



COLDWATER FIRE DEPARTMENT

FIRE SAFETY EDUCATION

***IS YOUR FAMILY FIRE SAFE? PROTECT YOURSELF,
YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR NEIGHBORS***



APARTMENT BUILDING FIRE SAFETY MANUAL for APARTMENT MANAGERS

COLDWATER FIRE DEPARTMENT
Fire Safety Manual for Apartment Managers
http://www.coldwater.org/Content/Dept_Fire.html

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Additional Information:

(Courtesy of Seattle Fire Department)



National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
United States Fire Administration



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Fire Safety Manual

for Apartment Managers

Introduction

Fires in apartment buildings often involve one or more dwelling units. The dense nature of apartment living during a fire event may allow for the spread of hazardous smoke, heat and flames.

Fires can occur at any time and are unexpected. Being prepared and acting in a safe manner should not be unexpected. How one responds to a fire event typically dictates how successful the event will be to extinguish for responders. Responding to a fire requires quick, deliberate and calm actions. These actions may be needed in limited visibility or smoky and hot conditions where being prepared can save lives and property.

The Coldwater Fire Prevention Code establishes fire safety regulations for Apartment buildings and multi-residential housing. In these regulations, property owners are required to develop emergency plans or guides for tenants as required in NFPA 101, 1994 [19-4.3 and Chapter 31-6.5]. They also require that tenants be informed about the fire protection equipment in the building.

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This manual was developed to aid building managers in their safety efforts. The manual will provide:

- Information about home fire prevention and safety;
- Guidelines for developing Code required Fire Emergency Guide;
- Recommendations for developing fire emergency procedures; and
- Overview on what to expect from Fire Department inspection processes.



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CHAPTER 1

Common Home Fire Hazards

(From 2008 to 2011) the Coldwater Fire Department responded to 20 apartment fires with an estimated fire loss of \$163,688.00 dollars. On average, CFD responds to 7 apartment related fire incidents per year. In an effort to reduce these numbers, understanding how and where residential fires most often begin and following some basic safety tips can reduce your risk. The following information is intended to aid building managers and building owners with understanding common hazards to apartment buildings and sharing this information with your building tenants on a regular basis.

Cooking Safety for Residents

Unattended cooking is one of the leading causes of residential fires.



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Watch What You Heat

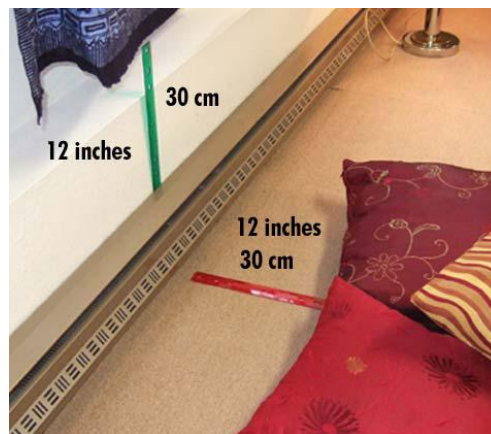
- The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking.
- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking and use a timer to remind you that you're cooking.
- Stay alert! To prevent cooking fires, you have to be alert. You won't be if you are sleepy, have been drinking alcohol, or have taken medicine that makes you drowsy.
- Keep items like dish rags, paper towels, pizza boxes, cardboard and newspaper away from the stovetop by a minimum of 3 feet.
- Never use the oven or stove to heat your apartment.
- If a fire starts in a pan on top of the stove, put a lid on it or turn the stove off. **(DO NOT USE OR THROW WATER ON IT)**



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Heating Safety for Residents

Heating is another leading cause of residential fires. As expected, most heating fires occur during the winter months. Fires caused by furniture, bedding or other materials placed too close to baseboard and portable space heaters are the most common types of heating related residential fires.



- Portable space heaters need space. Do not put anything close to any type of heater.
- Do not use portable heaters to dry clothes.
- Make sure your portable heater has a tip over shut-off control.
- Do not leave your portable space heater on when you leave the apartment or go to bed.
- Don't use extension cords with portable space heaters.
- Replace furnace filters regularly and have your furnaces or baseboard heating inspected by qualified heating or electrical contractors.

