
SAN MATEO CONSOLIDATED FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT

2020-05500
718 Tilton Ave San Mateo, CA

06-06-2020
Code Enforcement-Sub Standard Living

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

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9 **Damaged Property:** N/A

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

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15 **Details of Investigation:**

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

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

23
24 **Building:** 718 Tilton Ave is a single-story, wood frame, single- family residential building built
25 in 1902 with attached garage. The home was originally a three bedroom and one
26 bathroom dwelling approximately 1,000 Sq. Ft. with a basement. The building was of wood
27 siding with a hip roof. The home had been converted to a multi-family living building with eleven
28 different living spaces throughout the property.

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31 **Examination:**

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

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

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

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

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63 **Statements:**

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66 **W1: Captain Henretty- First in Engine 21:**

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

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

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79 V-1Lantan stated she does not live at the property, but she is the lease holder of 718 Tilton
80 Ave. V-1Lantan stated she sub leases living spaces to a variety of families that need
81 living accommodations. V-1Lantan stated she has held the lease at 718 Tilton for approximately
82 eight years. V-1Lantan stated that the current monthly rent due to the property owner (V-
83 2 Narian) is \$4600. V-1Lantan stated she charges her tenants anywhere between \$300-\$1000
84 for their living space. V-1Lantan stated that the property owner, V-2 Narian, was aware of the
85 living conditions at 718 Tilton Ave. since approximately early 2020. V-1Lantan stated that her
86 tenants built the variety of different living spaces on the property. V-1Lantan did confirm the
87 property owner had verbally told her she needed to restore the property to its original condition
88 and remove anyone not on the lease. V-1Lantan stated that the property owner refused to
89 repair anything on the property.

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92 V-1Lantan stated the morning of the fire response she was at the property when one of her
93 tenants informed her the electrical outlet underneath the sink was actively sparking. V-1Lantan
94 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.

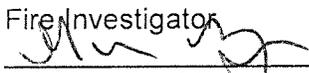
Conclusion & Opinion:

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.

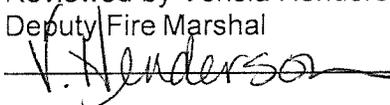
Total response time: 07:50 to 13:50 hours

END OF REPORT

Michael Zambrana
Fire Investigator

 06/10/20

Reviewed by Vorisia Henderson
Deputy Fire Marshal

 06/10/20