

The Earthquake Safety Implementation Program (ESIP) is a thirty year plan to implement the recommendations of the CAPSS study, completed in 2010. ESIP began in late 2011 under the City Administrator’s office and continues on today to make San Francisco a more prepared, safer, and resilient city.

The Earthquake Safety Implementation Program (ESIP) began in early 2012, evolving out of the key recommendations of the Community Action Plan for Seismic Safety (CAPSS), a ten year long study evaluating the vulnerabilities San Francisco faces to earthquakes. Its plan for action was turned into the fifty tasks ESIP will be implementing over the next few decades. This website is a resource for residents seeking information on ESIP's various programs or looking to become better prepared.

The Mandatory Soft Story Retrofit Program (MSSP) was created in 2013 as a multi-year community-based effort led by the Earthquake Safety Implementation Program and enforced by the Department of Building Inspection to ensure the safety and resilience of San Francisco's housing stock through the retrofit of older, wood-framed, multi-family buildings with a soft-story condition.

As part of this program, all affected property owners were noticed beginning in September 2013 and were required to have submitted their screening forms to DBI by September 15, 2014. DBI has achieved over a 99% response to the program. Buildings that have not complied with this requirement have been placarded and issued Notices of Violation (NOV).

We encourage property owners of soft story buildings to take the necessary steps to comply with program requirements by filing for a permit to ensure their properties are seismically safe in anticipation of the next big quake.

Wood-Frame Seismic Retrofit Program Compliance Timeline & Tier		
Compliance Tier	Submittal of Permit Application with Plans for Seismic Retrofit Work	Completion of Work and Issuance of Certificate of Final Completion
1	September 15, 2015	September 15, 2017
2	September 15, 2016	September 15, 2018
3	September 15, 2017	September 15, 2019
4	September 15, 2018	September 15, 2020

The ordinance applies to wood-frame buildings of three or more stories or two stories over a basement or underfloor area that have any portion extending above grade, and containing five or more residential dwelling units where the permit to construct was applied for prior to January 1, 1978, and where the building has not yet been seismically strengthened.

Ordinance Overview

This ordinance, [located here for download](#), requires the retrofit of all San Francisco buildings that meet **ALL** of the following criteria:

- Wood frame construction (Type V), and
- Application of permit for original construction was prior to January 1, 1978, and
- Five or more residential units, and
- Two or more stories over a basement or underfloor area that has any portion extending above grade, and
- A soft story condition that has not been seismically strengthened to the standards set forth in the ordinance.

The ordinance was signed into law on April 18, 2013 at the annual commemoration of the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and became operative as of June 17, 2013 and is current law in San Francisco. Currently, buildings potentially within the scope of this ordinance were noticed on September 15, 2013 and all notices were due back to the Department of Building Inspection (DBI) as of September 15, 2014. Each building determined by a licensed design professional to be a part of this program will be required to retrofit within the time specified by their tier assignment.

For a comprehensive list of each building's status, including tier assignment and status in the program, please [click here](#).

Currently more than 5,000 San Francisco buildings are required to participate in the program, 75% of screened buildings. More than 1700 buildings have filed for or been issued a permit and more than 700 owners have completed their required retrofit. Act today!

Complying With This Program

1. Noticing and Screening

On September 15, 2013 the City issued notices to all wood frame buildings containing five or more dwelling units, two or more stories, and permitted for construction prior to January 1978. Notices were sent to building owners at the address used for property tax notification within the Assessor's Office databases. **All property owners were, and still are, required to complete a screening form if noticed**, regardless of their building's configuration or previous retrofit status. Screening forms are required to be completed by a licensed design professional.

Buildings within the scope of the program that have completed work to the standards of the ordinance, have completed an [AB-094 voluntary retrofit](#), or are not soft story buildings will not be required to go any further than the screening process in the program by opting out of the program and its requirements using the optional evaluation form or the screening form respectively. Both forms must be completed in all cases by a licensed engineer or architect, except in cases where AB-094 work was completed.

Through the screening process **each building that is subject to the ordinance will be assigned a tier** and must be evaluated and begin the process of complying with the ordinance. This tiered approach will allow work to be phased and account for many of the conditions present within this subset of San Francisco's unique building stock.

All Screening Forms are past due, as of September 15, 2014. All owners who have not completed this form, do not complete this form, or fail to remedy having not completed this form, are in violation of the San Francisco Building Code (See our Violation section below). Each building's status within the program can be found in the [DBI Soft Story Mandatory Retrofit Program \(MRP\) Database](#).