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- Do not use Kerosene portable heaters indoors.



HEATING SAFETY FACTS

http://nfpaweb2.gvpi.net:8089/assets/files//PDF/Public%20Education/Heating_Safety.pdf

Smoking Safety for Residents

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the United States Fire Administration (USFA), smoking materials are the leading cause of fire deaths in the United States. Every year, almost 1,000 smokers and non-smokers are killed in home fires caused by cigarettes and other smoking materials. If you smoke or live with someone who smokes, learn the facts.

A lit cigarette accidentally dropped onto a chair or bed, or hot cigarette ashes or matches tossed away before they are completely out, can cause a large fire in seconds.

Putting out a cigarette the right way only takes seconds, too. It is up to you to make sure your cigarette is put out, all the way, every time.

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One-in-four people killed in home fires is not the smoker whose cigarette caused the fire.

- More than one third were children of the smokers.
- Twenty-five percent were neighbors or friends of the smokers.
- Most deaths result from fires that started in living rooms, family rooms and dens or in bedrooms.
- Two out of five (39%) fatal home smoking-material fire victims were age 65 or older.
- If you smoke, smoke outside.
- Wherever you smoke, use deep, sturdy ashtrays.
- Make sure cigarettes and ashes are out.
- Check for cigarette butts.
- Never smoke in a home where oxygen is used.
- If you smoke, fire-safe cigarettes are better.
- Be alert!

SMOKING SAFETY FACTS

<http://www.coldwater.org/Content/documents/SmokersFactSheet.pdf>



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Candle Safety for Residents

The most common mistake people make when using candles is placing them near combustible materials such as curtains or drapes, clothing, paper or bedding. Most candle fires occur during the months of December and January.



Causes and Circumstances of Home Candle Fires

- On average, 42 home candle fires are reported every day.
- More than half of all candle fires start when something that could burn, such as furniture, mattresses or bedding, curtains or decorations is too close to the candle.
- In one-fifth (20%) of candle fires, the candles are unattended or abandoned.
- Over one-third (36%) of home candle fires begin in the bedroom.
- Falling asleep is a factor in 12% of home candle fires and 36% of the associated deaths.
- December is the peak time of year for home candle fires. In December, 13% of home candle fires begin with decorations compared to 4% the rest of the year.
- One-half of home candle fire deaths occur between Midnight and 6 am.

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- Young children and older adults have the highest death risk from candle fires.
- The risk of fatal candle fires appears higher when candles are used for light.

Candle Safety Tips

Put candles in sturdy metal, glass or ceramic holders.

- Avoid using lighted candles.
- If you do use candles, ensure they are in sturdy metal, glass or ceramic holders and placed where they cannot be easily knocked down.
- Keep candles out of the reach of children and pets.
- Set a good example by using matches, lighters and fire carefully.
- Children should never be allowed to play with matches, lighters or candles.
- Never put candles on a Christmas tree.
- Extinguish candles after use and before going to bed.
- And NEVER leave burning candles unattended!



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Outdoor Grilling Safety for Residents



Most fires from the use of grills occur in summer months. The leading causes of grill fires are the fuel being used ignited, the grill being too close to combustible structure and unattended cooking.

The Coldwater Fire Prevention Code does not permit grilling on combustible balconies [F110.1 & 308.1.4].

In multi-story buildings, grilling must be done on ground floor and a minimum of 10 feet away from combustible porch overhang.

Use Barbecue Grills Safely

- Position the grill well away from siding, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Place the grill a safe distance from lawn games, play areas and foot traffic.
- Keep children and pets away from the grill area by declaring a 3-foot "kid-free zone" around the grill.
- Put out several long-handled grilling tools to give the chef plenty of clearance from heat and flames when cooking food.
- Periodically remove grease or fat buildup in trays below grill so it cannot be ignited by a hot grill.
- Use only outdoors! If used indoors, or in any enclosed spaces, such as tents, barbecue grills pose both a fire hazard and the risk of exposing occupants to carbon monoxide.

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Charcoal Grills

- Purchase the proper starter fluid and store out of reach of children and away from heat sources.
- Never add charcoal starter fluid when coals or kindling have already been ignited and never use any flammable or combustible liquid other than charcoal starter fluid to get the fire going.

