
SAN MATEO CONSOLIDATED FIRE DEPARTMENT

FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

2020-05500

06-06-2020

718 Tilton Ave San Mateo, CA

Code Enforcement-Sub Standard Living

Synopsis: I arrived on scene to a single-family residential home. Residents of the home found an electrical outlet underneath the kitchen sink that was actively sparking and producing an odor of burning which prompted an emergency response by the San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department. Upon arrival, fire crews mitigated the emergency but found evidence of multiple sub-standard living units in the home. A joint investigation team from the City of San Mateo responded to the property and found the property to be unsafe to occupy.

Damaged Property: N/A

Evidence/Photos: 40 color photographs were taken by Investigator Michael Zambrana with a Canon PowerShot ELPH 170IS digital camera. All files were transferred to the Fire Investigation "Inspectors" folder and then deleted from the camera.

Details of Investigation:

Source: I, Michael Zambrana, was dispatched on 06/06/20, by Public Safety Communications to 718 Tilton Ave. at 07:50 hours and arrived approximately at 08:31 hours.

Details: Upon arrival, I met with Captain Henretty who requested a fire Investigator for the substandard living conditions found during his response. I conducted an examination of the property and requested additional resources from the City of San Mateo.

Building: 718 Tilton Ave is a single-story, wood frame, single- family residential building built in 1902 with attached garage. The home was originally a three bedroom and one bathroom dwelling approximately 1,000 Sq. Ft. with a basement. The building was of wood siding with a hip roof. The home had been converted to a multi-family living building with eleven different living spaces throughout the property.

Examination:

I started my examination with a 360 degree walk of the home. The home was arranged with the main home facing Tilton Ave. (IMG_2455). The home had a driveway on the right side of the property which led to a small garage (IMG_2461). The garage was serving as a living space for a family. I did not access the garage, but V-1Lantan confirmed it was a living space (IMG_2462). The backyard had two sheds that were serving as living spaces for two separate families (IMG_2465). I did not access the sheds, but V-1Lantan confirmed they were living spaces.

The first floor of the dwelling had been converted to four separate living spaces, a kitchen, and a restroom. I did not access the rooms, V-1Lantan confirmed they were living spaces. I did not note any smoke alarms or carbon monoxide alarms in the area of examination. I did not note any fire or smoke damage during my examination of the first floor. There was no noted fire damage in the cabinet underneath the sink that originally promoted the fire response.

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The home had a subfloor basement with access from the exterior of the home by way of a wooden access hatch (IMG_2464). The hatch led to concrete steps down to the basement level. The basement was arranged with partitions separating four living spaces. The basement had a variety of extension cords running through the space (IMG_2486). I was unable to determine where they were plugged into and what they were powering because of limited access into living spaces. I did not access each individual living space but V-1Lantan confirmed they were living spaces. I did note one of the living spaces had a hot water heater in the living space that was wrapped with a tarp (IMG_2484). Electrical junction boxes in the basement had exposed wiring (IMG_2483).

At this point, I called my supervisor, Vorisia Henderson, to inform her of the situation and what I had found. The building department dispatched building inspector Allen Elkins to evaluate the electrical system. Code Enforcement Dispatched Christine Civiletti to evaluate sub-standard living conditions.

Statements:

W1: Captain Henretty- First in Engine 21:

W-1 Captain Henretty reported arriving on scene with a full assignment response. The residents directed fire crews to the kitchen of 718 Tilton Ave. W-1 Captain Henretty did not encounter any active burning fire at the time of response. W-1 Captain Henretty stated crews secured power to the home by shutting off the main breaker at the exterior of the home. W-1 Captain Henretty encountered substandard living conditions and requested a fire investigator respond to the scene.

V1-Nidia Lantan -2210 Alameda de Las Pulgas. San Mateo, CA- (650) 389-3648-Spanish speaker

V-1Lantan stated she does not live at the property, but she is the lease holder of 718 Tilton Ave. V-1Lantan stated she sub leases living spaces to a variety of families that need living accommodations. V-1Lantan stated she has held the lease at 718 Tilton for approximately eight years. V-1Lantan stated that the current monthly rent due to the property owner (V-2 Narian) is \$4600. V-1Lantan stated she charges her tenants anywhere between \$300-\$1000 for their living space. V-1Lantan stated that the property owner, V-2 Narian, was aware of the living conditions at 718 Tilton Ave. since approximately early 2020. V-1Lantan stated that her tenants built the variety of different living spaces on the property. V-1Lantan did confirm the property owner had verbally told her she needed to restore the property to its original condition and remove anyone not on the lease. V-1Lantan stated that the property owner refused to repair anything on the property.

V-1Lantan stated the morning of the fire response she was at the property when one of her tenants informed her the electrical outlet underneath the sink was actively sparking. V-1Lantan stated she called 9-1-1 and awaited response.

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**V2: Praveen Narian-146 N Delaware Dr. #6 San Mateo, CA - DOB:5/26/91 (650) 666-9149-
Property Owner- On site interview**

V-2 Narian stated that V-1Lantan and her children are the only people on the lease agreement. V-2 Narian stated he visits the property approximately once a month for an exterior and interior inspection. V-2 Narian stated that in late 2019 he had found multiple living spaces on the property. V-2 Narian stated he had sent his lessee (V-1Lantan) to ask they restore the property to its original condition. This letter was not produced on the day of the response.

Conclusion & Opinion:

Based on the conditions found on the property I requested the response of the City of San Mateo Building department and Code Enforcement Department. San Mateo Building Inspector Allen Elkins determined the home was unsafe to occupy and Red Tagged the building on behalf of the City of San Mateo Building Official. Pacific Gas and Electric was requested via dispatch and the Electric Restoration Supervisor George Carey [(650) 339-0295] recognized the City of San Mateo Red Tag and approved the removal of the gas meter and electric meter. I assisted Code Enforcement Manager Christine Civiletti in her investigation of the property by providing the translation of Spanish to English the remainder of my time on scene. I cleared the scene once my assistance was no longer required and handed the scene over to Code Enforcement Manager Christine Civiletti.

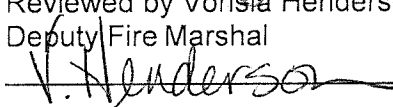
Total response time: 07:50 to 13:50 hours

END OF REPORT

Michael Zambrana
Fire Investigator

 06/10/20

Reviewed by Vorisia Henderson
Deputy Fire Marshal

 06/10/20