2. Permits for Work

All buildings that are screened into the program (i.e., by the screening form) are required to have permits for work by the date specified by their tier. This information is available for each building in the [DBI Soft Story Mandatory Retrofit Program \(MRP\) Database](#). Please visit the DBI Submittal Procedures website (linked here) for details about applying for a permit.

Also, please review our [Engineers and Contractors Section](#) below for more information about required engineering guidelines and the selection of a design professional.

Compliance Tiers

Tier I- Any building containing educational, assembly, or residential care facility uses (Building Code Occupancy E, A, R2.1, R3.1, or R4).

Tier II- Any building containing 15 or more dwelling units.

Tier III- Any building not falling within another tier.

Tier IV- Any building containing ground floor commercial uses (Building Code Occupancy B or M), or any building in a mapped liquefaction zone.

Wood-Frame Seismic Retrofit Program

Compliance Timeline & Tiers

Compliance Tier	Submission of Screening Form and Option Evaluation Form	Submittal of Permit Application with Plans for Seismic Work	Completion of Work and Issuance of CFC
I	September 15, 2014	September 15, 2015	September 15, 2017
II	September 15, 2014	September 15, 2016	September 15, 2018
III	September 15, 2014	September 15, 2017	September 15, 2019
IV	September 15, 2014	September 15, 2018	September 15, 2020

3. Completion of Work

The work must be completed in full with a Certificate of Final Completion (CFC) issued by the date specified by your compliance tier (above). Please refer to the chart above for your date.

Buildings in Violation

Buildings that are in violation of this program are subject to the enforcement of the San Francisco Building Code. The Department of Building Inspection (DBI) handles fines and fees, notices, other actions, and placarding. Buildings that are in violation of this program will be placarded with an "Earthquake Warning" placard noticing the building's owner, tenants, and general public of the risk posed by the building. Buildings upgrades that are not completed in the time required, apply for a permit in the time required, and/or do not complete the screening process successfully are/will be in violation.



The Soft Story Mandatory Retrofit Program violation placard

Cost Passthroughs

All work within the scope of this ordinance, as certified per [San Francisco Rent Board](#) procedures governing "[Seismic Work Required by Law](#)," will be subject to related passthrough regulation and allowances. This work may be passed along at 100%. Although, tenants facing hardship may use the [hardship appeal process for passthroughs](#). Tenants meeting Rent Board criteria will be able to apply for appeal on the basis of financial hardship passed through rent increases resulting from the work. Please click [here for that application](#)

On October 10, 2013, Mayor Ed Lee signed into law provisions that clarify the existing process for residential tenant financial hardship, allowing tenants who can not afford the capital improvement passthrough of the costs of a mandatory seismic retrofit a clearer and simplified path to being granted a hardship exemption as well as clarifying those procedures for property owners. The language of the ordinance can be [downloaded here](#). Also, please contact the [San Francisco Rent Board](#) for question at 415-252-4602.

Retrofits: General Information

The retrofits required under this program do not extend above the first floor, and may be completed using the criteria listed below in the [Engineers and Contractors Section](#). Through the [Community Action](#)

[Plan for Seismic Safety \(CAPSS\)](#) analysis, it is believed that these retrofits will cost between \$60,000 and \$130,000, depending on the building size. Please visit our [Soft Story Financing Page](#) for more details about financing.

ADA Compliance

This work may trigger disabled access upgrades to commercial spaces. A few important facts to note: (1) Residential spaces are exempt from compliance in all buildings constructed prior to March 13, 1991; (2) Any privately owned building with ground-floor commercial spaces, the San Francisco Building Code, Section 1134B requires 20% of construction costs be spent on disabled access improvements when projects are under the annual threshold of \$139,934.96; (3) Unreasonable Hardship Requests (UHR) may be granted per San Francisco Building Code, Section 1134B

Parking

During a soft story retrofit, parking will likely be impacted. To ease the burden of this disruption ESIP worked directly with the San Francisco Rent Board to develop a piece of legislation that clarifies the process of compensating the tenant for the loss of parking for both building owner and tenant alike. Overall, this legislation stipulates that in the case where parking has a specified value in the lease, that the tenant is due that amount in compensation for their lost parking. In the case where parking has not been assigned a leased amount, the tenant will be due replacement value for the parking not to exceed 15% of the tenant's monthly base rent. Please review this legislation, [found here](#), for more specifics.