



Housing York Inc.
Office of the President

Memorandum

TO: Members of the Housing York Inc. Board of Directors
FROM: Adelina Urbanski, President
DATE: February 4, 2016
RE: **Fire at Housing York Seniors Building
468 Eagle Street, Newmarket**

On Sunday, January 17, 2016 at approximately 12:15 p.m. a fire broke out at Fairy Lake Gardens, a 97-unit Housing York building, located at 468 Eagle Street in the Town of Newmarket. A tenant residing in a seventh floor apartment where the fire originated, was found deceased. Four other residents were transported to hospital for smoke inhalation and later released.

First responders were at the scene in less than one minute of the alarm being sounded. All life safety systems functioned well, staff were on the scene quickly and followed established procedures. Tenants of the 14 storey senior's high-rise were equally up to the task and followed procedures recently rehearsed in a fire drill. Most residents were evacuated and accommodated on buses provided by York Region Transit. Thirty-two residents were relocated by bus to nearby Armitage Gardens' multi-purpose room. Several tenants that chose to remain in their apartments during the event were cleared to do so by the first responders.

York Regional Police assisted with access control and maintained a list of residents arriving and departing. York Regional EMS staff remained on-site to provide support to residents, as needed. Newmarket Health Centre assisted with food - providing coffee, tea and sandwiches. Housing staff were on-site at Armitage Gardens and Fairy Lake Gardens to also provide assistance.

Tenants were allowed to return to Fairy Lake Gardens beginning at about 4:00 p.m. Prior to their return home, staff inspected all surrounding units for damages and temporarily repaired several doors that had been forced open by the Fire Department. Housing York's insurance provider was notified and arrived on scene to begin clean-up of the affected areas.

The seventh floor apartment, where the fire originated, was secured until the Ontario Fire Marshall's Office arrived and concluded their investigation. One apartment on the eighth floor was not cleared due to a strong smoke odour in the unit. The unit was cleared for occupancy the next day.

Housing York staff remained at the building throughout the evening to ensure tenants were feeling safe and to address any maintenance concerns that tenants had related to the event.

A tenant meeting was held on Thursday January 21, 2016 with staff from Housing York, EMS and Central York Fire Services in attendance. The meeting was well-attended, allowing the more than 50 tenants present the opportunity to express how they were feeling and to have their questions about the fire answered. Central York Fire Services took the opportunity to remind tenants how they can keep themselves safe in their unit and what to do in an evacuation. York Region Social Workers were available to assist tenants coping with this tragic event in their building.

The family of the deceased tenant have been allowed into the apartment to collect belongings. Staff will continue to work with them to provide any further supports they may require relating to the unit and their tragic loss. The apartment is expected to be fully restored by the end of March 2016. The total claim is estimated to be \$100,000 but will be recoverable from an insurance policy. Housing York will be required to pay the \$10,000 deductible. The official cause of the fire has not yet been released.

Adelina Urbanski
President

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