
BILLERICA

HOUSING AUTHORITY

John Saulnier, Chair
James F. O'Donnell, Jr., Vice Chair
Marie O'Rourke, Treasurer

Martin E. Conway
Robert M. Correnti, Executive Director

16 River St
BillERICA, MA 01821
Tel 978-667-2175
Fax 978-667-1156
email: bcorrenti@billericahousing.org

BILLERICA HOUSING AUTHORITY
JUN 17 2024

MEMORANDUM



TO: RESIDENTS OF 13 RIVER STREET and 16 RIVER STREET
FROM: Bob Correnti
DATE: June 17, 2024
RE: EMERGENCY PULL CORD ALARM SYSTEM

An event this past weekend at 16 River Street necessitates this memo regarding the Emergency Pull Cord Alarm System.

There is an Emergency Pull Cord Alarm System in all apartments at 13 River Street and 16 River Street. At both locations, an apartment resident can activate the alarm by pulling the cord attached to the alarm switch. In every apartment, there is an alarm switch located in the apartment bedroom and another switch located in the apartment bathroom. The alarm system pull cords should not be blocked and should hang to the apartment floor. The system is a "local" alarm system meaning it sounds an alarm only at the building location. At 13 River Street, the alarm bell is located outside on the building exterior wall. At 16 River Street, the alarm bell is located inside the building. The alarm does not sound anywhere else. It does not sound at Police or Fire locations. When activated, the system sounds the bell, unlocks the front apartment door and illuminates a light to indicate the apartment sounding the alarm. At 13 River Street, the indicator light is located on the door frame by the door handle. At 16 River Street, the indicator light is above the apartment door.

The system is designed so a resident can alert neighbors of an emergency situation. This alarm can provide a more immediate response to the emergency. With the illuminated light, a neighbor responding can identify the apartment with the emergency and enter the apartment, via the unlocked front apartment door. The responder can then assess the situation.

If an emergency exists, the responder can contact the appropriate authorities to address the emergency. The responder can also silence the alarm by returning the alarm switch to the "Off" position. Thus, the system is designed to alert neighbors so as to provide the opportunity for a prompt neighbor response. The Housing Authority Office should be advised of any emergency. Additionally, the Housing Authority Office should be contacted should the system not be functioning fully (for example, the light did not illuminate).

This past weekend, a Billerica Housing Authority resident, who did not live in the building with the sounding alarm, did respond to the building with the continuous sounding alarm and rang an apartment doorbell to gain access into the building. However, the building resident responding to the doorbell would not press the door buzzer to give access to the responding resident outside and stated to the responding outside resident, "I already called maintenance...we are told you can't go into the apartment." This is simply not the response for this system. Waiting for a response by maintenance would mean a longer response time where minutes could be critical.

More often than not, sounding pull cord alarms are "false" alarms inadvertently and unknowingly activated. Nonetheless, in every case, a prompt response is critical should a response, by the proper authorities, be needed. If no immediate neighbor response and the alarm continues, contact the Billerica Fire Department (978-671-0941).

Our community includes many residents with disabilities. An informed knowledge of the system and a neighbor's willingness to respond are important components for the proper operation and response of the Emergency Pull Cord Alarm System. This is truly a "Neighbor Helping Neighbor" system. If any questions, please contact the Executive Director during regular Office hours.