

November 28, 2018

Memorandum for Record

Subj: Observations of conditions at 5829 S. Datura- Multifamily Dwelling dba as "Southview Towers"

This is a 5 story multi-family dwelling with rental-lease units including an elevator shaft for 2 cars

There was a fire at this address, on Nov. 17, originating in a single unit on the West side of the ground floor. The Fire dept. will provide information of the cause and the extent of the immediate fire damage in this (and adjacent) units.

I visited the facility on Nov 27 and spent approximately 45 minutes inside. The below facts and relevant code citations are based upon my observations during that time.

The structure as a whole does not seem to be in any danger of imminent structural failure.

The elevators are not currently operating. According to reports from the restoration company, one of the two elevator cars in the common shaft is actually operational, and one is not, but both are turned off at present, at the direction of the fire official. Before being put back into full time operation, the interior surfaces of the shaft and the cars will require thorough cleaning to remove soot deposits to prevent the unintended spread of such materials through air pressure changes in the shaft as the cars move up and down and physical transfer by passengers moving in and out of the cars. Until at least one of the cars is completely operational, there is no acceptable amount of ordinary egress between levels for any occupants, other than the emergency path provided by stairs. IAW IPMC section 606.2 "at least one elevator must remain in operation at all times when the building is occupied. "

Upon entry to the building and as one travels around the facility, there is visible soot staining on walls, ceilings and deposits on floors, becoming more pronounced and visible as one gets closer to the point of origination, but there is visible staining or soot deposits on every level, from basement to 5<sup>th</sup> floor. Extra intensity is evident around elevator carriage openings, stair way access door openings at each level and at HVAC return grills in the corridors.

The reps from the restoration company, stated that tests for airborne asbestos particles have initially come back negative, but more comprehensive testing, required by the state dept. of health is ongoing and results are yet to be received. Regardless of other factors, no "occupancy" or even the extended presence of workmen employed by repair contractors, should be allowed until these results indicate that it is safe to do so.

It is a fact that the existing drywall ceilings and wall finishes throughout the building are known to include Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM). It is understood that any remodeling, repair or renovations which include removal of these building elements will require that specific protective and containment and disposal procedures be followed and such work must be performed or at least supervised and controlled by licensed abatement contractors.

Regardless of the asbestos issue, the air inside the building has a pervasive and noticeable amount of soot odor and actual particles detectable' Approximately 40 minutes time spent in the building resulted in a noticeable discomfort, and actual residues deposited in nasal passages of this inspector. This was

not a condition that would be tolerable for any extended period for a relatively healthy adult, and would undoubtedly be dangerous for anyone with a compromised respiratory system, such as asthmatics or persons already suffering from emphysema or other types of COPD . This describes many of, if not the majority of, the regular residents of this facility.

As I progressed through the building, I noticed that the (HVAC System) return grills in the corridors were heavily caked with soot residue, which indicated that the return air system continued to operate for some appreciable time after the smoke was being drawn into the return portion of the HVAC system. This indicates the absence of return path smoke detectors, tied to the air handling equipment, which should have shut down once the smoke was detected at a fairly low level. Also there appears to be, no fire or fire/smoke dampers at the corridor return openings... These conditions constitute a violation of basic and long standing protections required by the building and mechanical codes. *Ipso facto*, the HVAC system is not in a safely operable condition for this building type and occupancy group i.e. R-2.

There were reports from witnesses and restoration company personnel that during the fire event and before complete evacuation, some residents had activated the range top exhaust units in their apartments, when the smoke began coming into those units. This means that the HVAC ducts serving the common corridors and the cooking exhaust/duct systems in the individual units are both coated with detectable levels of soot, and if left un-cleaned (or removed and re-installed) these duct systems will release soot particles and smoke odors back into the building for some significant period of time.

These conditions constitute an environment not suitable for human habitation or health and must be corrected before residents can return to individual units or even enter the building and travel through the common areas.

See International Property Maintenance Code, **IPMC** section 301.2 regarding responsibilities of the owner of the premises to operate and maintain a safe and sanitary facility.

See IPMC section 305.3 regarding maintenance of all interior surfaces in a clean and sanitary condition.

See IPMC section 607 regarding the requirement that all duct systems shall be maintained free of obstructions and capable of performing required functions.

Due to the age of this specific building, some of the ordinarily "required" fire suppression, smoke detection and fire alarm systems are not present or are simply inadequate. Before the facility, as a whole, can be put back into operation and fully occupied, these deficiencies must be addressed.

Based upon the above facts and code requirements, it is my opinion that this facility is not, at present, safe for human habitation.

Respectfully Submitted

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