Propane Grills

- Check the propane cylinder hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. A light soap and water solution applied to the hose will reveal escaping propane quickly by releasing bubbles.
- If you determine your grill has a gas leak by smell or the soapy bubble test and there is no flame:
 1. Turn off the propane tank and grill.
 2. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again.
 3. If the leak does not stop, call the fire department.
- If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department. Do not attempt to move the grill.
- All propane cylinders manufactured after April 2002 must have overfill protection devices (OPD). OPDs shut off the flow of propane before capacity is reached, limiting the potential for release of propane gas if the cylinder heats up. OPDs are easily identified by their triangular-shaped hand wheel.
- Use only equipment bearing the mark of an independent testing laboratory. Follow the manufacturers' instructions on how to set up the grill and maintain it.

- Never store propane cylinders in buildings or garages. If you store a gas grill inside during the winter, disconnect the cylinder and leave it outside.

Clothes Dryer Safety for Residents



Each year there are more than 12,000 dryer fires in US homes. Failure to clean lint screens and dryer vents continues to be the leading cause according to reports. National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Home Fires Involving Clothes Dryers and Washing Machines, March 2009.

Safety Tips for Residents

- Always remove lint from trap before using the clothes dryer.
- Regularly check dryer exhaust vent hoses behind the dryer for lint build up and clean. Bends and lint buildup in hoses can block airflow.
- Never put rubber, plastic, foam or any materials that made contact with flammable liquids in the dryer even if previously washed.
- Never leave dryer running while sleeping or out of the home.

DRYER SAFETY FACTS

<http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files//PDF/DryerFactSheet.pdf>

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Arson Safety for Residents

Arson is a crime that can occur at any time of the day or night. The following tips can help keep apartment buildings from being a target of an arson fire.



Arson Safety Tips for Residents

- Lock doors and windows of your home and garage.
- Clean up wastepaper, long grass, weeds, litter, or anything that can burn from around buildings.
- Clear carport areas of anything that could fuel a fire.
- Do not allow dumpsters to become overfilled. Arrange for additional dumpsters or take refuse to transfer stations, if required.
- Locate commercial dumpsters and recycling bins at least five feet away from combustible walls and openings of roof eave lines. Use only metal or metal lined receptacles.
- Place locks on commercial dumpsters, if possible.
- Trim shrubbery away from doors and windows to improve visibility.
- Leave your indoor and outdoor lighting on during hours of darkness. Consider installing devices that automatically turn on outdoor lights when they sense darkness or movement outside the home.

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CHAPTER 2

Coldwater Requirements for Emergency Guides

The Coldwater Fire Prevention Code sets the minimum regulations and standards for Apartment Building emergency planning and preparedness. The Fire Emergency Plan or Guide is one requirement with which all apartment owners and managers should be familiar.

In accordance with NFPA 101, 1994 Section 19-4.3 and Chapter 31-6.5, owners or managers of rental properties are required to develop and provide to residents a building specific Fire Emergency Guide.

The Fire Emergency Guide will provide residents with a suggested evacuation plan and information about accessible fire protection equipment in the building. A copy of the Fire Emergency Guide should be given to each resident when they move in and when changes are made.



As a minimum, the Fire Emergency Guide should contain the following:

- ✓ **Location of fire alarm manual pull boxes.**
- ✓ **Location of Portable Fire Extinguishers.**
- ✓ **Location of Fire Alarm Smoke Detectors.**
- ✓ **Exit routes for each apartment using stairs, not elevators.**
- ✓ **Locations for outside gathering/assembly areas for building occupants.**
- ✓ **Instructions for those tenants unable to evacuate the building using stairs.**

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One format option for the Fire Emergency Guide is to prepare a basic floor plan diagram for each floor of the building, being sure to include the points outlined in the box to the left of the diagram below. The Fire Emergency Guide should reflect the needs of your residents and the specifics of the building. The building owner or manager should review the Fire Emergency Guide at least once a year. A copy of the guide should be given to each tenant when they move in or when changes are made.

