

HAPPENINGS IN AND AROUND HIGH-RISE RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN MALAYSIA

A true account of a fire which happened on the 24 June 2009 at Duplex Level 10, K Block, Desa Permai Indah, reported to Architect Centre by a concerned resident:

I was about to go to bed just before midnight after a tiring day. Suddenly, loud wailing sirens broke the silence of the night at my condo. One fire-engine after another rumbled into the drive-way. I received calls and sms that a fire had broken out at K Block, thank God, not my block. I quickly rushed down the staircase, joined in by other equally nervous residents to see what had happened.

Imagine the action scene. A large crowd of residents and people from the neighbouring areas had already descended into our lovely garden. They were all craning their necks, looking up at the tenth floor. The access to the block was of course cordoned off. Residents could only speculate and various versions of the fire were rippling. An elderly lady- the fire victims' opposite neighbour, fed us with her account of the fire. Poor lady was hauled down by her son. She had to leave her walker behind. She recounted that the flames were roaring high and neighbours could only do so much with a bucket brigade and fire extinguishers till the firemen came and used the fire hose reels. **As expected, hose reels from up and down the duplex had problems as they had never been used for nearly 13 years. And when nothing happens, who bothers to do frequent inspections?**

It was found that the fire was caused by a short circuit in the kitchen. The tenant had left an electric appliance cooking and went to sleep. The socket was overloaded and when the wires fell on the wooden stove cabinet, it caught fire and the rest just followed. Luckily, the two tenants were not hurt. They got a friend to run down to alert the security guard who immediately called the fire brigade. Again, they could have just phoned the guard house, but sad to say,

how many residents bother to note down the emergency numbers to call?

What a wake – up call for everyone in the condominium! Suddenly new notices appear everywhere--- Please remove things stored in the PBA or Bomba risers. Sounds familiar? A walk- about the blocks reveals all sorts of paraphernalia stored inside - planks, pots, boxes of rubbish, bottles of stinking enzymes, name it and you have it. I happened to see a BIG discarded mattress in the riser—what a shame to such indiscriminate, irresponsible and apathetic misdemeanor by some residents! Suddenly, after the fire, management council is instructing workers to go round to clear these items and sticking warnings everywhere. **Let's hope they also inspect and ensure that all fire hose reels are in good working condition too.**



Fire engine arriving at the site



Overloading electrical appliances on a socket could have caused a short circuit in kitchen



Rubbish at the Bomba riser. Is the fire extinguisher, fire hose inspected for expiry of use?



Electrical riser door lock broken - does not comply with 2 Hour Fire rated doorset specifications



Discarded mattress in the PBA riser

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