

WAUKEGAN FIRE DEPARTMENT



Fire and Life Safety Handbook for Landlord and Property Managers

WAUKEGAN FIRE DEPARTMENT
Fire Education and Prevention Division
1101 Belvidere Road
Waukegan, Illinois 60085
Phone (847) 249-5410 Fax (847) 249-5607

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CITY OF WAUKEGAN

FORWARD

Perhaps nothing is as devastating as a fire out of control. Fire can kill, disable, and completely disrupt people's lives. Fire can ruin businesses and destroy livelihoods. According to the US Fire Administration, 20 percent of fires in the United States occur in apartments.

This packet is provided to help equip you with the information needed to significantly reduce the possibility of a fire occurring in your complex. If you have questions pertaining to any information contained in this manual or if you would like a training session contact the Waukegan Fire Prevention Bureau at (847) 249-5410.

EXITING SYSTEMS

The most important aspect of fire safety is quick and safe evacuation. All exits, and all components of the exiting system including doors, corridors, stairways must be maintained in working order at all times.

Keep stairways free of obstructions. Anything which could make the stairway unusable should be kept away from stairs. Barbecue grills, motorcycles, lawn mowers, and similar equipment and combustible materials should not be stored under stairs. Keep all storage and other obstructions out of corridors.

If there are interior corridor systems, ongoing maintenance is necessary.

1. Fire doors along the corridor, including apartment doors, laundry and utility room doors, garbage room doors and stairway doors must be self-closing, self-latching and not propped open. Properly maintained fire doors can hold back fire and smoke from the corridor, allowing residents time to get out.
2. Maintain and test emergency lighting systems and exit signs monthly. Check for burned out bulbs, low and dead batteries. Replace burned out bulbs as soon as possible.

Post evacuation plans in common areas of the complex. Each plan should indicate two exits from each area and a safe place for everyone to congregate. Provide evacuation information to new tenants regarding procedures to be followed if the fire alarm is activated.

ADDRESS

It is very important that the address numbers be easily seen from the street to assist emergency personnel in quickly locating the appropriate building.

The address numbers for the complex should be at least four inches in height, contrasted against the background, and be visible from the street.

In multi-building complexes, building identifier letters or numbers should be at least four (4) inches high and contrast with the background, and mounted high on one corner of the building so that they can be seen from the roadway. Special attention should be given to landscaping; trees that will grow and hide the letters should not be planted in this area.

Post apartment numbers conspicuously, contrasting with background, and at least three (3) inches in height.

SMOKE DETECTORS & FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS

Every unit in multi housing complex is required to have smoke detectors installed in accordance with the building code and state law.

Fire alarms are designed to notify residents of a fire in time to safely evacuate from a building. Building managers should consider providing residents with information to assist them in planning their evacuation. Keep fire alarm systems in proper operating condition at all times. This can be accomplished by regular testing and maintenance of your alarm system by qualified personnel.

Testing and Maintenance (must notify Waukegan Dispatch prior to testing at (847) 360-9000 ext. 550). Included but is not limited to; testing all devices, cleaning all smoke detectors, checking battery levels, etc. Documentation may be requested by insurance underwriters or Fire Department seeking verification that reasonable efforts are being made to maintain the system in good working order.

NOTE: A trouble condition, indicated on the alarm panel by a yellow light, can be caused by numerous conditions. This situation requires contacting qualified service personnel to troubleshoot and correct the problem immediately.

Nuisance alarms, besides being annoying, can cause residents to become desensitized to the alarm and possibly cause them to disregard it. Proper maintenance can help avoid this situation. The City of Waukegan adopted a false fire alarm ordinance in 1994. Occasionally, manual pull stations are maliciously pulled. If this occurs frequently, contact the Waukegan Fire Prevention Bureau for assistance.

FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS

Fire sprinkler systems are a most effective means of controlling fires, minimizing fire spread and damage caused by smoke and fire. Sprinkler heads are strategically placed throughout apartment living areas. Activated by heat, only those heads near the fire will discharge water. Fire sprinkler systems do require regular testing and maintenance.

