

The cost of NOT protecting high-rise buildings with fire sprinklers.

Two years after the fatal Harper Square fire, the trauma continues as residents in more than 80 units remain displaced.

On January 25, 2023, the Harper Square fire was the first of 17 fires in unsprinklered high-rise residences in Chicago that year. It resulted in one fatality, multiple injuries, hundreds of residents displaced, and millions of dollars in property loss and displacements. For Harper Square residents, the last two years have been a time of uncertainty, stress, frustration and exhaustion as costs mount and insurance coverage has been exhausted. Unfortunately, a similar tragedy could strike again since fire sprinklers are not being retrofit during reconstruction after the fire.

All 17 buildings were built before the 1975 City of Chicago Code requiring fire sprinklers in all new high-rises. Today, more than 600 residential high-rise buildings in Chicago stand without fire sprinkler

protection, with cost often cited as the reason not to retrofit fire sprinklers. **The real question is, “What is the cost of NOT installing fire sprinklers when a fire occurs?” Harper Square is a model example of post-fire costs far exceeding the cost of installing fire sprinklers.**

Fire sprinklers prevent these tragedies. Heat from a fire individually activates each sprinkler to extinguish or control the fire while it is small, allowing residents to safely escape. Fire sprinklers are the most effective solution to reduce fire risk, protecting residents, firefighters and property.

Two years after the Harper Square fire, it is clear the life- and property-saving benefits of fire sprinklers far outweigh the staggering, ongoing costs of a tragic fire without them.

Is your high-rise fully protected with fire sprinklers?



**Northern Illinois Fire
Sprinkler Advisory Board**

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