

# Chicago Tribune

## High-rise residents out until at least Wednesday

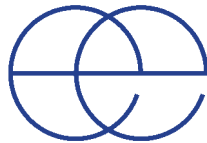
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LAKEVIEW - Residents of a Lakeview condominium high-rise were told Monday they will not be able to return to their apartments until at least Wednesday after a water main break late last week flooded the building's basement.

The 29-story building at 3200 N. Lake Shore Drive was evacuated Friday after the boilers were submerged, knocking out heat. The building also lacks water, elevator service and fire protection.

Over the weekend, crews began pumping out the water from the lowest level of the basement. When the water is drained, electricians and mechanical contractors will be called to assess the damage, according to a memorandum made available to building occupants Friday.

Residents were given a list of local hotels at which the management company, Harbor House Condominium Association, had arranged to provide a discount rate.



## EDWARDS ENGINEERING INC.

# LOCAL CONTRACTOR LEADS RECOVERY EFFORTS

Chicago – Imagine the basement of your home filling up with thousands of gallons of water. That's a very brief synopsis of what faced more than 650 residents of a condominium complex on North Lake Shore Drive on a recent bone chilling morning. Filling the boiler room, which is one floor below the basement at a rate of 1,000 gallons per minute, the water reached a height of nearly 12 feet.

“We were alerted of the situation early that morning and immediately dispatched our people to the scene,” said Mike Hoy, Account Manager for Edwards Engineering Inc., a full service mechanical contracting company from suburban Elk Grove Village, IL.

There was a lot going on when the Edwards Engineering team of experts arrived. Because the boilers were submerged, there was no heat to the building and the outside temperature had dipped into single digits. The frigid conditions and the fact that there was

no domestic water available, or water available for fire protection, caused the City of Chicago to order all residents to evacuate the premises by 7PM. They were told they would not be allowed back into the building until heat could be restored and the building made safe – which meant getting rid of all that standing water and then building the heat back up.

Evacuation was no easy task. The building consists of 29 stories and all six elevators were forced out of commission by the flood. Residents, escorted by security people including Chicago firemen and police officers, were forced to walk down many flights of stairs. Building management assisted in making hotel arrangements for many of the residents.

Before the Edwards Engineering crew could gain entry to the boiler room and begin the task of getting heat back to the building, the City had to bring in pneumatic pumps to suck out the water from the boiler and storage rooms which are one and



a half stories below ground. Ten gallons of oil had drained out of each of the elevators as well, which meant there were sixty gallons of oil sitting on top of the water. The pumping process took all of Friday night. And, once that was done, the Edwards' Engineering personnel took over.

They first had to drain the main loop to prevent freezing. There were between six and eight Edwards' staff on the job for the next 36 hours it took to get everything up and running. "If there's ever any good news in a situation like this," commented Bob Orsi, Edwards Engineering Field Supervisor, "it's usually about the people doing the job. And, this was no exception," he continued. "Because of the seriousness of the situation, we assembled our most experienced journeymen. These guys are highly trained and well aware of the safety measures that have to be taken in difficult circumstances like this." No injuries or biological contamination occurred during the process.

Edwards Engineering worked closely with the other contractors involved to ensure that everything kept running smoothly. "There was a great deal of respect shown to the Edwards workers for the efficient way the recovery process was handled," Orsi stated. "I can't say enough about the value of their experience and training."

To keep things moving, the Edwards Engineering team supplied their own heat using a kerosene torpedo heater that one of the crew picked up along with 10 gallons of kerosene. The Edwards Engineering personnel had food delivered directly to the site so they could keep on task and restore services as soon as possible. Because of the seriousness of the situation and Edwards Engineering's relationship with important vendors in the HVAC marketplace, calls were made from the Edwards Engineering crew and operation's support, to alert local suppliers to request

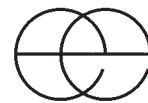
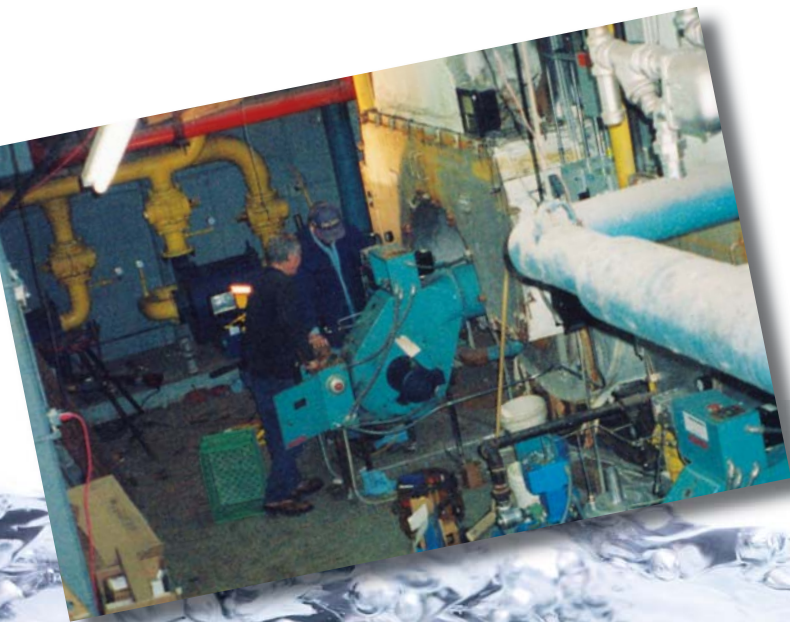


that their businesses be opened after hours to make specialized control and equipment parts available over the weekend. Additionally, Edwards Engineering's on-site crew met every two to three hours with the building's management personnel and insurance provider to keep them apprised of the progress and other important elements of the situation.

Edwards Engineering started building heat on Sunday and by Monday night the building heat and domestic water supply was back. They kept an overnight watch to ensure that everything was working properly. Domestic water was tested on Tuesday, after a 24 hour culture cure, to ensure it was safe.

Residents began returning to their homes by 2PM Wednesday - thanks to the diligent efforts of the Edwards Engineering professionals. This timeframe didn't seem possible when the boilers were submerged under water just five days earlier.

Jim Schulz, Vice President of Edwards Engineering Service Division commented, "I am very proud of the professional and thoughtful way our personnel responded to a very serious and dire situation. It is extremely gratifying to see the efforts of our work pay off to people in such a visible and remarkable way. I'm proud to say that it is also representative of what we do every day in a less dramatic and visual way for hundreds of our customers throughout the Chicago and Northern Illinois area."



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