Testing & Maintenance of Fire Sprinkler Systems

1. Fire sprinkler systems require at least annual testing and maintenance by a qualified contractor.

2. Standards for testing and maintenance of fire sprinkler systems are outlined in N.F.P.A. pamphlet 13.
3. Tenants should be advised not to obstruct sprinkler heads by hanging items or decorations from them.
4. All required sprinkler systems also require a fire alarm system tied into the City of Waukegan dispatch center.
5. If you are unsure about fire alarm or sprinkler systems contact the Fire Prevention Bureau at (847)249-5410.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Fire extinguishers, when operated by a person knowledgeable in their proper use, can significantly reduce fire damage. Training is essential. If you have a fire extinguisher available, be sure it is a Class ABC extinguishers with a testing laboratory label. Use an extinguisher only if:

1. The Fire Department is being called (9-1-1).
2. The building is being evacuated. Activate fire alarm, if available.
3. You know you have a Class ABC extinguisher, and you already know how to operate it.
4. The fire is small and contained in the area where it started.
5. You can fight the fire with your back to an exit.

If any of these are not true, get out immediately and dial 9-1-1.

Training information pertaining to fire extinguishers is available from the Waukegan Fire Prevention Bureau.

Maintenance: Keep fire extinguishers in good working order at all times. Be sure they are mounted in conspicuous, accessible locations. Annual servicing by qualified personnel and monthly inspection by maintenance personnel is required.

FIRE LANES AND FIRE HYDRANTS

Fire lanes are designed to provide direct access for emergency activities and emergency apparatus. Most frequently, they are used for fire apparatus during medical emergencies. When fire lanes are blocked by fire or medical emergency, seconds count. Proper signage is very important to enforce no parking in the fire lane. The police department will cite vehicles illegally parked and may assist apartment managers with cite enforcement. Contact your Waukegan Fire Prevention Bureau for information on signage, wording and placement.

A five (5) foot clearance must be maintained around all fire hydrants. Be especially careful of any snow, weed, or debris build up around hydrants.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Learn CPR. For information pertaining to classes, call the American Heart Association at (312)346-4675.

Keep your address, phone number, and emergency numbers (9-1-1) on or near the phone.

When dialing 9-1-1, be sure to answer all the dispatchers' questions and follow their directions. Speak slowly and stay calm. Stay on the phone until instructed to hang up.

Provide specific information about where the emergency is taking place. For example, the building number, apartment number, nearest entrances, which pool, etc.

To direct emergency personnel to the scene, turn on an outside light and, if available, send someone out to meet them.

Unlock gates or doors leading to the apartment so firefighters can make entry.

POOL SAFETY

Each year, many water-related incidents occur. These incidents frequently involve young children, but adults can also be victims. Water-related incidents not only include drowning, but near drowning, which can leave the victim severely brain damaged. Also, diving from other than designated areas can cause head and spinal cord injuries due to the victim striking his/her head on the bottom. Permanent paralysis can result. Alcohol consumption may precipitate water related incidents by impairing judgement.

Adults, as well as children, should never swim alone. Children must always be directly supervised by a responsible adult.

Provide approved life saving equipment, such as a pole with a hook and a ring buoy with rope, in the pool area.

Persons supervising others should know cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Interior perimeter pool fences should be installed. Fences should be at least 4 feet in height, with self-closing and self-latching gates, which should be checked frequently. Vertical bars should not be spaced more than four inches apart.

Keep pool area free of toys and other objects that might attract children.

Keep tables and chairs away from the outside of the interior perimeter fence, so children cannot climb over the fence by using furniture or other objects.

Do not allow pets in the pool area when young children are present.

Post pool rules conspicuously and enforce them. Suggested rules include:

1. Children must always be directly supervised by a responsible adult.
2. Rules addressing the consumption of alcoholic beverages should be considered.
3. Roughhousing is not allowed.
4. Dive only from the diving board, not from the side of the pool.
5. Gates must be closed after entering or exiting the pool area; never prop them open.
6. Glass containers are not allowed in the pool area.

