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## **Haverhill, MA, Wood-Framed Fire Comes Days After Waltham City Councilors Call For Stronger Building Codes**

*24 Residents Displaced after Kitchen Fire Ignites 18-unit Apartment Complex*

**Silver Spring, MD** – Yet another wood-framed fire has displaced families in Massachusetts – this time, pushing 24 people out of their homes and into the arms of the Red Cross' aid. [The fire](#), which occurred Tuesday evening, started on a third floor kitchen and left the 18-unit apartment building currently uninhabitable.

The incident comes just a week after the Waltham City Council voted unanimously to call on the state of Massachusetts to implement tighter restrictions on the use of combustible materials for low- to mid-rise residential buildings after not one, but four major fires ravaged wood-framed apartment complexes in the state since the start of summer.

“This is yet another preventable fire that could have been easily mitigated with safe and durable construction materials like concrete,” 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 urge the state of Massachusetts to heed the call of Waltham and stop the use of combustible materials in low- to mid-rise residential buildings.”

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 [Waltham, MA](#); [Charlotte, NC](#); [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](#).

Because of a change in 2009 to the International Building Code, Massachusetts allows buildings to be constructed with five wood-frame stories, as long as the first is built with

concrete – a policy decision that has sacrificed safety and left a large number of families displaced from their homes, particularly in recent months.

“Lawmakers can no longer idly sit by while fires continue to ravage our communities,” continued Lawlor. “Now is the time to stand up and follow the lead of a number of cities and towns nationwide that have taken proactive steps to end the use of unsafe, combustible materials that sacrifice safety for the sake of saving a dollar.”

Learn more at [www.buildwithstrength.com](http://www.buildwithstrength.com).

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