



## Department of Commerce

Division of State Fire Marshal  
John R. Kasich, Governor  
Jacqueline T. Williams, Director

# Operation Safe Stay Development and History of the Program



All hotels in the State of Ohio are required to be licensed prior to opening for business and must renew their license to operate annually, thereafter. Hotel licenses (and renewals) are obtained through the Ohio Department of Commerce, Division of State Fire Marshal (SFM). Prior to any hotel license being issued or renewed, members of the State Fire Marshal's Code Enforcement Bureau (CEB) conduct an inspection of the facility to ensure that it is in compliance with fire safety standards and sanitary requirements set forth in the Ohio Fire Code (OFC) and the Ohio Revised Code (R.C.). Inspections may also be

conducted subsequent to a complaint filed by members of the public regarding conditions at a hotel.

On June 16, 2014, Ohio Governor John R. Kasich signed House Bill 486 (of the 130<sup>th</sup> Ohio General Assembly) (HB 486) into law. HB 486 included the creation of the Ohio Business Compliance Incentive (OBCI) program which is a transformative approach to regulation. The program encourages compliance with regulations while safeguarding Ohioans and Ohio visitors. "This is a program that will continue to allow the Department of Commerce to hold businesses accountable, but will recognize and incentivize those who are consistently compliant," said Andre T. Porter, then Director of the Ohio Department of Commerce. "By recognizing and rewarding compliant businesses, we can achieve the goal of getting government out of the way of successful and responsible businesses and we can shift our resources to focus on the fringe actors who are not compliant."

One of the programs included in the OBCI initiative is called the "**Ohio Safe Stay Hotel**" program, or "**Operation Safe Stay.**" Many hotels in Ohio are routinely in compliance with OFC safety measures and applicable sanitary standards and **Operation Safe Stay** was designed not only to acknowledge those hotels that are compliant, but to also provide a mechanism whereby the public can readily identify those hotels.

*Operation Safe Stay* publically designates as a "**Safe Stay Hotel**" those hotel facilities in Ohio that consistently meet the highest level of OFC-based fire and life safety standards and R.C.-based sanitary standards. With objectives to protect the public, to prevent fires from occurring, and to ensure safety when fires and other emergencies do happen, the OFC is the minimum standard for fire safety requirements in new and existing buildings and contains references to rules and regulations established by the National Fire Protection Association, a private, non-profit organization dedicated to reducing fire related fatalities.

**Operation Safe Stay** is designed to make Ohio even safer for those who travel through and within Ohio. Only those hotel facilities that meet or exceed the requirements of the **Operation Safe Stay** program will be designated as a **Safe Stay Hotel**. This means that any hotel so designated will have consistently been in compliance (for a period of at least two years) with, amongst other things, fire safety standards and sanitary standards established in the State of Ohio.

When a hotel meets the qualifications of the **Operation Safe Stay** program and is designated as a **Safe Stay Hotel** by the SFM, it is issued a decal for display at its facility and use in its literature and advertising campaigns. Use and display of the decal, allows the public to make an informed decision about staying at a facility and serves as a readily identifiable symbol letting the public know that any facility legally displaying the decal is consistently operated within all applicable OFC provisions and all applicable sanitary requirements.

When seeing the logo, the public will be able to readily identify those establishments that are in compliance with safety and sanitary standards and make an informed decision on which establishments to patronize. “Over time and as the program grows and all become familiar with it, Ohioans and the traveling public will recognize the logo much like they do a ‘Better Business Bureau’ or a ‘AAA’ decal,” said State Fire Marshal Larry L. Flowers; “it will be an indicator to the public that the facility is consistently being operated with their safety in mind.”

Qualifying facilities are permitted to reproduce the **Safe Stay** logo for use in their print and digital advertising campaigns. Hotels may display the decal in their facility, on their literature, on their website and on any other media campaigns (such as accounts on travel websites, etc) they may have. The decal may be used at any and all times during which the facility does in fact hold the designation. However, if the designation is revoked, the facility must immediately cease using the decal in any and all manners, including but not limited to all advertising formats.

In addition to use of the decal or **Safe Stay Hotel** designation, all qualifying hotels are listed on the SFM’s website as qualifying participants in the **Operation Safe Stay** program. In addition to other information regarding the program, the SFM’s website houses an up to date list that indicates which hotels in the State of Ohio qualify as **Safe Stay Hotels**. The list is updated daily and, therefore, serves as the definitive indicator of any facility’s latest status. It is the most current and up to date information available to the industry and the public.