

# Smoke Detectors Once Again Save Potential Tragedy When Fire Breaks Out At 4 A.M. In Edwardsville Apartments

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EDWARDSVILLE - Smoke detectors and fire safety are always important, demonstrated once again by a recent fire in an Edwardsville apartment building. The situation also highlights the effectiveness of the City's Rental Inspection initiative.

The Safe Housing Program was created following a 2012 apartment fire that caused the tragic death of two college students. Officials seek to keep track of rental properties in the city limits of Edwardsville so they can be inspected for basic fire and life safety concerns like faulty or missing smoke detectors or other unsafe conditions, Edwardsville Fire Chief James Whiteford said.

"A fire last Monday broke out around 4 a.m. while most in the 12-unit apartment building were sleeping. Smoke detectors alerted the residents to the fire, preventing greater tragedy. Because of the early detection everyone was able to evacuate the building without injury and the early notification allowed the fire department to quickly bring the fire quickly under control. Damage was limited to one side of the apartment building."

Denise Thibault, director of Edwardsville's Safe Housing Program, said the rental inspection program does more than just check smoke detectors.

"We also check to ensure proper egress for safety of tenants and our emergency personnel, shock hazards, fall hazards, carbon monoxide detectors, and house numbers so emergency responders can easily identify the right building," Thibault added. "These safety inspections and property maintenance inspections assure that rental housing in the city of Edwardsville is maintained in a good, safe, and sanitary condition. We enforce other city adopted codes to help maintain or improve property values and neighborhoods."

Edwardsville Fire Chief James Whiteford said, "Prevention is the best thing a Fire Department can do for its community. Preventing an emergency is much more efficient than responding to something that has already gone wrong. The rental inspection program is like an arm of the Fire Department. Inspectors identify problems before they cause harm and make our response safer when things do go wrong."



[Chris Rhodes also contributed to this story.](#)