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Fire in Occupied Charlotte Apartment Complex Latest in String of Wood Fueled Catastrophes across the Country

7 Hurt, 130 Residents Left Homeless after Arson Fire Torches Apartment Complex

Silver Spring, MD – [Early Monday morning](#), the Woodscape Apartments, a wood-frame, multi-family complex in Charlotte, North Carolina, was the site of a massive 3-alarm fire that injured seven and displaced one hundred thirty residents. Authorities have determined the fire was intentionally set.

“This was an entirely preventable tragedy that would have been mitigated had the structure been built with resilient construction materials and not cheap wood,” said Kevin Lawlor, a spokesperson for Build with Strength, a coalition of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association comprised of fire service professionals, engineers, architects and industry experts. “We’re hopeful that those injured recover quickly and those displaced find shelter. We hope that lawmakers will finally listen and accept our offer to work with them to find ways to build residential structures in their communities that can lessen the impact of crimes like these and natural disasters.”

The fire comes at a time of increased visibility on the use of wood or wood-framing in apartment complexes, as a number have been the site of spectacular fires recently – most notably in [Warner Robins, GA](#); [Midvale, UT](#); [Oakland, CA](#); [Dorchester, MA](#); [Lawrence, MA](#); [East Hollywood, CA](#); [Lowell, MA](#); [Waterbury, CT](#); [Emeryville, CA](#); [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](#).

Like The Metropolitan, the partially-built apartment complex in Raleigh, North Carolina, that was the site of a massive, [5-alarm fire back in March 2017](#), the composition of Woodscape Apartments likely contributed to the intensity of the flames, as the use of wood for framing and siding was prevalent in the construction.

Last month, the North Carolina Building Code Council (NCBCC) met for the first time since the Raleigh fire, [and determined](#) that it would take “a catastrophe” in an “occupiable building” before the council would consider making changes. The

Woodscape Apartments were post-construction, had installed sprinkler systems and were occupied.

“No one should have to lose their life before the NCBCB recognizes the inherent dangers of combustible construction materials,” continued Lawlor. “There is no argument left to be made by the wood industry when an occupied building with a sprinkler system goes up in flames because cost was valued more than safety during the construction phase.”

[In August 2016](#), the Sandy Springs (GA) City Council, concerned about the risk of fire in their community, passed an ordinance to amend the city’s building codes to include new requirements that prohibit combustible materials from being used in certain building elements with the aim of providing increased building quality, sustainability, durability, and longevity. Likewise, Tucker, Georgia, has taken proactive steps to preemptively ban the use of combustible materials, such as wood, in certain types of construction.

Learn more at www.buildwithstrength.com.

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