



The City of  
Worcester

# — FIRE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR APARTMENT BUILDINGS

Presented by the Worcester Fire Department



W O R C E S T E R

# THE SPEED AND PROGRESSION OF A FIRE

## Fire Growth

Incident start; no report to WFD



## 2 Minutes Later

2 Minutes = Explosive Growth



## 14 Minutes Later

WFD crews fully on scene, controlling incident (preventing spread to neighboring exposures)



# Impacts of a Fire

Most common causes of fire:  
Smoking, Cooking, Heating,  
Electrical Events, & Lithium-Ion  
Batteries

# Smoking Fires

The following slides show three fires in the city that were caused by smoking. These fires resulted in approximately \$1,107,500 in damages, 2 Civilian Injuries and the displacement of 48 Tenants.



# Smoking Fires

- \$332,700 damage estimate
- 10 residents displaced
- 1 civilian injury



# Smoking Fires





# Smoking Fires

- \$229,000 damage estimate
- 10 residents displaced



# Smoking Fires



# Smoking Fires

- \$545,800 damage estimate
- 28 residents displaced
- 1 civilian rescued from balcony
- 1 civilian injury



# Cooking Fires

The following slides show three fires in the city that were caused by cooking. These fires resulted in approximately \$818,600 in damages, 3 Civilian Injuries and the displacement of 18 Tenants.

# Cooking Fires

- \$450,000 damage estimate
- 8 residents displaced



# Cooking Fires





# Cooking Fires

- \$350,000 damage estimate
- 7 residents displaced
- 2 civilians rescued from 3rd floor window (including 1 child)
- 2 civilian injuries



# Cooking Fires



# Cooking Fires



# Cooking Fires

- \$18,600 damage estimate
- 3 residents displaced
- 1 civilian injury



# Cooking Fires



# Electrical Events

The following slides show two fires in the city that were caused by an electrical event.

These fires have resulted in \$400,000 in estimated damages, 1 Civilian Injury and resulted in the displacement of 14 Tenants

# Electrical Event

- \$300,000 damage estimate
- 12 residents displaced
- Canine fatality on second floor
- Tenant jumped from third floor



# Electrical Event



# Electrical Event



# Electrical Event





# Electrical Event

- \$100,000 damage estimate
- 2 residents displaced



# Electrical Event



# Electrical Event



# Electrical Event



# Proximity Heat Sources

The following slides show three fires in the city caused by combustibles in close proximity to a heat source. These fires have resulted in \$950,000 in estimated damages, 2 Civilian Injury and the displacement of 25 Tenants

# Heat Sources Near Combustibles

- \$500,000 damage estimate
- 5 residents displaced



# Heat Sources Near Combustibles



# Heat Sources Near Combustibles



# Heat Sources Near Combustibles

- \$350,000 damage estimate
- 17 residents displaced
- 1 civilian rescued from rear walk-out roof
- 2 civilian injuries



# Heat Sources Near Combustibles



# Heat Sources Near Combustibles



# Heat Sources Near Combustibles

- \$100,000 damage estimate
- 3 residents displaced



# Heat Sources Near Combustibles



# Heat Sources Near Combustibles



# Lithium-Ion Battery

The following slides show three fires in the city caused by lithium-ion batteries. These fires have resulted in \$163,000 in estimated damages, 1 Civilian Injury and the displacement of 6 Tenants.



