

Trump Tower Fire Controlled by Fire Sprinkler System, Showing Stark Contrast from Hancock Center Fire in November

Orland Park, IL (February 18, 2016) – According to Chicago Fire Department reports this morning, fire sprinklers controlled a fire in a trash compactor on the 50th floor of the Trump Tower, preventing injuries, deaths and any major damage to the building.

Tom Lia, executive director of the nonprofit Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board, says the fire sprinkler save is an example of why fire sprinklers are important for life safety and property protection in high-rises. But it also shows the glaring difference in protection between Chicago's new and old residential high-rises.

When it was built in the late 2000s, fire sprinklers were required in the Trump Tower, which houses both residential and commercial occupancies. However, not all high-rises built prior to 1975 have the same protection.

Lia refers to the November 2015 fire in the John Hancock Center, which also has both commercial and residential occupancies. A candle fire on a residential floor injured five people, including a police officer, because there were no fire sprinklers on the residential floors of the high-rise. Only the commercial spaces in the bottom half of the building were required to be retrofitted with fire sprinklers.

“Chicago's Life Safety Evaluation for residential high-rises built prior to 1975 ignores the national model codes adopted by the state of Illinois and has allowed buildings such as the Hancock to be unsprinklered,” states Lia. “That's why a candle fire caused such great damage a few months ago.”

There are still dozens of residential high-rises that need to comply with the city's Life Safety Evaluation, even though the deadline was January 1, 2015. The city has begun addressing those buildings in court proceedings. Lia says those buildings can install fire sprinklers to comply.

“A high-rise without fire sprinklers is not a safe place to live. That's why over 80 older residential high-rises already have retrofitted fire sprinklers,” adds Lia. “New high-rises with fire sprinklers and older high-rises that have retrofitted fire sprinklers are those that will be the most fire-safe and marketable to safety-conscious buyers and renters. The fire sprinkler save at the Trump Tower today is a perfect example of the benefits of fire sprinklers.”

About the Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board (NIFSAB)

NIFSAB is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting progressive legislation, raising public awareness, and educating code officials and governmental policy makers by demonstrating the proven performance of fire sprinklers in saving both lives and property. For more info, visit www.firesprinklerassoc.org.

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