ATTIC FIRE SAFETY

CHECK
Your attic and look for any gaps

PROTECT
Yourself, your family and your home from fire risks

SAVE
Lives by slowing the spread of fire

WHY IS AN ATTIC FIRE BARRIER IMPORTANT?

- Save lives by slowing the spread of fire — protecting yourself and your family
- Reduce the loss of personal belongings and property
- Reduce the emotional trauma of dealing with the aftermath of a fire, including lost mementos and the stress of rebuilding
- Avoid increased insurance premiums that can result from making a claim
- Preserve the historic integrity of the interior and exterior of your home
- Be proactive! You can’t control what your neighbors do and the risks that can come from smoking, cooking, etc.

WHAT STEPS SHOULD I TAKE AS THE OWNER OF A HISTORIC ROWHOME?

CHECK OUT YOUR ATTIC
Look for any holes, gaps or openings in the walls between you and your neighbors.

TALK TO YOUR NEIGHBOR
Let them know about any gaps you found and ask if they want to work together to fix the problem.

GET A CONTRACTOR
Bring in a professional to fill any openings in your attic space.

APPLY FOR A BUILDING PERMIT
Include a drawing that shows how the barrier to separate the two homes will be constructed, how it fits with existing conditions and whether the wall will be completed on both sides or one side only.

Need help? The City’s Building Department can provide guidance to your contractor.
Contact: 301.600.3808 / cityoffrederick.com/ask

COMPLETE WORK

THE ATTIC FIRE SEPARATION GRANT PROGRAM BY DOWNTOWN FREDERICK PARTNERSHIP

If you own an existing 50+ year old rowhome in the Frederick Town Historic District, you may be eligible to receive up to $1,000 to offset the costs of constructing and/or filling gaps in a fire barrier between adjoining rowhomes. NO MATCH REQUIRED by the homeowner.

APPLICATION: downtownfrederick.org/community-resources
HOW TO KNOW IF YOUR HOME HAS A FIRE BARRIER

- Check your attic and look for any holes, gaps or openings between your attic and the attached home’s attic.
- Any opening between attic spaces creates an opportunity for fire to spread quickly.

IMPACT OF A DOWNTOWN FREDERICK FIRE

In November 2014, a fire that started at 327 S Market St spread through 10 homes, leaving six with significant fire, water, and smoke damage.

Located in the Historic District, the impacted rowhomes were constructed in the 1860s. The fire spread quickly through the roof and attic areas of the homes, in part due to the lack of fire barriers between the units.

Started by a carelessly discarded cigarette, the fire went to three alarms and was battled by over 100 firefighters from 20 companies in Frederick and Montgomery Counties. It was a cold, windy night and residents who had run out of their homes sat in shock as they watched their homes burn.

The six heavily damaged homes were under renovation for over a year. Due to the extent of the damage, the homes were declared uninhabitable by the City of Frederick and the homeowners relocated to rentals during the renovation process.

CONCERNED ABOUT GETTING IN YOUR HOME’S ATTIC?

Fox Mountain Property Inspections has agreed to provide a one-time, free 15 minute inspection of your attic space to check for any openings and/or determine whether or not a fire barrier exists today.

You can reach out to Fox Mountain Property Inspections at 301.685.3145 or clientcare@foxmt.com

HOW TO ADD A FIRE BARRIER IN A HISTORIC HOME

- It will be very difficult, if not impossible, to create a true fire-resistant wall in accordance with the requirements for new construction in most historic rowhomes; however, improvements can be made to help decrease your home’s fire risk.
- Work towards a goal of achieving a two-hour fire rating within the attic.
- Install two layers of 5/8-inch drywall on each side of the wall; drywall can be installed on one side only if your neighbor isn’t willing to participate.
- Install two layers of drywall to the underside of the roof for a distance of 4 feet from the wall separating the houses, which ideally would occur on both sides of the wall.
- Work with City staff to determine the maximum amount of fire safety improvements that can be made in your specific rowhome’s attic.