SAMPLE
XYZ Apartments Fire Emergency Guide

Building Fire Safety Equipment

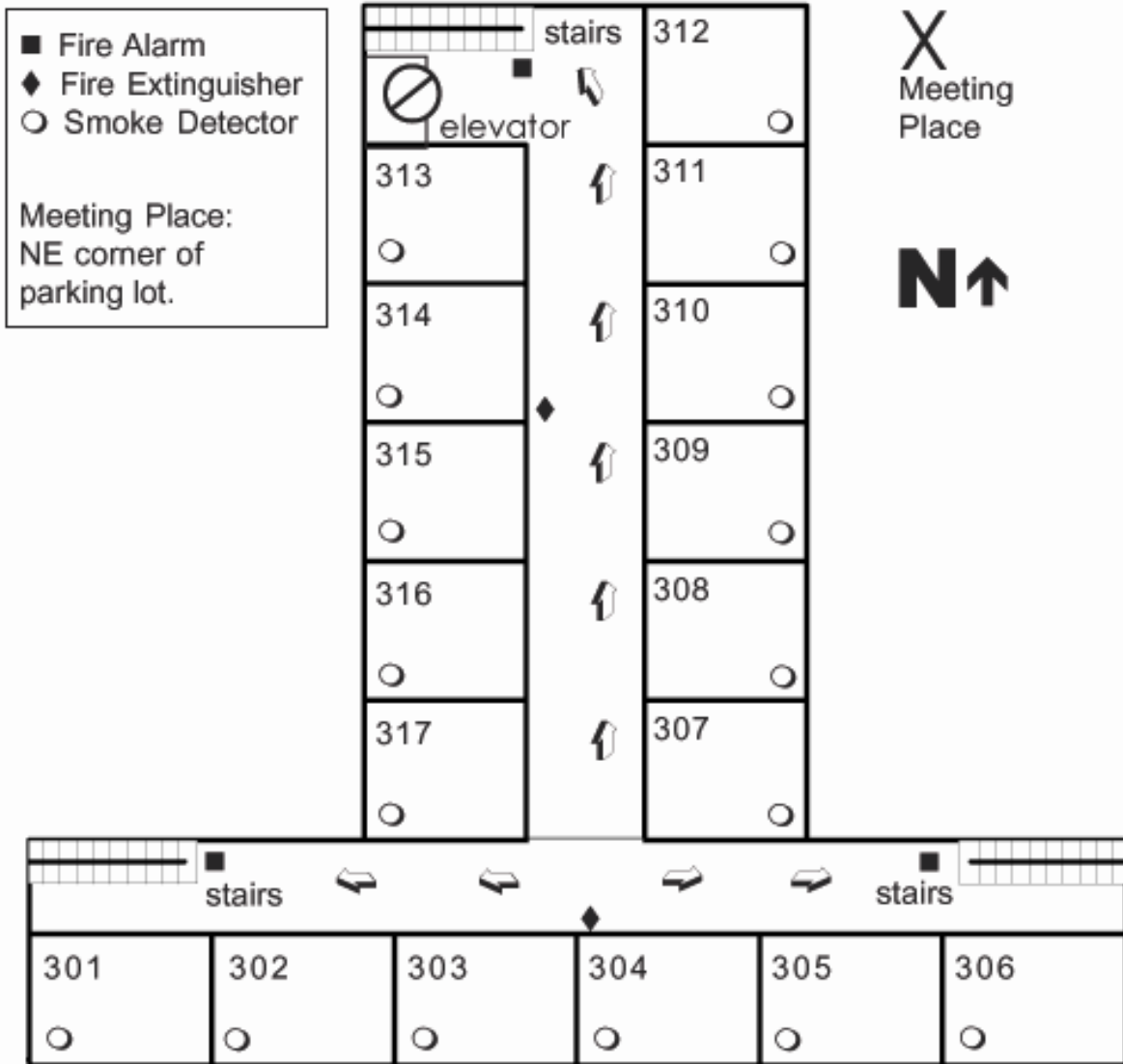
1. The building is equipped with smoke alarms and a fire sprinkler system.
2. Portable fire extinguishers are located on every level next to each exit and Fire Alarm pull stations are located next to each exit stairwell.

Every alarm must be treated as a fire emergency. When you hear the fire alarm or if you encounter smoke or fire, take these steps to ensure a safe evacuation of the building.

