

HOME NEWS TRIBUNE

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Fire sprinklers would have helped

Three dozen New Brunswick city residents are suddenly and needlessly homeless as a result of two separate fires early Dec. 13.

At 4:41 a.m., a fire gutted the Golden Rail Pub and left apartments in the two floors above the bar uninhabitable.

Approximately four hours later, firefighters received another call about a fire in a 2½-story home on Suydam Street, and by the time crews arrived at the scene, heavy smoke and flames were billowing from the roof. An adult male resident was taken to the Saint Barnabas Burn Center, and a firefighter also was hospitalized as a result of this house fire.

If fire sprinklers were present at either of these locations, the injuries and damage to the properties might have been drastically reduced. Properly installed and maintained fire sprinklers help control fires from spreading.

In many cases, automatic fire sprinklers extinguish a fire before the fire department even arrives on the scene. More importantly, fire sprinklers could have mitigated the risk to individuals affected by the blaze, including the resident who suffered burns and the firefighter injured fighting the blaze.

Currently, there is a pending regulation in New Jersey that would make it mandatory for all newly constructed one- and two-family homes as well as condominiums and townhomes to be equipped with fire sprinklers, starting in 2012.

If passed, this regulation would help to reduce the devastating effects of fires and help protect New Jersey residents in the places where they feel safest — their homes.

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