It is recommended that a telephone be near the pool with the 9-1-1 emergency number posted for emergencies.

CHEMICAL STORAGE/FLAMMABLE & COMBUSTIBLE LIQUIDS STORAGE

Pool Chemicals: Store pool chlorine and muriatic acid separately in a well-ventilated area.

Flammable and Combustible Liquids:

Store gasoline in approved safety cans only. Do not exceed five gallons. Place caps tightly on container. It is recommended that flammable and combustible liquids be store in a well ventilated area, away from open flame (i.e., gas water heaters and other ignition sources).

Flammable liquids should never be stored inside your building.

Combustible liquids and flammable liquid storage in excess of ten gallons must be stored in an approved flammable liquid storage cabinet. Contact Waukegan Fire Prevention Bureau for cabinet specifications.

COOKING INSIDE CLUBHOUSES & RECREATIONAL AREAS

Cooking is a frequent cause of fire loss. Cooking which produces grease (i.e. frying, browning of meat) is not allowed unless an approved grease removal system and extinguishing system has been installed. When an extinguishing system has been installed, servicing every six months by a qualified contractor is required. All cooking areas, hood and ducts should be kept free of grease accumulation.

LOCKS/LOCK BOXES

At least two vehicular access points into larger complexes may be required for fire department access. Gates may be locked; however, they must be able to be readily opened by the fire department. Prior to closing any gates to vehicular access, contact the Waukegan Fire Prevention Bureau to determine if that access is required for the fire department. The City of Waukegan requires the lock box security system to allow emergency access to locked areas and will assist you in setting up a locking arrangement that fills your needs and those of emergency responders. This system is required by all apartments that have a required fire alarm system.

HEATING & VENTILATION UNITS

Heating and ventilation units require regular service. Develop and use preventative maintenance programs for all mechanical equipment. Keep motors free of grease and dust. Check filters regularly and change them when necessary. Make sure fresh air returns/vents are kept clean and open to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

LAUNDRY ROOMS

A laundry room is another area of fire hazard. Lint and combustible debris can accumulate behind the dryer, and can ignite when heated.

- ▶ Clean dryer lint screens after each use.

- ▶ Dryer vents should be continuous to the outside in galvanized steel or aluminum.
- ▶ Clean dryer and washer motors as needed to eliminate grease and lint accumulation.
- ▶ Gas vents for water heaters and dryers should be maintained in good repair and continuous to the outside.

DUMPSTERS

Locate dumpsters away from buildings. Maintain a five (5) foot separation from combustible construction and eaves. The intent is that in the event of a fire in the dumpster, the fire may be contained to the dumpster and not spread to adjacent buildings. Dumpsters should have lids and lids should be kept closed.

BARBECUE GRILLS

- ▶ **DO NOT** use barbecue grills on wood balconies or under stairways.
- ▶ Use only enough charcoal lighter fluid to start the fire. Keep the flame low. **Never** use gasoline to start the fire.
- ▶ Keep the grill lid closed when cooking or waiting for charcoal to properly heat.
- ▶ When cooking, the grill should be constantly attended.
- ▶ Have an approved fire extinguisher close by and know how to use it.
- ▶ Let coals cool overnight or wet the ashes thoroughly prior to disposal. Dispose of ashes by placing them into a metal container with a tight-fitting metal lid.
- ▶ Keep matches, lighters, and combustible liquids out of reach and out of sight of children.

LPG/NATURAL GAS

LPG/Propane Use and Storage/Natural Gas

It is extremely dangerous to store or use LPG cylinders (such as barbecues) inside buildings. If a cylinder leaks or vents, flammable vapors will travel

throughout a building causing an explosive situation.

Check rubber .0. rings and supply hose every time the cylinder is filled.

Protect natural gas meters and piping from damage by vehicles.

ELECTRICAL

Electricity is a common cause of fires. These include improper use of extension cords, damaged flexible cords, overloaded circuits, and defective appliances.

Electrical installations and wiring throughout the complex should be installed by a qualified electrician in accordance with the National Electrical Code.

