

Melanie Diaz Sprinklers Save Lives Act of 2023 HB 1292

On Saturday, February 18th, 2023, a deadly fire broke out in one of the buildings at the Arrive Apartment complex in Silver Spring. The fire broke out in an apartment on the seventh floor of one of the 15-story buildings. 100 firefighters had to be called to the scene. Several residents were trapped in their apartments and had to be rescued from their balconies. Multiple people were hospitalized because of injuries sustained in the fire. 400 people have been displaced. 25-year-old Melanie Diaz, a beloved community member, died in the fire.¹

This fire could have been prevented from spreading if sprinklers were installed throughout the building.² A sprinkler system was installed in some of the buildings in the complex, but it was only installed in the stairwells and other mechanical areas. Sprinklers were not installed in the residential units nor in the hallways.³

This situation is not unique to this tragedy. Currently, in Maryland, state law and local regulations state that if a building was constructed prior to 1974, sprinklers are not required in every residential unit.⁴

Sprinklers and smoke alarms save lives.

This legislation requires the following changes for all high rise buildings by July 1, 2023:

- Requires each unit in a high-rise building to have a fire extinguisher if the building does not have an automatic sprinkler system
- Requires certain high-rise buildings to post notice at all main building entrances to disclose that the building does not have an installed automatic sprinkler system
- Requires notice in the lease agreement that the building does not have an automatic sprinkler system
- Requires the installation of smoke alarms in public corridors accessible by units in high-rise buildings
- Prohibits landlords from requiring a deaf or hard of hearing tenant to pay for a visual notification appliance or to provide certain documentation for a visual notification appliance

AND

- Requires ALL high-rise buildings over 75 feet to be protected by automatic sprinkler systems by January 1, 2033
- Requires the Department of Housing and Community Development, the State Fire Marshal, and the Maryland Department of Emergency Management to identify funding sources to support meeting these requirements with priority funding to buildings that plan to be in compliance by 2028.

For more information, please contact:
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¹<https://wjla.com/news/local/deadly-fire-silver-spring-apartment-arrive-melanie-diaz-cause-source-accident-accidental-victim-family-montgomery-county-maryland-moco-georgia-avenue-deadly-fatal-sprinkler-system>

²<https://moco360.media/2023/02/27/del-charkoudian-drafting-bill-to-bolster-fire-safety-measures-in-apartment-buildings-statewide/>

³<https://www.sourceofthespring.com/silver-spring-news/2803660/one-dead-15-injured-in-fire-at-arrive-silver-spring-apartment-complex-over-400-displaced/>

⁴ <https://law.justia.com/codes/maryland/2020/public-safety/title-9/subtitle-4/section-9-403/>