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### Harlem Wood-Framed Apartment Fire Kills Family of 6

*Youngest Victim of the Deadly Fire Just 3 Years Old*

**Silver Spring, MD**—A [fire](#) erupted at a 109-year old wood-framed apartment building in Harlem early Wednesday, claiming the lives of 6 people, including two girls ages 11 and 6 and two boys ages 8 and 3. Three others suffered from smoke inhalation and required hospitalization. The overwhelming smell of thick, noxious smoke, neighbors reported, was their first sign of distress in the early morning hours. The fire ultimately consumed the entire six-room apartment, preventing the family from reaching the fire escapes located on the opposite end of the apartment from the bedroom in which they were sleeping.

The devastating loss of life in this Harlem fire comes on the heels of countless wood-framed, multi-story fires across the country – most recently, another wood-framed apartment [fire](#) in Mishawaka, Indiana on Monday afternoon that placed a firefighter in the hospital and displaced tenants.

"It's basically kind of timber and a lot of wood up there," Mishawaka Fire Battalion Chief Mike Cloy said. "Then, it just basically spreads horizontally any way it wants to. Really, the fire kind of just has a mind of its own."

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, points to these fires as evidence of the need for greater accountability in how mid- to high-rise buildings are constructed.

"These two fires completely underscore the devastation that weakened building codes can bring," said Kevin Lawlor, spokesperson for Build with Strength. "In Harlem, you have an utterly tragic loss of life – an entire family lost – and in Indiana, you have the displacement of residents and injury of first responders. Though states away and days apart, the common thread between both fires is how

preventable they were. Combustible construction puts communities at total risk. Whether it's loss of life, property, displacement, or the endangerment of first responders, when building codes allow for stick-frames in multi-story structures, it's the families and neighbors in a community that pay the price. From Harlem to Indiana or elsewhere, people deserve 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](http://www.buildwithstrength.com)**