Extension cords: Do not use these as a replacement for permanent electrical wiring. Extension cords are designed for temporary use only. They should be kept free from damage, and the wiring size should be appropriate for the amperage of the appliance it is supplying. Use only UL listed cords.

Flexible cords Maintain flexible cords to appliances (i.e. lamps, toasters, etc.) in good condition and place them where they are not subject to damage. Replace damaged, frayed, dried, or cracked cords.

Overloaded circuits These can occur by plugging too many appliances into one circuit, exceeding the capacity of the wiring, heating the wiring, and possibly starting a fire. Never plug in more appliances than the receptacle will accept. Two plugs are usually allowed in a typical household receptacle.

Defective appliances Heat producing appliances are especially prone to create a fire problem if misused or allowed to become defective. Unplug heat producing appliances (i.e. toasters, blow dryers, curling irons) when not in use. Place space heaters at least three (3) feet from anything that will burn, or further if per the manufacturer's recommendation. Never use an extension cord to supply a space heater. Space heaters should be unplugged when sleeping or leaving the premises.

Never allow tenants to run extension cords from one apartment to another to supply power to an apartment without electricity. **IMPORTANT: DO NOT** allow tenants to move into an apartment prior to turning on utilities. Tenants moving in have been known to use candles or lanterns which pose a potential

hazard, as well as placing items on the stove top, and when utilities are turned on, these items catch on fire

WORKING WITH THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

The information provided in this manual is intended to raise your awareness of safety issues and assist you in recognizing potential fire and life safety problems. To supplement the information in this manual, the Waukegan Fire Department has video tapes available for use in employee and tenant training. Ongoing education and training is essential. Please contact our Fire Prevention Bureau at 249-5410 for more details.

As a manager or landlord, you have the ability to significantly reduce safety hazards by being observant and by following up on concerns forwarded to you by tenants.

Tenant Complaints

Occasionally complaints are received by the Waukegan Fire Prevention Bureau and are evaluated. The first question asked is .Have you notified your apartment manager or landlord?. If not, it is usually suggested they notify the manager prior to any intervention by the Waukegan Fire Department or City Code Enforcement Officer.

If fire department intervention occurs, an inspector will first discuss the concern with the manager and perform an inspection to evaluate the situation. If a problem exists, the inspector will then present recommended solutions to the manager and agree on a reasonable time frame for correction.

Manager Complaints/Landlord Complaints

If the tenant is maintaining an unsafe condition, the fire department, when requested by the manager or landlord, will determine if intervention is called for and the type of intervention necessary. Often as a manager or landlord, the lease may allow you the ability to act on a problem, depending on the nature of the situation.

LANDLORD APARTMENT CHECKLIST

YES	NO	
_____	_____	Proper smoke detectors are installed and operating properly.
_____	_____	All exterior doors and locking devices are in good working order so, in the event of a fire, tenants can exit quickly.
_____	_____	Windows open easily so they could be used as an alternate exit in the event of fire.
_____	_____	Stove vent hoods, ducts, cooking surfaces, and cabinets are free of accumulated grease.
_____	_____	The apartment number is properly posted.
_____	_____	If a barbecue grill is used, there is a closed metal container for ash storage.
_____	_____	All fireplace chimneys are cleaned regularly and checked for leaks by a qualified person.
_____	_____	There are no obvious electrical problems (i.e. blackened areas around electrical plugs, badly damaged cords).
_____	_____	There are no excessive quantities of flammable and/or combustible liquids stored in the apartments.
_____	_____	GFI (ground fault interrupter) receptacles are functioning properly. Push the test button. The power should now be cut to the receptacle. By pushing the reset button, power is restored. GFIs are typically installed in bathrooms and near bathrooms and near kitchen sinks and may prevent shock/electrocution accidents.
_____	_____	The swimming pool fence is in good condition with a self closing and self latching gate. There is no horizontal opening larger than four (4) inches.
_____	_____	Ensure that stoves/ovens are turned off prior to tenants move-in.

CORRECT ALL NO. ANSWERS TODAY