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New York’s Inter-Agency Fire Safety Working Group

Battery energy storage systems (BESS) have the unique potential to make energy systems smarter, more affordable, and more resilient while creating cleaner air and healthier communities in the process. Because of these benefits, energy storage technologies are becoming increasingly common in New York State. By developing and refining rigorous standards and inspecting current in-service energy storage projects, the Inter-Agency Fire Safety Working Group (FSWG) is ensuring that these battery technologies are safely integrated into New York State’s energy systems.

New York State’s FSWG is:

- *Backed by third-party subject matter experts*
- *Setting nation-leading standards*
- *Generating real-world results*

Energy storage strengthens and modernizes the electric grid by making it more flexible, efficient, and resilient —benefiting communities, businesses, and households across New York.

- Control energy costs
- Deliver electricity to meet the demand of customers and increase grid reliability
- Serve as a back-up energy source
- Supply energy to a home, to a business, to a community, or to the electric grid
- Provide economic and environmental benefits

Establishing an Inter-Agency Fire Safety Working Group

On July 28, 2023, Governor Kathy Hochul announced the creation of a New York State Inter-Agency Fire Safety Working Group to ensure the safety and security of energy storage systems across the State following several fire incidents within New York State.

In doing so, the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES), Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC), New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Department of Public Service (DPS), and the Department of State (DOS) were directed to create a working group to independently examine energy storage facility fires and safety standards.

Developing Best-in-Class Standards

Since forming, the FSWG has guided New York State towards the adoption of some of the nation's most robust safety standards for energy storage systems, reinforced by stringent oversight and independent, third-party review.

NYSERDA now requires independent peer reviews for a project design's code compliance conducted by nationally recognized subject matter experts for all NYSERDA-supported projects to ensure consistency, quality and alignment with current codes and standards. New York State's BESS codes are among the highest standards internationally and are designed to reduce risk while ensuring that in the rare case a fire does happen, it is contained and does not pose a threat to the facility's host community or first responders. This model has been successfully used by New York City to ensure compliance and safety across BESS projects throughout the City.

If projects do not meet the standards, incentives are withheld, and the project is unlikely to move forward.

***Did you know?** New York City's FDNY has demonstrated proven success permitting and siting energy storage projects in the most complex urban environment in the U.S. New York State enforces stringent inspection and permitting standards, based on existing protocols established by the FDNY, to maintain safety and consistency statewide.*

Inspecting In-Service Projects

The FSWG, along with its subject matter experts, conducted field inspections on 57 in-service larger projects. These inspections helped to directly inform the development of NYSERDA's enhanced inspection process that better aligns with real-world conditions, improves safety protocols, and strengthens coordination between solar developers, local authorities, and emergency responders. Further, results and observations from the inspection process provided critical insights into issues that could be addressed by fire code recommendations, incentive program rules, and local emergency response coordination to be implemented in the near term.

The NYSERDA independent peer reviews and enhanced inspections run parallel to local permitting authority, meaning every community retains control while benefiting from these expert safety checks.

Final Fire Code Recommendations Report

In early 2024, NYSERDA requested public comments from subject matter experts and interested stakeholders to provide feedback on a draft [Fire Code Recommendations Report](#) [PDF] produced by the FSWG. Those

comments were evaluated, and feedback was incorporated into a final report, which was provided to the [New York State Code Council](#) and Department of State who in turn drafted code language to reflect the recommendations. That draft code language was released in summer 2024 and early 2025 for public comment. On July 25, 2025, New York officially adopted updated energy storage safety codes based on the FSWG's recommendations, further cementing the State's commitment to safe deployment.

Did you know? On July 2025, the Code Council adopted the FSWG's recommendations for the [2025 NYS Fire Code](#), which take effect January 1, 2026.

Fire Safety Panel

In November 2025, fire safety experts convened at the Long Island Energy Storage Summit to discuss the collaborative work of the Inter-Agency Fire Safety Working Group, lessons learned from real-world site inspections, and the policies and standards now shaping safe deployment across the state and beyond. Experts included Casey Grant (Executive Director of D&S Research Associates & Engineers), Bruce Johnson (Regulatory Services Manager for Buildings and Fire Safety at UL Solutions), Joseph Loftus (Chief in Charge of HAZMAT Operations at FDNY), and Nick Petrakis (Director of Engineering at ESRG).



NYSERDA




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Press Releases to Date:

- July 26, 2024: [Draft Fire Code Announced to Enhance Safety Standards for Battery Energy Storage](#)

[Systems](#) 

- February 6, 2024: [Governor Hochul Releases Initial Recommendations From Inter-Agency Fire Safety Working Group](#)
- December 21, 2023: [Initial Findings Released From Inter-Agency Fire Safety Working Group On Emergency Response](#)
- July 28, 2023: [Governor Hochul Convenes Inter-Agency Fire Safety Working Group Following Fires in Jefferson, Orange, & Suffolk Counties](#) 

Other Energy Storage and Safety Resources:

- [Deploying Safe Lithium-Ion Energy Storage in Your Community Webinar](#)  and [Presentation Slides](#) [PDF]: Hosted by the FSWG May 7, 2025, topics include critical safety considerations, regulatory updates, and best practices in the field, along with specific recommendations for local action.
- [Energy Storage Program](#): Learn about the different types of energy storage and how integrating storage in the electric grid will allow clean energy to be available when and where it is most needed.
- [Energy Storage Innovation](#): Research and investment are driving innovation in energy storage technology and product development.
- [Guidebooks, Resources, and Training for Local Governments](#): Access information, tools, and step-by-step instructions to support local governments managing battery energy storage system development in their communities.
- [Lithium-Ion Battery Awareness Training](#) : OFPC has made a course available on the DHSES E-Learning Management System for all first responders.

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