

# PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

*Sprinkler System Saves Lives of 6 Families and Apartment Building*

**CALDWELL, ID** Caldwell Fire responded to report of a fire at an apartment complex on the evening of June 6, 2020. Upon arrival, the crews found an empty apartment with evidence of smoke filling the unit. The fire had initiated in the kitchen activating the sprinkler suppression system, which was able to confine the blaze to the room of origin.

According to Chief Scott, on duty Battalion Chief, the activation of the single sprinkler head successfully mitigated the fire, keeping the families that reside in the building safe. Without the sprinkler intervention, there would undoubtedly be significant damage to the property and lives at risk.

Activated and operating sprinklers are effective in controlling fires 96% of the time, however, national reports show sprinkler systems are present on only 10% of reported U.S. fires.

*"If there were not sprinkler system in this building, this would be a different situation. We could be out a building and 6 families could be out of their homes."* - Complex Maintenance Management

The fire investigator, Brad Johnson, concluded if not for the sprinkler system activation, the room of origin would have flashed over within two minutes and quickly expanded to the apartments above and adjacent blocking exits for those residences. Even with our six-minute response time, we would have had a rescue scene upon arrival.

Fortunately, due to the apartment complex having a maintained sprinkler system installed, there was relatively little damage, low risk to firefighters, and one family that was displaced which the Caldwell Firefighter's Local 1821 Burnout Fund was able to assist them in housing after the incident. Caldwell Fire responds to approximately 70 residential structure fires per year with cooking fires as the number one cause at 27%. Cook with caution and understand the effectiveness of home sprinkler systems.

####

The Caldwell Fire Department has a staff with 43 full-time firefighters, 2 in prevention bureau, and 4 administration. Lead by Chief Mark Wendelsdorf, the department serves a 147 square-mile area and responds to an average of 6800 calls per year. Caldwell Fire shares mutual aid agreements with fire departments in the surrounding communities.