fire detection and alarm system which costs more than $5,000.

Exception:

Simplified permitting processes. —

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(a) "Alteration" means to add, install, relocate, replace, or remove.

(b ~~a~~) "Component" means valves, fire sprinklers, escutcheons, hangers, compressors, or any other item deemed acceptable by the local enforcing agency. For purposes of this paragraph, a valve does not include pressure-regulating, pressure-reducing, or pressure-control valves.

(c ~~b~~) "Contractor" means a person who:

1. Is qualified to engage in the business of electrical or alarm system contracting pursuant to a certificate or registration issued by the department under part II of chapter 489, Florida Statutes; or

2. Is qualified to engage in the business of fire protection system contracting pursuant to a license or certificate issued by the State Fire Marshal.

(d ~~c~~) "Fire alarm system project" means a fire alarm system alteration of a total of 20 or fewer initiating devices and notification devices; ~~or~~ the installation or replacement of a fire communicator connected to an existing fire alarm control panel in an existing commercial, residential, apartment, cooperative, or condominium building; or the replacement of an existing fire alarm panel using the same make and model as the existing panel.

(e ~~d~~) "Fire sprinkler system project" means a fire protection system alteration of a total of 20 or fewer fire sprinklers in which the sprinklers are of the same K-factor and located in spaces where there is no change of hazard classification or increased system coverage area, or the installation or replacement of an equivalent fire sprinkler system component in an existing commercial, residential, apartment, cooperative, or condominium building. For purposes of this paragraph, a component is equivalent if the component has the same or better characteristics, including electrical, hydraulic, pressure losses, and required listings and spacing as the component being replaced.

(2) No change.

(3) A local enforcement agency must issue a permit for a fire alarm system project or fire sprinkler system project in person or electronically within 2 business days after submission of a completed application. A contractor may commence work authorized by the permit immediately after submission of a completed application.

(4) The ~~A~~ local enforcement agency must provide an inspection within 3 business days after such inspection is requested, ~~require at least one inspection of a fire alarm system project or fire sprinkler system project~~ to ensure compliance with applicable codes and standards. If a fire alarm system project or fire sprinkler system project fails an inspection, the contractor must take corrective action as necessary to pass inspection.

(5)(a) For a fire alarm system project, a contractor must keep a copy of the plans and specifications at the fire alarm system project worksite and make such plans and specifications available to the inspector for an onsite plans review at each inspection. If the local enforcement agency determines that it needs additional documents for recording purposes, the contractor must provide such documentation in paper or electronic form to the local enforcement agency within 4 business days after the inspection or 4 days after the documentation is requested, whichever is later. The local enforcement agency may not require additional plans reviews or documentation of areas or devices outside the scope of permitted work, as needed on permit applications.

(b) For a fire sprinkler system project ~~to alter an existing fire protection system~~, a contractor must keep a copy of the plans and specifications at the fire sprinkler system project worksite and make such plans and specifications available to the inspector at each inspection. If the local enforcement agency determines that it needs additional documents for recording purposes, the contractor must provide such documentation in paper or electronic form to the local enforcement agency within 4 business days after the inspection or 4 days after the documentation is requested, whichever is later. The local enforcement agency may not require additional plans, reviews, or documentation of areas or devices outside the scope of permitted work, as needed on permit applications.

(c) For a fire sprinkler system project to install or replace a component, a contractor must keep a copy of the manufacturer's installation instructions and any pertinent testing instructions needed to certify or accept the component at the fire sprinkler system project worksite and make such documents available to the inspector at each inspection.

(6) A local government that fails to meet a deadline under subsection (3) or subsection (4) must refund the permit fee by 10 percent for each business day after such failure, unless the local government and contractor agree in writing to a reasonable extension of time, the delay is caused by the applicant, or the delay is attributable to a force majeure or other extraordinary circumstances. Each 10-percent refund shall be based on the original amount of the permit fee.

**(Code language for consistency with HB 551 – bill effective date – July 1, 2025)**