

CITY OF MADISON  
**CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**  
Room 401, CCB  
266-4511

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: City of Madison Common Council

FROM: Kate Smith, Assistant City Attorney

DATE: April 5, 2020

RE: Resolution to extend the expiration date of work permits issued for fire protection systems  
(Legistar File # 60111)

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In her updated Emergency Order dated March 26, 2020, the Mayor temporarily authorized work permits issued for fire protection systems currently in existence or in existence through the time that the Director of Public Health Madison and Dane County and the Governor of Wisconsin determine to end the emergency actions that they have taken to combat the coronavirus pandemic shall expire one year from the date of issuance or six months from the time that emergency action ends, whichever is greater.

**BACKGROUND**

The City of Madison Fire Department (“MFD”) conducts inspections and issues work permits for fire protection systems under Madison General Ordinance Chapter 34. Per MGO Sec. 34.03(1), MFD Fire Inspectors conduct annual inspections, testing and maintenance specified for automatic fire sprinkler systems. Work permits under MGO Sec. 34.03(1)(h) lapse unless the work either begins or resumes one year after the date of issue. In the event of further construction after the applicable time period ends, a new permit must be obtained pursuant to all the requirements of the code. Work permits have an expiration date in order to avoid situations where a permit is acquired in anticipation of upcoming fire code changes and kept open indefinitely in order to circumnavigate new requirements.

**WHY THIS ORDER IS NECESSARY**

Governor Ever’s Safer at Home Order allows tradespeople to continue working as a critical trade. While construction is allowed to continue as essential infrastructure, work may be delayed or postponed based on the COVID crisis. MFD is still issuing work permits, but the department has fielded questions from

people delaying planned work due to the current crisis. Extended expiration dates for up to a year will give people more time to complete work without keeping them open indefinitely should fire code regulations change. Since most construction work continues, MFD anticipates that primarily small projects will be impacted and does not expect a backlog of work.

### **ACTIONS TAKEN THUS FAR PURSUANT TO THIS ORDER**

There has been minimal action taken thus far. MFD has continued to issue work permits since construction is considered essential and will extend permits as needed.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact as a result of this order. Currently critical trades work continues currently under the Safer at Home order.