1. Leave your unit as quickly as possible, closing the doors as you go. Pull the fire alarm next to the stairwell as you exit if fire alarm is not sounding.
2. Use the stairs, not the elevators, to evacuate the building.
3. Once outside, move away from the building to the designated meeting place. Do not congregate in the lobby. The meeting place is on the NE corner of the parking lot.
4. If you encounter smoke or fire outside of your apartment and you are unable to exit using the stairs, stay in your unit. Keep your door and windows closed. Use towels or clothing to block openings around doors or vents where smoke might enter.
5. Once you have left the building, do not go back into the building for any reason until the Fire Department has given permission to reenter.

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EXAMPLE



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CHAPTER 3

Fire Safety Planning

Staff Training

If your building has regular staff members, it is important that they have an understanding of their role in a fire emergency. Training should be provided for any tasks they may need to perform during a fire emergency. Particular attention should be paid to the following areas.

Prevention

Educate all employees as to the specific hazards in their working environment and how to prevent fires while conducting their assigned duties. Employee awareness can prevent fires and protect residents.

Evacuation

Staff members may be expected to manage the evacuation of the building during a fire emergency. Employees who are asked to fulfill this task must understand the building's evacuation plan for both ambulatory and non-ambulatory residents. Once residents are outside it is important to keep them informed in order to combat any fears or rumors.

What is Real Fire Like?

- **Real fire is fast.** Once a fire begins to flame it can double in size every 30 seconds. At this rate, a room can become fully involved in minutes.
- **Real fire is dark.** Fires produce large amounts of thick, black smoke that obscures vision, causes nausea and may even lead to unconsciousness or death. Three out of four people who die in residential fires die from smoke inhalation.
- **Real fire is hot.** A fire can cause the temperature at ceiling level to reach excesses of 1200 degrees Fahrenheit, at just 5 feet it can be 800 degrees. At this temperature, the superheated air will burn your lungs.
- **Real fire is unpredictable.** Each fire is unique. Some may smolder for hours filling a room with smoke. Others will burn at exceedingly high temperatures, consuming everything with flames.

Fire Alarm Reporting Any fire alarm in the building must be reported to the Fire Department, even if the building has a monitored fire alarm system. The Coldwater Fire Department does not charge for false alarms. A staff member should be assigned to call 9-1-1 from a safe location whenever a building alarm activates or a fire is reported. The caller should be prepared to provide information as it is requested by the dispatcher and should be able to stay on the telephone until instructed to hang up.



Training is Available

The Coldwater Fire Department provides free training on emergency planning, preparedness and fire or emergency evacuation drills.

(517) 278-4177

Alarm Investigation

If the building's fire alarm system provides information as to where the alarm is initiated, building staff may be able to investigate the source. This should only be done if it can be done safely. Investigation does not eliminate the need to report the alarm to the Fire Department. Anyone assigned to investigate a fire alarm must understand the dangers of fire and know how to operate a portable fire extinguisher. Any information regarding the source of the fire alarm should be reported in a call to 9-1-1 as soon as possible.

If building staff determine that a fire alarm is false prior to the Fire Department's arrival, they should call 9-1-1 and relay the information to the dispatcher.

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The dispatcher will notify the responding fire department that a false alarm has been reported. One fire department vehicle will arrive to verify that the alarm is false. The Coldwater Fire Department will investigate all fire alarms. The building alarm may not be silenced without permission of the Fire Department.

Conducting Building Fire Drills

Building fire drills are a requirement of the Coldwater Fire Prevention Code and the fire emergency plan. Drills should be done as a means to evaluate the readiness of your building, staff and residents in case of fire and an evacuation is necessary. All staff should be familiar and fully understand their role in case of fire alarm. Fire drills should replicate as closely as possible the activity expected in an actual emergency.

The following information should assist with the planning of staff fire drills:



- Prior to any drill, staff should be familiar with the emergency plan and their responsibilities.
- The drill should include the sounding of the building's fire alarm system. If your building has an offsite monitoring company you must contact them prior to conducting the drill. Remember to contact the company when the drill is finished.
- Keep a log book to record drill activity.

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- It is also recommended that you notify residents that the fire alarm system will be sounding for the staff drill and invite them to participate.

