

# Trade Center to Get Fire Sprinklers at \$45 Million Cost

By MICHAEL GOODWIN

The Port Authority decided yesterday to install fire sprinklers throughout the World Trade Center complex at a projected cost of \$45 million. It is expected to take three to five years to complete the project.

Contracts will be let through competitive bidding. The work, which will be done after office hours, is expected to begin in about five months.

New York City requires that sprinklers, or alternative fire safety measures, be installed in all office buildings taller than 100 feet, or about 10 stories. Because it is owned by New York and

New Jersey, however, the trade center complex, including the twin, 110-story towers, is exempt from the law.

But Guy F. Tozzoli, director of the World Trade Department, which runs the complex, said the the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey had decided five years ago to comply with the city's law.

He said it had already spent about \$8.5 million to install smoke detector communication systems between lobbies and floors and systems to bring elevators to lobbies when fire is detected.

"I think these buildings should now be the safest possible buildings built," Mr. Tozzoli said.

Peter C. Goldmark Jr., executive director of the authority, quipped that installing the systems in the twin towers would "eat up every mile of copper pipe east of the Mississippi."

"Buy copper stock," he added.

Each floor in the towers is equal to one acre, or 43,560 square feet. A sprinkler

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Continued on Page B5, Column 3

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# Trade Center Getting Sprinklers For Fires at a Cost of \$45 Million

Continued From Page A1

head will be installed every 2,500 square feet.

About 50,000 people work in the complex, which has six buildings, and 80,000 more visit each day. Authority officials said they acted because the extra safety the sprinklers would afford was worth the cost.

"We're a public agency and safety has got to be a high priority," Mr. Goldmark said. "There's nothing like sprinklers. They get to a fire early and keep it from spreading."

## Only One Major Fire

The complex has had only one major fire, Mr. Tozzoli said, and that one was traced to arson. He said it was set about five years ago on a low floor and caused about \$1 million in damage.

The authority's commissioners approved installation of the sprinklers at a brief routine monthly public meeting late yesterday afternoon in 1 World Trade Center. Agreement on the sprinklers had been reached previously in committee meetings and in executive session, so yesterday's action was little more than a formality.

Money for the installation will come from the authority's general revenue bonds, according to Mr. Tozzoli. Mr. Goldmark estimated that government agencies would reimburse the Authority for about \$18 million of the cost, including \$15 million from the State of New York, which has many offices in the towers. Private commercial tenants would not be

given rent increases because of the sprinklers, it was said.

In lieu of sprinklers, the law permits dividing open spaces into compartments with fire retardant walls and pressurized stairways to keep smoke out. Although those systems would have been about \$28 million cheaper, the port agency decided on the sprinklers because it felt pressurized stairways might not work well in such tall buildings. Mr. Tozzoli said such systems were less effective if more than three doors were open at any one time.

Most stairways in the towers, he said, run for about 43 consecutive floors. "The chance of only three doors being open at any one time is remote," he said.

The authority's action was expected to put added pressure on the owners of private office buildings throughout the city to comply with the high-rise fire safety law, known as Local Law 5.

## Noncompliance Is Rampant

The Buildings Department recently reported that about half of the 859 buildings over 100 feet tall had not filed plans for compliance, as required. The 100-foot figure was chosen because it is the height of the Fire Department's tallest ladder.

Local Law 5 was passed in 1973, following fires at two midtown office buildings in 1970 that claimed five lives. However, the real estate industry challenged it in court and the city decided not to enforce it until the challenges were resolved.

The final court cases were settled last year and enforcement began. Officials have recently been mailing summonses to owners who have not complied. The maximum fines permitted are \$1,000.