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3-Alarm Fire at Downtown Memphis Construction Site Causes \$5M in Damage
Unfinished "Forum Flats" Apartment Complex Built with Combustible Framing

Silver Spring, MD—A [three-alarm fire](#) swept through a South City construction site in Downtown Memphis on Friday, causing an estimated \$5 million in damage and halting construction for the foreseeable future. The construction site, located at the corner of Danny Thomas Boulevard and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, featured multiple stories and wood framing. The apartments were being built on the now demolished Foote Homes public housing complex, and Memphis Housing Authority had intended to give 47 vouchers to residents who had been displaced.

The Memphis fire represents a growing trend of wood-framed, multi-story fires across the country.

"This entirely preventable fire is unfortunately one of many in communities across the country, whose weakened building codes allow for combustible framing in mid- to high-rise buildings" 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. "Today it was a construction site in Tennessee, but whatever type of housing you call home, if it's combustible construction, you are never safe from this type of destruction."

Firefighters arrived at the scene shortly after 5:30 a.m. Friday morning, but were quickly pushed back by the fast-moving blaze. Over 200 firefighters were at the scene by 7:00 a.m., and the fire wasn't ultimately extinguished until 6:00 p.m. that day.

"Even when a fire doesn't result in injury or death, the cost to the community is always high," said Lawlor. "Locals who would have received public housing vouchers for this project have been displaced, businesses were shut down, roads were closed and over 200 first responders were put to the test. Memphis – and every community – deserves better."

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.

Learn more at www.buildwithstrength.com

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