



Violations Are Found at Building in Brooklyn Where 5 Died in Fire

By ANDY NEWMAN
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New York City is charging the owners of a building in Brooklyn where [five people died in a fire](#) last month with illegally subdividing apartments there to create extra dwellings, officials said.

In their canvass of the building, at 2033 86th Street in Bensonhurst, which was badly damaged in the fire on Jan. 30, investigators from the [Buildings Department](#) found that apartments on the second and third floors were illegally subdivided, including a two-bedroom apartment that had been converted into four units.

“Because of the illegal partitions,” said Tony Scalfani, a department spokesman, “the two front units had only one means of egress: the stairwell.”

The stairwell collapsed in the fire. The police have charged a resident of the second floor, Daniel Ignacio, with setting the blaze.

The evidence of illegal conversion that investigators found included the kinds of locks on the doors and the different ages of wood, Mr. Scalfani said. Fire officials said at least 18 people had lived in the apartments on two floors above a sushi restaurant.

The Buildings Department was to issue violations on Friday evening to the company that owns the building, 20-35 86th Street Realty, for illegally increasing occupancy, working without a permit and failure to provide two means of egress, Mr. Scalfani said. Each violation carries a maximum fine of \$25,000.

The principal of the company, Vasilios Gerazounis, could not immediately be reached for comment on Friday evening.

The buildings commissioner, Robert D. LiMandri, said in a statement, “Property owners must understand they have a responsibility to maintain their property in a safe manner, and an illegal conversion can put people’s lives in serious danger.”

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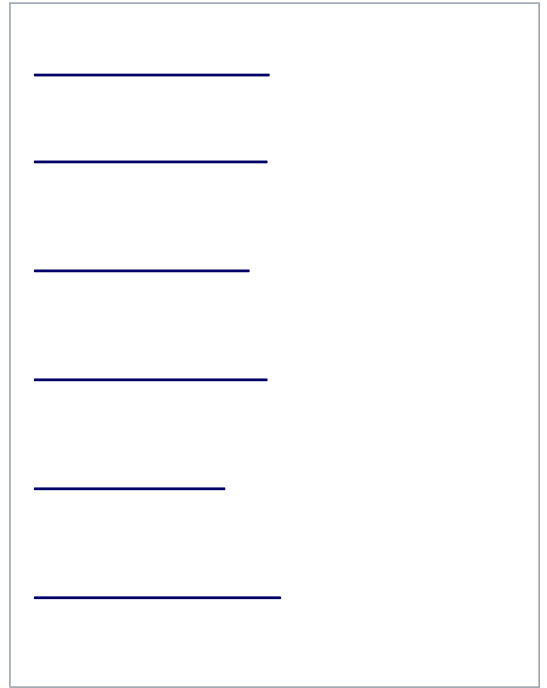
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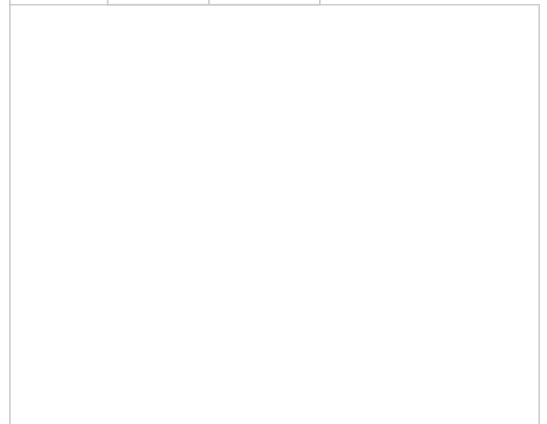
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