

Sprinklers Prevent Tragedy in Two Health Care Facility Fires

Compliance with code requirements, activation of sprinkler systems, and proper staff actions saved lives in two recent Massachusetts fires.



INVESTIGATION REPORT

The NFPA has investigated numerous fires in health care facilities where fire safety deficiencies were documented, patients died, and extensive damage occurred.

Two recent fires—at a nursing center in Woburn, Massachusetts, on October 30, 1992, and a hospital in Weymouth, Massachusetts, on January 24, 1993—were notably different from other fires documented by the NFPA. There were no fatalities at these fires, injuries were kept to a minimum, and property damage due to direct flame contact was limited. Moreover, the fire protection equipment and training programs at these facilities were consistent with current fire safety codes and standards.

Analyses of the two fires indicate that compliance with fire safety code requirements, proper training of staff members in emergency procedures, and the activation of automatic sprinklers can significantly reduce the potential for loss of life and for property losses in health care facilities.

WOBURN NURSING CENTER FIRE

On Friday, October 30, 1992, an explosion and fire resulted in the total evacuation of the Woburn Nursing Center, a 101-bed facility in Woburn, Massachusetts.

The explosion occurred when natural

Firefighters evacuate a resident of the Woburn Nursing Center after leaking propane caused a fire and explosion.

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