# Lithium Ion Battery

- \$50,000 damage estimate
- 4 residents displaced
- One burn injury to tenant

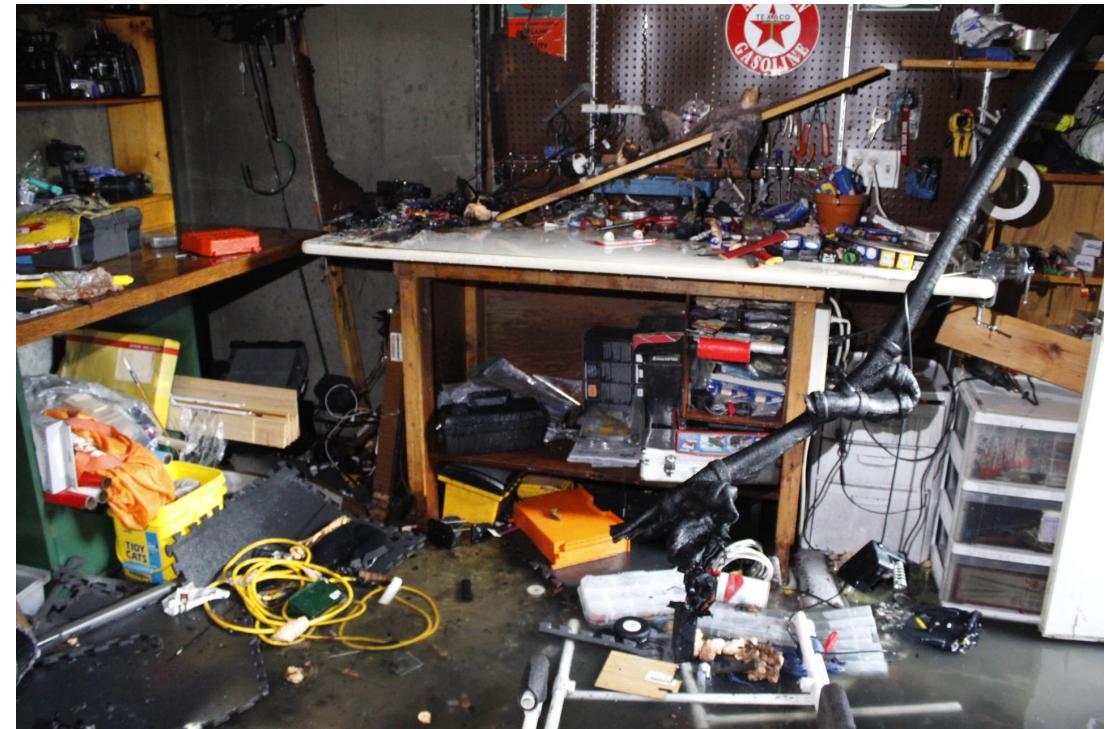


# Lithium Ion Battery



# Lithium Ion Battery

- \$25,000 damage estimate
- 2 residents displaced



# Lithium Ion Battery





# Lithium Ion Battery



# LITHIUM POLYMER BATTERY

- \$88,000 damage estimate
- 2 deceased dogs
- 4 residents displaced



# EJECTED LITHIUM ION CELLS

- Approximately \$35,000 in damage
- Stored in shed



- Extension to house
- 2 residents displaced



# After a Fire

In the event of a fire, it is important that tenants and landlords understand their rights and obligations.



# Assessment of Fire Damage

- The Worcester Fire Department – Fire Prevention Division will notify the City of Worcester Department of Inspectional Services whenever there is a fire or smoke damage within a residence.
- The Department of Inspectional Services will determine what steps must be taken to make your residence habitable once again.

# Utilities

- Often the Fire Department must shut off or disconnect the utility services as a safety precaution and to prevent further damage to the structure and its contents.
- The utility companies cannot restore your utility services until the repairs have been completed by a Massachusetts licensed contractor, are approved, and a clearance has been issued by the Department of Inspectional Services.

# Important Information to Know

All landlords' insurance policies for multi-unit residential buildings must provide up to \$750 in relocation benefits to tenants.

- Mass. General Law, Ch. 175, Section 99, Clause 15

Landlords upon written request must disclose the name of the insurance company.

- Mass. General Law, Ch. 186, Section 21

Tenants should not be charged rent for the period the unit is uninhabitable. And – if the tenant can't come back – the landlord must return the security deposit and last month's rent

# How Does a Tenant Collect Payment?

- The landlord's insurance company makes the payment.
- The insurance company will send an "adjuster" to represent its interests and evaluate the damage of the building.
- The tenants will deal directly with the Adjuster, not the landlord, regarding this insurance.
- The landlord will need to provide the following information to the tenant:
  - Name of the Adjuster
  - Name of the Insurance Company
  - Insurance Company Address
  - The Adjusters Telephone Number

## Renter's Insurance: What You Need to Know



### Why it matters

- \$5,000-\$30,000 of insurance coverage for:
- Fire & smoke damage
- Water damage from plumbing, floods, storms, hail
- Temporary housing if you're displaced from your home
- Theft & vandalism



In Worcester County, **every week an average of 5 families are displaced due to home fires**, and most cannot return to their homes or grab stuff



### Common Misconceptions

- Landlord's insurance DOES NOT COVER your stuff
- It's affordable – prices range from \$5 to \$15 a month



