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BUILDING EVACUATED

Three-storey apartment fire displaces dozens of residents

JANE SEYD
jseyd@nsnews.com

Approximately 70 people are out of their homes just 12 days before Christmas after fire tore through an older three-storey apartment building in the City of North Vancouver Tuesday morning.

Fire crews from multiple departments on the North Shore raced to the scene at 260 East 12th Street after fire alarms went off in the 64-unit apartment building in the central Lonsdale area between St. Georges and St. Andrews.

"We had smoke and fire coming from all three floors on the back side of the building," said North Vancouver City Fire Department Chief Greg Schalk. "Fire did actually extend into the attic space and through the roof. So it was a significant fire."

Nobody was injured in the fire, but all building residents were evacuated, and the damage to certain parts

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MERRY AND BRIGHT Conni Smudge a.k.a. Chris Bolton, co-founder of the North Shore Pride Alliance, is spreading Christmas joy at 'snack and chat' events on Lonsdale Avenue. See page 44 for the full story. NICK LABA / NSN

MISCONDUCT ALLEGATIONS

West Van Mayor Mark Sager issued law society citation

JANE SEYD
jseyd@nsnews.com

Less than two months after winning the municipal election, West Vancouver Mayor Mark Sager is facing regulatory scrutiny over his legal work.

The Law Society of B.C. has issued a

citation against Sager, alleging he committed professional misconduct while handling a friend's estate between 2010 and 2020. Among the allegations, the citation accuses Sager of taking money from the estate when he didn't have authorization, and not acting in the best interests of the estate's beneficiaries.

The law society alleges Sager was in a conflict of interest by causing a will to be prepared for his client in which he was named trustee of a life interest and given absolute discretion to use estate funds to travel to England, without ensuring that his friend received independent legal advice.

The law society also alleges Sager withdrew funds improperly from the estate, including more than \$8,800 over a seven-year period between July 2010 and October 2017 "when you were not entitled to those funds." The citation also alleges Sager withdrew "some or all of \$40,000 in

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GROUSE MOUNTAIN

A Magical Story Awaits...

THE

PEAK OF CHRISTMAS

Nov 25th - Jan 2nd

No injuries reported during early-morning evacuation

Continued from page 1

of the building is extensive, he said.

Based on initial reports, firefighters believe the blaze started on the first floor of the building and spread to the second and third floors and into the attic, said Schalk.

Schalk said it's too early to say what caused the fire, but it's most likely to have been accidental.

The 56-year-old apartment building had functioning fire alarms, but no sprinkler system as its construction pre-dated that requirement in the building code.

Cheyenne Hohensinn, who lives opposite the apartment building that caught on fire, said he and his wife were woken by sirens and the arrival of fire trucks around 6 a.m.

Hohensinn said he could see flames coming through the roof and shooting about three metres in the air. "It was definitely coming out the windows," he said. Fire trucks parked on the north side of the building sprayed the fire with water while other firefighters appeared to attack it from above, he said.

Hohensinn said he saw residents fleeing the burning building carrying everything from pets in carriers to cherished possessions. "One lady had her wedding dress," he said.

The fire was out by mid-morning, and between 50 to 70 residents were taken to a reception centre nearby at the offices of North Shore Emergency Management on



First responders attend the scene of an apartment fire in Central Lonsdale Tuesday morning. The cause of the fire is still under investigation. NORTH VAN RCMP

14th Street where they were being provided with necessities like clothing, and set up with hotel rooms for 72 hours.

"It was a very early morning fire," said Emily Dicken, director of North Shore Emergency Management. "A lot of people have been displaced in their pyjamas."

A few residents were able to bring their pet cats to the centre.

Firefighters were checking for other pets that may have been left behind in order to reunite them with their owners.

They were also working with residents to allow them to go and retrieve essentials including medication, keys, wallets and important papers from the building.

Fire crews were to meet with building owners, insurers and restoration crews to determine next steps.

It's not known how many of the tenants



An early morning fire at an apartment building at 260 East 12th Street has displaced approximately 70 residents of the City of North Vancouver. CHEYENNE HOHENSINN

had insurance.

Schalk said it's possible some parts of the building that weren't damaged will only be impacted for a short period of time, while other units may be more seriously damaged.

In cases where people are going to be displaced for a longer term, emergency

management will work with BC Housing to try to find suitable accommodation for those residents – often not an easy job.

Dicken said mental health supports are also being made available to the displaced residents.

"It's a hard experience for people to go through, she said.

North Vancouver **City Library**

Holiday hours

Friday, Dec. 23	9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 24	9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 25	Closed
Monday, Dec. 26	Closed
Tuesday, Dec. 27	10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Tuesday, Dec. 28	10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Thursday, Dec. 29	10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 30	10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 31	10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Sunday, Jan. 1	Closed
Regular hours resume Monday, Jan. 2	9 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Visit nvcl.ca/calendar for up-to-date information and programs.



CALENDAR




Christmas BUREAU
A Family Services of the North Shore program



Family Services NORTH SHORE
Changing lives together

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To learn more, visit familyservices.bc.ca, call 604-984-9627, or scan the QR code.



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