

City of New Bedford enforcement actions against rooming houses getting results

“In the wake of a fatal March 2023 rooming house fire on Acushnet Avenue, Mayor Jon Mitchell directed the New Bedford Fire Department to launch an aggressive enforcement program to bring the City’s remaining 19 un-sprinklered rooming house operators into compliance with a state law mandating the use of sprinkler systems. As of this week, the New Bedford Fire Department’s enforcement program has resulted in:

- 6 operators having fully completed sprinkler system installations;
- 5 operators deciding to cease or reduce operations as rooming houses so that their facilities are no longer subject to the state sprinkler requirement;
- 6 operators currently installing sprinkler systems; and
- 2 operators facing court action brought by the City for their failure to respond to City directives.

In addition, since March 2023 the Fire Department’s Fire Prevention Bureau conducted inspections of 14 other rooming houses with existing sprinkler systems. Fire Inspectors verified that these existing systems were in good working order. The Fire Prevention Bureau is continuing its close scrutiny of rooming houses in New Bedford, with rooming houses periodically checked for compliance with all life safety code requirements.

“Rooming houses pose a unique set of fire safety challenges, and we must take extra steps to keep their occupants safe,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell. “I am grateful for the work our code

enforcement team and the fire department did to make that happen.”

“Our progress is a reflection of the dedication and professionalism of Captain Kurt Houghton and his team of Fire Inspectors, and their effective collaboration with other City Departments, including Inspectional Services, the Mayor’s Housing Task Force, the Health Department, and the Solicitor’s Office. It has been a team effort to hold rooming house operators accountable, and I am proud of the role that the Fire Department has played,” said Fire Chief Scott Kruger.

OVERVIEW OF CITY’S 19 UN-SPRINKLERED ROOMING HOUSE OPERATORS

6 Locations With Fully Completed Sprinkler System Installations (Since March 2023)

- 116 County Street
- 485 County Street
- 45 Morgan Street
- 162 Sawyer Street
- 39 Sycamore Street
- 192 Walnut Street

5 Locations That Have Ceased Or Reduced Operations (No Longer Subject To State Law)

- 138 Deane Street
- 234 Earle Street
- 152 Williams Street
- 371 County Street
- 110 Eighth Street

6 Locations Actively Installing Sprinkler Systems

- 201-203 Ashley Boulevard
- 549 County Street
- 147 Eighth Street
- 49 North Street
- 550 County Street
- 134 Deane Street

2 Locations With Operators Facing Court Action

- 237 Collette Street
- 639 County Street

14 Locations With Existing Sprinkler Systems (Which Have Been Re-Inspected)

- 1751-1759 Acushnet Avenue
- 1842 Acushnet Avenue
- 434 Cottage Street
- 396 Middle Street
- 347 Pleasant Street
- 1050 Pleasant Street
- 1060 Pleasant Street
- 20 South Sixth Street
- 29 Tarkiln Hill Road
- 116 Lindsey Street
- 116 Ruth Street
- 493 Belleville Avenue
- 499 Purchase Street
- 242 Walnut Street"-City of New Bedford.