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5-Alarm Blaze Rips Through Residential Construction Site, Embers Spark Nearby Fires

East Bay inferno latest in devastating string of Oakland building fires

Silver Spring, MD— Early on Tuesday, massive flames destroyed an East Bay housing complex built of salvaged wood, along with several other buildings in the area’s [fifth major residential fire in just two years](#). The five-alarm blaze was so powerful that firefighters could not enter the structure, instead launching a defensive effort to keep the fire from spreading. Over [2,200 homes were without power](#), and one firefighter was left hospitalized.

The “Ice House” complex in West Oakland was under construction using salvaged wood beams and brick. Four of the six buildings were completely destroyed, set to house [126 units](#) with plans to welcome residents as soon as December. Just six months ago, the [exact same complex](#) was hit by another fire. This time around, the wood building fire blazed for over eight hours with over 90 firefighters working to extinguish it. Embers from the fire fell for blocks, [igniting three additional fires](#) around the neighborhood.

“It’s just a [big pile of kindling](#),” said Nick Luby, deputy fire chief with the Oakland Fire Department, discussing Tuesday’s fire at the construction site. “Small timber – it just grows quite quickly.”

Several homes were evacuated in the emergency, as families with young children and pets woke to neighbors’ [screams warning of a fire](#). Residents huddled outside while some brave residents grabbed hoses and buckets and attempted to keep falling embers from igniting more homes.

“The tragic fire in East Bay is about more than construction and building loss,” said Kevin Lawlor, a spokesperson for Build with Strength, a coalition of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association comprised of fire safety professionals, engineers, architects, community groups and industry experts committed to strengthening the nation’s building codes. “This is about the housing and the safety of our families – those who the fire placed in danger, displaced, evacuated, left without power or a place to live. It’s about time elected officials recognize the risk of combustibile building materials, in Oakland and across the country.”

Build with Strength works with communities, lawmakers, and industry employees to advocate for safer, sustainable building materials. Strengthening local and national building codes is among the organization’s top priorities.

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

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