



Fire Department
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UPDATE

Structure Fire in the 1800 Block of Kensington Drive

1811 Kensington Drive, City of Waukesha

WAUKESHA, Wis. – The City of Waukesha Fire Department would like to provide an update on the tragic incident that occurred in our community yesterday.

On Sunday, the City of Waukesha Fire Prevention Bureau in coordination with the City of Waukesha Police Department, conducted a joint investigation into the origin and cause of the fire at 1811 Kensington Dr. The investigative team conducted multiple interviews of all the tenants and other witnesses involved or in the area where the fire occurred. A thorough examination of the evidence at the scene was also completed. The investigation has concluded, and the fire is not believed to be suspicious in nature. The fire investigation team believes the fire originated in or around the exterior wall of unit #7 at 1811 Kensington Drive. Currently, the likely cause of the fire is believed to be electrical in nature. The City's Fire Investigative team will continue to work with the Insurance company for the property as testing is completed to determine the final cause of the fire.

The injured Firefighter was part of the mutual aid response from the Sussex Fire Department that came in as part of the MABAS request. We have checked with the Sussex Fire Department and are happy to report that the individual's injury did not require transport to the hospital. They are doing well and should not require any loss of time for the injury. The Department's Response included all 5 Stations from the City of Waukesha, along with Mutual Aid resources from the cities of Brookfield, New Berlin and Pewaukee; Lake Country Fire Rescue; Tess Corners Volunteer Fire Department; Town of Brookfield; and the Villages of Big Bend, Hartland, Sussex, Mukwonago, Vernon and Waukesha. In total 93 Firefighters responded to the incident or helped ensure adequate coverage of the remainder of the community during the incident; 10-engines, 5-trucks; 1-rescue; 9-ambulances; and 7-chief officers. The Department received assistance from the Waukesha Police Department, Waukesha Metro Transit, Salvation Army, Red Cross, We Energies, and the Waukesha Water Utility.

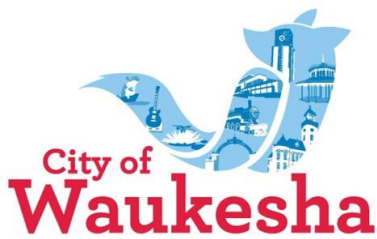
The Fire Department would like to provide a correction to the age of the building. After a review of the building file, by the Fire Prevention Bureau, the 1811 Kensington Drive building was built in 1989 and was one of the final buildings completed in the Westgrove Apartment complex.

The Fire Department would like to recognize the efforts being made by our community to support the residents affected by this tragedy on Sunday. The Humane Animal Welfare Society (HAWA) is helping the family with their deceased cat. Unfortunately, the second cat remains unaccounted for. It was last seen in the apartment below the area where the fire started. At this time, the building is too unstable to thoroughly check and account for this missing pet. As the restoration / rebuilding efforts continue to stabilize the structure, we will be able to finally check for this missing pet. "Our hearts go out to the residents that have lost these cherished pets," Joseph Hoffman, Assistant Fire Chief.

Dana Aschenbrenner, Regional Property Manager at Point Real Estate Management, LLC has asked the fire department to pass along the following; *"We are grateful to the Waukesha Fire Department and the many nearby fire departments that assisted with quick action to get the fire under control and, most importantly, ensure all residents were safely evacuated," said Dana Aschenbrenner, regional property manager for Point Real Estate. "We are thankful that no one was injured, and our priority now is to help ensure our residents' needs are met. We are working diligently to provide access for residents to retrieve personal belongings as soon as possible, as well as secure alternative housing at our sister properties or other nearby apartments."*

WAUKESHA, Wis. – On October 20, 2024 at approximately 2:41 pm, the Waukesha Fire Department was dispatched to 1811 Kensington Drive in the City of Waukesha for a reported building fire. Initial callers reported smoke and flames coming from the exterior of a 16-unit apartment building. City of Waukesha Dispatch Center quickly alerted the Fire and Police Departments. Fire crews from the downtown station were the first to arrive and found a rapidly expanding wind driven working fire that had begun to extend into the attic space of the building. Both Police and Fire Crews quickly worked to alert all residents in the building and ensure that the apartments in the immediate area were searched and clear of all occupants. While residents were being assisted out of the building additional fire crews were attacking the fire that was well involved in the attack space. Fire Department Command requested additional resources through the MABAS system. Once all areas of the building were searched and all residents were evacuated, the Fire Department shifted to defensive operations utilizing ladder pipes and exterior hose lines to bring the fire under control.

The building was built in 1974 and is part of the Westgrove Apartment Complex. At time of construction the building was only required to have a fire alarm system, which was operational and allowed the residents to be notified. The building was built before the codes required Fire Sprinklers to be installed in the building. The fire appears to have started on the exterior of the building and extended through the eaves into the attic of the 50-year-old building.



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One Firefighter suffered a minor injury related to heat stress that did not require transport to the hospital. No civilians were injured. Unfortunately, at the time of this press release one cat was found deceased while the fire department continues to search for one cat that is unaccounted for. Police and Fire Investigators remain on the scene and are working to determine the exact cause of the fire. No damage estimate is available at the time of this press release, but the buildings assessed value was \$1.26 million before the fire today. The Red Cross and Apartment Management is working with residents to ensure that they are cared for through this unthinkable tragedy.

The City of Waukesha Fire Department would like to remind all members of our community that October is Fire Safety Month. Please check the batteries in your smoke detector, have an escape plan and practice it with the people you reside with. "As we saw today, a small outside fire can rapidly spread, with wind conditions like we experienced today. A wind driven fire can lead to significant damage in our community, and only allowing you seconds to escape from a fire in your home," said Acting Battalion Chief Julie Schultz, City of Waukesha Fire Department.

Pictures credited to Tim Snopek at timsnopek.com:





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