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Wood-Framed Oakland Apartment Complex Under Construction Burns for Second Time in a Year

Fire Highlights Vulnerabilities with Wood-Framing, Lax Building Codes

Silver Spring, MD – On Saturday, a five-story, wood-framed retail-apartment complex under construction in Oakland, CA [was destroyed for the second time in a year](#), raising concerns about the use of combustible construction materials in the low- to mid-rise residential market.

The five-alarm fire, which buckled the metal scaffolding around the building and nearly caused a construction crane operating on the site to collapse due to the intensity of the flames, forced the evacuation and displacement of 35 residents in 15 apartments and condominiums in a neighboring building.

“It seems like we can’t go a week without one of these buildings going up in smoke,” said Kevin Lawlor, a spokesperson for Build With Strength, a coalition of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association and comprised of fire service professionals, engineers, architects and industry experts. “The truth is we’ve had dozens over the last few years, and it has to come to a certain point where if I were a resident or investor involved with a lightweight, wood-framed building, I would be worried.”

The blaze comes amidst a string of other spectacular lightweight, wood-framed apartment fires this year – most notably in [St. Petersburg, FL](#); [Arlington, VA](#); [College Park, MD](#); [Overland Park, KS](#); [Raleigh, NC](#); and [Maplewood, NJ](#). There have been [dozens over the last few years](#).

“At this point, the onus is on lawmakers to protect their constituents, as developers have been given the greenlight to prioritize negligible cost-savings over safety and durability,” continued Lawlor. “The current building codes are the minimum requirements, and are not adequate in providing the resiliency needed in the event of catastrophe.”

Cities and towns like New York City, NY; Chicago, IL; Maitland, FL; Sandy Springs and Tucker, GA have taken proactive steps to preemptively ban the use of combustible materials, such as wood, in this type of construction.

Resource: [America is Burning](#)

Learn more at www.buildwithstrength.com.

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