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Ten Children Killed in Wood-Framed Chicago Apartment Building Fire *Weak Building Codes Led to Chilling Loss of Life*

Silver Spring, MD – A fire in a three-story, wood-framed apartment building in Chicago early Sunday morning has resulted in the deaths of ten children, ages three months to 14 years old. Two of the children were originally thought to be adults. The Chicago Fire Department successfully contained and extinguished the fire, but the children who died were [overcome by smoke as they slept](#). Over 135 firefighters and paramedics and 45 pieces of equipment responded to the fire. Initial investigations revealed several factors that led to the loss of life including non-working smoke detectors, a lack of pressurized stairwells, zero installed sprinklers, and construction with combustible materials.

This grave construction failure, like so many others, puts pressure on the importance of [strengthening weak building codes](#). Advocates have been educating and encouraging a change in the law for years, however, all attempts have been opposed by numerous building and real estate stakeholders.

“The deaths of these children was entirely preventable with stronger building codes” said Kevin Lawlor, spokesperson for Build with Strength, a coalition of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association consisting of community organizations, fire safety professionals, engineers, architects and industry experts committed to strengthening the nation’s building codes and ensuring greater access to secure housing. “Adopting better fire codes and standards to include the use of noncombustible materials like concrete and steel helps ensure a needless tragedy like this doesn’t happen again. Every single family deserves to live in a safely constructed building, and local officials have to step up in order to make this happen.”

Build with Strength, a coalition of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA), has launched a campaign to educate citizens, local and state officials, and industry experts about the inherent dangers of wood-framed construction, particularly in multi-story, residential and commercial buildings. As a grassroots organization, they work with local elected officials and industry workers, from architects to project managers to advocate for the safety benefits of working with concrete-based construction.

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