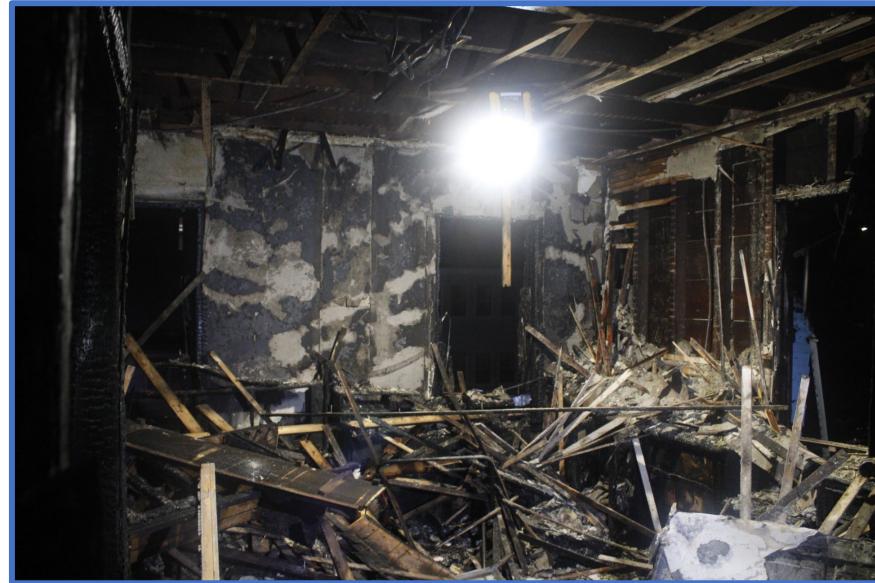
### Shopping Tips

- Compare policies – cost and coverage vary
- Ask your car insurance provider for a discount



### What to look for in a Policy

- ✓ Contents Coverage
- ✓ Liability & Theft
- ✓ Replacement Value
- ✓ Living Expenses



This advice brought to you by the American Red Cross in collaboration with the Worcester Fire Department and Emergency Management



# Prevention

**What can we do to avoid a fire, protect our tenants, and our buildings?**

# Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms should be in good working order:

- Battery replaced every 6 months if not a 10-year sealed lithium battery.
- Smoke alarms should be replaced if over 10 years old.



# Smoke Alarm Locations

## Inside Apartments

- Inside every sleeping room (including sleeping porches).
- Installed directly outside of the sleeping area.
- Every apartment of your building must have at least one smoke alarm.

## Common Areas

- At least one on every floor in the front and back stairwells and the basement.
- On levels without bedrooms, install alarms near the stairway to the upper level.

# Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Outside every bedroom in your apartments.

- Within 10 feet of each bedroom door.

On every floor of your apartment building, including the basement.

- More than 5 feet but less than 20 feet away from fuel-burning appliances so they work properly and to avoid false alarms.



# All Weather Heat Detectors

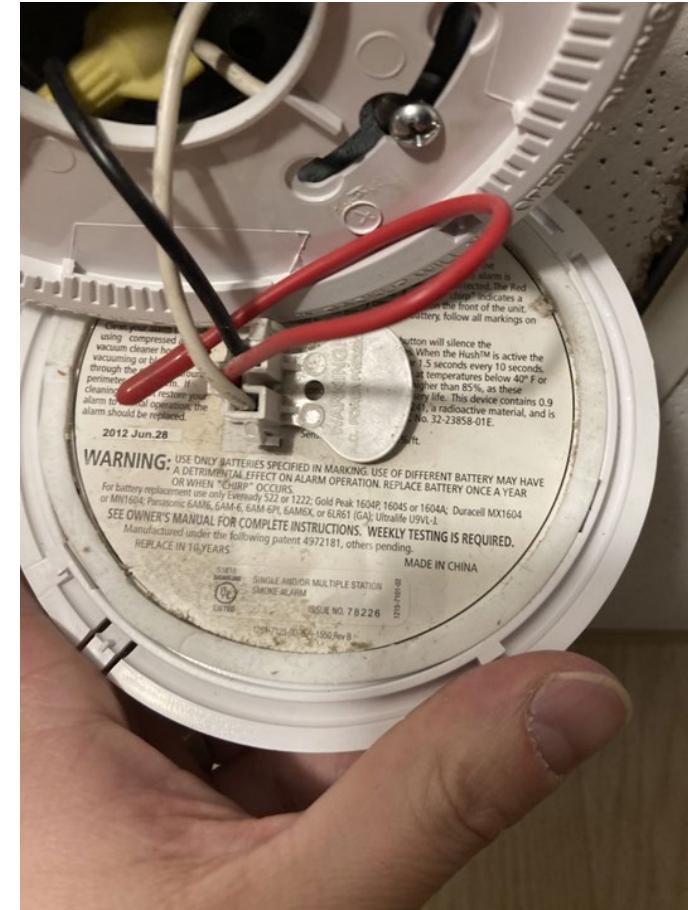
- These detectors are designed for both indoor and outdoor use.
- These detectors must be used on rear porches that are not temperature controlled..
- Simply put, a heat detector or heat alarm is a device used to detect any significant increase in temperature that might indicate an imminent fire.





# Hardwired Alarms

- A hardwired smoke alarm is a series of smoke alarms that are interconnected to a 120-volt AC circuit.
- Unlike standard smoke alarms that run solely off battery power, hardwired smoke alarms are wired directly into your building's electrical system.
- From the outside, hardwired smoke alarms look much like battery-powered smoke alarms and are located in the same areas within the home.
- The difference is that hardwired smoke alarms include an electrical cable that runs unseen behind the ceiling or wall directly into the back of the smoke alarm.



