



News

Office of the Fire Chief Timothy M. Butler

645 Randolph Avenue, Saint Paul, Minnesota, 55102

April 30, 2013

Saint Paul Public Housing Agency to be Commended *Fire Chief to Recognize 20 Year Fire Sprinkler Program*

Contact: Fire Marshal Steve Zaccard
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For Immediate Release

Saint Paul Fire Chief Tim Butler will commend twenty-three employees of the Saint Paul Public Housing Agency (PHA) for their roles in completing a massive two decades-long program for fitting all of the PHA's sixteen high rise apartment buildings with fire sprinklers.

Fires in high rise buildings pose extreme hazards to firefighters and are very time consuming and labor-intensive to fight. Fire sprinklers, on the other hand, have an excellent record of keeping fires in check 95% of the time until firefighters can arrive 96%. Fire sprinklers reduce property damage 71% and provide occupants an 80% greater chance of surviving a fire than with just smoke detectors, alone. Nationally, 85% of fire deaths occur in residential occupancies. In Saint Paul that number increases to 100%.

Fire sprinklers have been required by the state building code in new high rise buildings since 1972, but they're not retroactive. Fire sprinklers were not required in the PHA high rise buildings back when they were first built, but Executive Direction Jon Gutzmann and his staff set out in 1991 to *voluntarily* fit all sixteen of their high rise apartment buildings with fire sprinklers to protect their residents – a task worthy of recognition by the Fire Chief. The project took more than twenty years to complete because funding needed by the PHA withered during the recession.

WHAT: Community Service Awards

WHO: Saint Paul Fire Chief Tim Butler
PHA Executive Director Jon Gutzmann
PHA Board chair Tom Reding
PHA Maintenance Director Hank Petro
PHA President's Council Member Connie Lydon

WHEN: Wednesday, May 1, 2013, 9:30 a.m.

WHERE: Fire Station No. 1
1000 7th St, W., Saint Paul

In the event that new information becomes available, it will first be publicized through the Saint Paul Fire Department's Twitter account, @StPaulFireDept.