

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 24, 2014



**Contact:**

Diana L. Klink  
757.514.4104  
757.359.1845

Tim Kelley  
757.514.4103  
757.871.3039

## UPDATE

SUFFOLK, VA (November 24, 2014) Property Maintenance Officials and an Electrical Inspector from Suffolk's Community Development Division responded to Suffolk Towers earlier today and met with the Property Manager for Suffolk Towers and their maintenance personnel to re-inspect the premises. The Property Manager confirmed that 3 panel boxes, including those on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> floors, need to be replaced following yesterday afternoon's fire.

Their Property Manager further confirmed that the scheduled completion date for these repairs is Monday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, at which time the premises will be re-inspected as it relates to the restoration of electrical power to the premises.

The Property Manager is coordinating efforts with residents that have been displaced by the fire and is also working with the Red Cross of Coastal Virginia to provide shelter to affected individuals. They are also coordinating efforts to make certain that their residents are able to retrieve any personal items needed while they are unable to remain in their apartments.

The Fire Marshal's Office has confirmed that the cause of the fire was electrical in nature and was ruled accidental.

## **UPDATE**

SUFFOLK, VA (November 23, 2014) During the course of this afternoon's evacuation from Suffolk Towers, Suffolk Fire & Rescue crews from Ladder 6 rescued a male in his 40's from the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of the building.

While other personnel were evacuating residents from the interior of the building, crews from Ladder 6 as part of their initial assessment and response were utilizing the Ladder to check from the exterior of the building when they saw the resident trying to open his window. He was able to completely open the window and rescue personnel were able to secure him onto the platform. He received medical assessment once on the ground.

The total number of residents has been estimated by management at 61. The American Red Cross of Coastal Virginia is currently assisting 41 individuals, including two children, displaced as a result of the fire. They will be accommodated at the EconoLodge and Days Inn located in the 1500 block of Holland Road. A bus and van from Suffolk Parks & Recreation is transporting those individuals that have been displaced. The remaining 20 residents that were affected have made their own arrangements to stay with friends or family.

Main Street United Methodist Church, with the assistance of St. Paul's Episcopal Church on North Main Street, is currently feeding those affected individuals. First Baptist Church also volunteered their assistance.

The portion of North Main Street which was initially closed is expected to reopen by 7:00 p.m.

## **TWO ALARM BLAZE AT SUFFOLK TOWERS**

SUFFOLK, VA (November 23, 2014) Suffolk Fire & Rescue is currently on the scene of a two alarm blaze at Suffolk Towers, located in the 180 block of North Main Street in downtown Suffolk

Emergency Communications received the call of a working commercial structure fire at 2:09 p.m. and the first units arrived at 2:11 p.m. Upon arrival firefighters found heavy smoke on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> floor of the 8-story high-rise apartment building. They immediately began evacuating the premises.

Upon investigation it was determined that the fire originated in the electrical room on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. The entire electrical panel sustained heavy damage. Dominion Virginia Power and the building maintenance team responded and the power was secured for the residences.

Everyone was safely evacuated and there were no injuries. The fire was declared under control at 3:18 p.m.

The building includes 59 apartment units, and 6 units are currently vacant. It is estimated that approximately 104 occupants will be displaced overnight. Officials from the Red Cross of Coastal Virginia are on scene and assisting firefighters in determining the exact number of individuals that will be displaced. Main Street United Methodist Church, also located in the 180 block of North Main Street, opened their doors to assist those displaced by the fire. Firefighters are also assisting those displaced by the fire in retrieving any medications or items needed overnight.

There was no water damage and only minor smoke damage throughout the building. Dry chemicals and carbon dioxide were used to extinguish the fire. There was no damage to Baron's Pub or WalWin Carpet, two retail establishments on the ground floor of the building. Those businesses also assisted the residents as it was raining lightly shortly after the fire first occurred.

Suffolk Police provided traffic control and security at the scene. North Main Street at Market Street and North Main Street at E. Washington Street are currently closed and are

expected to remain closed for the next several hours. Public Works crews responded to place detours, and officials from Suffolk's Community Development Division also responded to inspect the premises and to instruct the maintenance crew on requirements to have power restored.

Battalions 1 and 2, Engines 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6, EMS-1, Ladder 6, Medics 1A, 3A and 6A, Rescue-1, Rescue-6 and Rehab 6 responded to the scene. Driver Volunteer Fire Department is currently backfilling Station 10, Chuckatuck Volunteer Fire Department is staffing Engine 29 at Station 1 and backfilling Station 9, Holland Volunteer Fire Department is backfilling Station 7, Nansemond Suffolk Volunteer Rescue Squad is backfilling Station 2 with 2 ALS Medics.

###