



Fire safety notices and close the door signs can save lives - by Evan Lipstein

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Fires occur suddenly in any type of building but are especially dangerous and often deadly in residential high-rise apartment buildings where tenants don't know what to do when a fire breaks out.

A massive eight-alarm fire burned through an apartment building in Jackson Heights, Queens this past week, displacing around 90 families—more than 200 residents have been displaced as their homes were destroyed. The FDNY has said that critical errors allowed the fire to spread quickly and cause devastation. FDNY commissioner Daniel Nigro said tenants heard the fire alarms go off but waited around 10 minutes before calling the fire department. Making matters worse, he said, the door to the apartment where the fire started was left open allowing for the blaze to spread quickly. The fire (traveled) out to the hallway, the units were unable to make a quick advance.”

Take note: If you are escaping a fire in your home or apartment you must close the door to reduce the spread of fire. Leaving a door open allows the fire to grow rapidly and spread throughout the building, harming or even killing other building occupants and responding Firefighters.

This is why the FDNY now requires buildings install “Close The Door” signs. The mandated sign must read: “In a Fire, Close All Doors Behind You! Keep Fire and Smoke Out of Building Hallways and Stairs. Keep Apartment and Stairwell Doors Closed at All Other Times. Protect Your Neighbors and Your Home!” The mandated rule requires posting these signs as a reminder on the public hallway side of stairwell doors.

“Close The Door” signs provide a clear, visible reminder to building residents of the importance of closing each door as one exits one's apartment and building during a fire. Closing these doors serves to contain the fire and smoke within the apartment, assist in firefighting operations and prevent smoke from entering the stairwells through which building residents may need to evacuate.

This new law applies to all residential apartment buildings and occupancies classified in Occupancy Group R-2 except any building or occupancy that is occupied as a homeless shelter and that has a fire alarm system with voice communication capability, school dormitories, college and university dormitories, and student apartments.

“Fire Safety Notices” are required by law to protect lives. There is an FDNY rule to make sure your property is following related to Fire and Emergency Preparedness Notices. The purpose of the fire and emergency preparedness notice serves to inform building residents and building staff about evacuation procedures and to provide other guidance in the event of a fire or non-fire emergency in the building or occupancy.

These notices must be printed and mounted in the following locations: On the inside of every dwelling unit door of each dwelling unit in the building and in a conspicuous location near any common mailbox area customarily used by building occupants, or if there is no common mailbox area, in a conspicuous location in or near the elevators or main stairwell.

Hyline Safety Company offers the assorted signs and consulting services needed to comply with these new local law requirements. Please reach out if you need our assistance.

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