

LD1115146

**HOUSE BILL NO. 630**

Offered January 25, 1994

*A BILL to amend and reenact § 27-97 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Fire Prevention Code.*

Patrons—Cantor, Cunningham and Reid; Senator: Stosch

Referred to Committee on General Laws

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That § 27-97 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 27-97. Adoption of Fire Prevention Code.

The Board of Housing and Community Development is hereby empowered to adopt and promulgate a Statewide Fire Prevention Code which shall be cooperatively developed with the Fire Services Board pursuant to procedures agreed to by the two Boards. The Fire Prevention Code shall prescribe regulations to be complied with for the protection of life and property from the hazards of fire or explosion and for the handling, storage and use of explosives or blasting agents, and shall provide for the administration and enforcement of such regulations. The Fire Prevention Code shall require manufacturers of explosives, as defined in the Code, to register and report information concerning their manufacturing facilities and methods of operation within this Commonwealth in accordance with regulations adopted by the Board. The Board shall also establish regulations for obtaining permits for the manufacturing, storage, handling, use, or sales of explosives. In the enforcement of such regulations, the enforcing agency may issue annual permits for such activities to any state regulated public utility. Such permits shall not apply to the storage, handling, or use of explosives or blasting agents pursuant to the provisions of Title 45.1.

The Fire Prevention Code shall supersede fire prevention regulations heretofore adopted by local governments or other political subdivisions. Local governments are hereby empowered to adopt fire prevention regulations that are more restrictive or more extensive in scope than the Fire Prevention Code provided such regulations do not affect the manner of construction, or materials to be used in the erection, alteration, repair, or use of a building or structure, *including the voluntary installation of smoke alarms in commercial buildings where such smoke alarms are not required under the provisions of the Code.*

In formulating the Fire Prevention Code, the Board shall have due regard for generally accepted standards as recommended by nationally recognized organizations including, but not limited to, standards of the Southern Building Code Congress, the Building Officials and Code Administrators International, Inc., the National Fire Protection Association, and recognized organizations issuing standards for the protection of the public from the hazards of explosives and blasting agents. Such standards shall be based on the companion document to the model building code referenced by the Uniform Statewide Building Code. The Fire Prevention Code shall require that buildings constructed prior to 1973 be maintained in accordance with state fire and public building regulations in effect prior to March 31, 1986. The Fire Prevention Code shall also require annual fire drills in all buildings having floors used for human occupancy located more than seventy-five feet above the lowest level of fire department vehicle access. The drills shall be conducted by building staff personnel or the owner of the building in accordance with a plan approved by the appropriate fire official and shall not affect other current occupants. The Board may modify, amend or repeal any Code provisions as the public interest requires. Any such Code changes shall be developed in cooperation with the Fire Services Board pursuant to procedures agreed to by the two Boards.

INTRODUCED

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