Another recommendation is to keep records of fire drills and include the following information:

1. Identity of the person conducting the drill.
2. Date and time of the drill.
3. Notification method used.
4. Staff members on duty and participating.
5. Number of occupants evacuated.
6. Special conditions simulated.
7. Problems encountered.
8. Time required to accomplish the evacuation.

For those residents unable to use stairs to evacuate, the safest response to a fire emergency may be to remain in their apartments. As long as the fire is not in the individual apartment, that unit is an area of refuge. An area of refuge provides protection from smoke and flames.

Residents must be instructed that if they choose to stay in their units, their doors and windows must remain shut. Residents should also understand that it may be safer for them to remain inside the apartment rather than await further evacuation assistance from their balconies.

**SAFETY RULES FOR RESIDENTS
WHO CHOOSE TO STAY
IN THEIR APARTMENT**

- **Keep the door to the room closed.** A closed door provides a barrier to smoke and flames.
- **Use towels or clothing to block openings** around doors, vents or window openings to prevent smoke from entering.
- **Place a signal device in the window.** The device can be anything that will call attention to your location
- **If smoke or fire enter your apartment call 9-1-1 to report your location.** Stay low to the floor and put a wet cloth over your nose and mouth.
- **Keep windows or balcony sliding doors closed.** Smoke can enter the apartment from outside. Having open windows may put you at greater risk from smoke entering from the outside and hamper rescue efforts from below.

If they feel they are in jeopardy, residents should use their telephone to call 9-1-1 to report their location and request immediate help.

Residents who choose to stay in their units should be identified to the responding firefighters immediately upon their arrival. One way this can be done is by maintaining a roster at the fire alarm panel of residents who plan to stay in their rooms. This roster is then provided to the firefighters upon their arrival.

Window Security Bars

If your building has security bars, residents must understand how to open them for evacuation. Every resident should practice unlocking and opening them. These devices are required to have quick-release devices to allow them to be opened immediately. If the security bars are permanently fixed they should be replaced or retrofitted with release devices that meet the Fire Code requirements.



CHAPTER 4

Fire Safety Inspections

The Coldwater Fire Department, in conjunction with the Coldwater Neighborhood Services Department, conducts fire safety inspections during Rental Housing Inspection cycles. This is an effort to reduce the building's risk to fire and remove potential fire safety hazards in the building's common and mechanical equipment areas. The Coldwater Fire Department will also inspect fire protection systems for annual maintenance and inspection recording.



To be prepared for inspections, apartment managers should be aware of the following fire safety items:

Emergency Access

- The property address should be clearly marked and visible from the street.
- Fire lanes must remain clear for emergency vehicles at all times. Fire hydrants should not be blocked or covered with snow making them not visible.
- Fire department hose connections must remain clear, accessible and free from vegetation.



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Fire Extinguishing Equipment

- Portable fire extinguishers must be inspected and serviced by a qualified company annually.
- Extinguishers should be accessible within 75 feet from any location within the building.
- Fire Department hose connection cabinets must be maintained with valves operated and piping flushed quarterly.

Fire and Life Safety Systems

- Required fire alarm, sprinkler, standpipe and extinguishers require annual testing and inspection.
- Inspection and testing must be done by a licensed firm.
- Inspection records for these systems must be kept in a "red" file book accessible to the fire department.

Exits

- Exit signs must be clearly visible and in working order.
- Exits must remain free from obstructions and furnishings.
- Exits access must be lit in hours of darkness.
- Fire doors must close freely and latch when released. Fire doors must never be blocked open.
- Stairwells must be kept clear and not used for storage. Storing combustibles under stairs is prohibited.

Code Violations

- If a code deficiency is discovered, a notice of deficiency will be issued and a time frame for correction will be established. The fire department will allow ample time to have deficiencies corrected. The

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fire department will conduct a follow up inspection to verify corrections were completed.

CHAPTER 5

Additional Resources

United States Fire Administration:

<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/citizens/>

National Fire Protection Association:

<http://www.nfpa.org/categoryList.asp?categoryID=244&URL=Safety%20Information/For%20consumers>

US Consumer Products and Safety Commission:

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prerel.html?tab=recalls>

Coldwater Fire Department Safety Information (Related Documents):

http://www.coldwater.org/Content/Dept_Fire.html



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