# Interconnected Alarms

- An interconnected smoke alarm is a system where smoke alarms communicate with each other.
- If one smoke alarm activates, all the smoke alarms on the circuit go off, making it more likely that all persons have the best chance of getting out before they are overcome by smoke and die.
- This creates an entire circuit of smoke alarms to help provide you with an early warning to an emergency.





# Tampering and Removing Alarms



# Landlord Responsibilities

## Common Areas

- Ensure all alarms are properly installed and working properly.
- Recommended that you check common areas monthly to ensure the system is operational.
  - Common areas do not require you to give notice.

## Inside Apartments

- Ensure all alarms are properly installed and working properly.
- Recommended that when you come to collect rent you should check apartments to ensure your tenants have not removed any alarms.
  - Give notice to your tenants that you will need to get access.

# Failure to Maintain

## Massachusetts Fire Code 2021

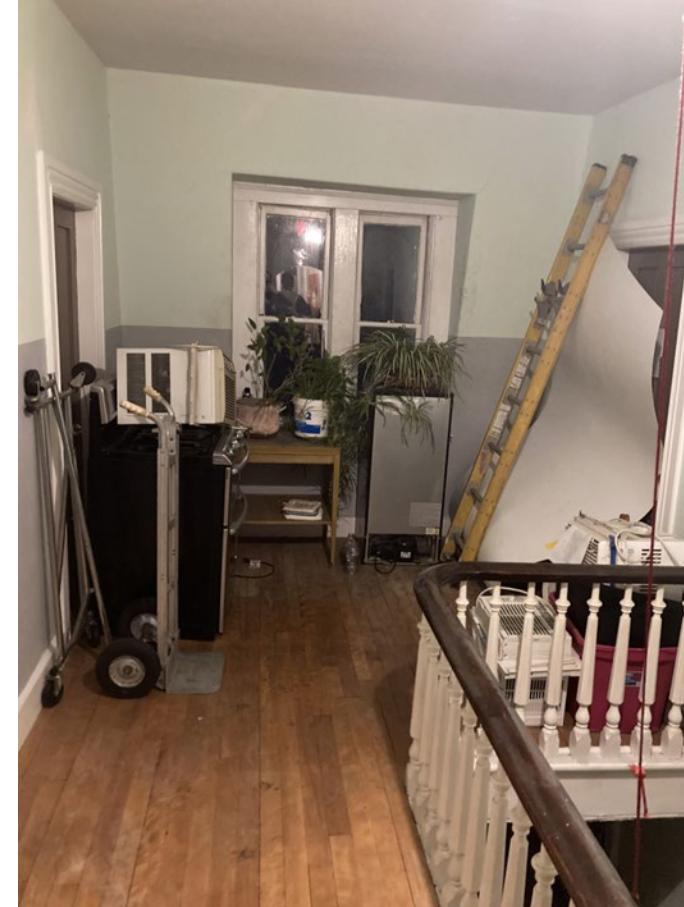
- 907.10 Smoke Alarm Maintenance
- Smoke alarms shall be tested and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Smoke alarms shall be replaced when they fail to respond to operability tests, or when they exceed 10 years from the date of manufacture, unless an earlier replacement is specified in the manufacturer's published instructions.

## Code Enforcement

- 1<sup>st</sup> Offense - \$100
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense - \$500
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense - \$1,000
- Failure to make the necessary repairs will result in legal action.

# Means of Egress

- Means of egress shall be continuously maintained free of all obstructions or impediments to full instant use in the case of fire or other emergency.
- No furnishings, decorations, or other objects shall obstruct exits or their access thereto, egress therefrom, or visibility thereof.



# Cooking Equipment

- No solid fuel cooking and heating appliances shall be permitted to be used, kindled, or stored on any balcony.
- No gaseous fuel cooking and heating appliances shall be used, kindled, or stored on any balcony located above grade, unless permitted to be permanently installed pursuant to its equipment listings.
- No cooking or heating appliances shall be used, installed, kindled or stored on any fire escape balcony.



# No Smoking

- Removal or destruction of any required "No Smoking" sign shall be prohibited.
- Smoking or depositing any lighted or smoldering substance in a place where required "No Smoking" signs are posted shall be prohibited.



# Violations and Education

- Education is our first line to make the corrections.
  - Landlords and tenants are explained what violations need to be corrected and are given a reasonable amount of time depending on the situation.
  - Once corrections are made, we inform both the landlord and tenant that if this happens again, we will fine accordingly.
- Violations are issued as a form of enforcement when education fails and continue until corrected.
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Offense - \$100
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Offense - \$500
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Offense and Ongoing - \$1,000



# Questions???

