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Warner Robins, Georgia, Has Opportunity to Build With Strength

Eight Families Homeless After Fire Tears Through Wooden Apartment Complex

Silver Spring, MD – Monday evening, eight Georgia families lost their homes as a [fire tore through a Warner Robins apartment complex](#) that utilized wood for the façade. Seven of the eight units are considered a total loss, while the eighth is believed to have water damage.

Fortunately, no one was injured in the blaze. However, the incident 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 [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](#).

“The anguish and anxiety of losing one’s home and belongings is something no one should have to experience – especially if it is preventable,” 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. “Warner Robins should follow the lead of other communities throughout Georgia that have sought to construct their buildings with materials that last a lifetime.”

[In August 2016](#), the Sandy Springs (GA) City Council 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.

“We should not be taking the risk of constructing our larger buildings from combustible material,” said Stephen Skalko, a Georgia-based consulting engineer on life safety, fire

safety and construction aspects of buildings in an [oped for *The Macon Telegraph*](#). “With the future in mind, we owe it to our children, and to their children, to provide them with durable, sustainable and reasonably safe structures.”

A [September 2016 poll](#) found Georgia voters are supportive of the Sandy Springs construction regulations (96% support), and support their own city passing similar regulations by overwhelming margins (94% support). The poll of 400 registered voters living in Georgia, commissioned by Build with Strength, a coalition of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association, was conducted online from September 22nd – 26th and representative of voters in the state in terms of gender, party affiliation, race and age.

Learn more at www.buildwithstrength.com.

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