

# **PUBLIC SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR FIRE SAFETY HIGH RISE BUILDINGS**

The attack on the World Trade Center created a catastrophic collapse of both towers. While this tragedy will be reviewed and evaluated for a long time to come, we still recommend you follow the safety guidelines presented below. A fire in a high-rise residential building usually can be confined to the apartment where it starts. However, smoke and heat can travel throughout the building, especially upward.

High-rise residential buildings are constructed to be fireproof. Most of what is inside the buildings, including your furnishings and belongings, can burn and produce a tremendous amount of heat and smoke.

## **Ways to Keep your Apartment Safe**

- Never keep rubbish in the hallway. Make sure it is stored properly and collected regularly.
- Don't put items in the trash chute that are too big and may get stuck. Things caught in the chute easily can turn a fire in the basement into a fire on your floor.
- Be careful not to overload electrical circuits. Short circuits are the cause of many fires.
- Cook with care. Keep a small portable dry chemical fire extinguisher readily available (Class B or K extinguisher). Baking soda is also a handy household item that can be used to smother stove fires.
- Never smoke in bed and make sure that there are no smoldering butts when you empty ashtrays.
- Test smoke detectors weekly and replace batteries twice a year (the beginning & end of Daylight Savings time).

- Make sure that your apartment door is a tight-fitting self-closing type of door in compliance with the fire code. Should your door not self-close, request this repair from your building manager.
- Inspect your exit stair doors. They must be self-closing, snap shut and unlock from both sides. If they don't meet this standard, report it to the superintendent or the Fire Department.

### **If The Fire is in Your Apartment**

- Get everyone out. Stay low as you go out. Close but don't lock all doors in the apartment as you leave.
- Alert others on the floor by knocking on doors. Activate the fire alarm if there is one.
- Go down the nearest STAIRWAY, holding the railing.
- Call the 911 from a floor **BELOW THE FIRE** or from else where out side the building.

### **If the Fire is NOT in Your Apartment**

- Stay inside rather than entering smoke-filled hallways, especially if the fire is on a floor **below** your apartment.
- Keep your door closed.
- Seal the door with duct tape or wet sheets and towels. Seal ventilators and any other openings where smoke may enter.
- Turn off air conditioners.
- Fill your bathtub with water. If the front door gets hot, wet it down.
- Unless flames or smoke are coming from below, open your windows a few inches at the top or bottom. Don't break the windows; they may need to be closed later.

- Call 911 with your apartment number and a description of the conditions in your apartment. Firefighters will be directed to your location.
- If you feel you are in grave danger, open a window and wave a bed sheet for firefighters to spot you.

## **Planning Ahead Can Save Your Life**

### **Things to know:**

- The layout of your floor.
- The location of all stair exits from your floor.
- The number of doors between your apartment and the exit stairs. This is essential knowledge to find the exit in the dark.
- Where your apartment key is located. Take the key with you if you are forced to evacuate.
- The location of fire alarm boxes (if your building has them.)

### **Things to Do**

- Keep flashlights ready and in a handy place.
- Install and maintain smoke detectors. Owners of high-rise buildings are required by law to install detectors in each apartment.
- Report fire hazards to your superintendent. Blocked exits, piled-up trash, missing exit lights and open fire doors are violations of law. If your superintendent doesn't correct them call the Fire Department.