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Are you prepared to deal with a fire?

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Will you be able to escape if a fire breaks out in your apartment block? Was the building built or renovated with fire safety in mind? Are you sure the staircase is not blocked? In the event of a blaze, what should you do? Try to put it out or flee?

You can get answers to these questions and more at the upcoming symposium, "Is Your Home a Fire Hazard?"

Organised by EdgeProp.my, the free symposium will be held on Saturday, Oct 14, from 9am to 1pm at the Hilton Kuala Lumpur in KL Sentral. You can register online — on a first-come, first-served basis — to attend the event.

The symposium is presented by Gamuda Land and supported by Nippon Paint.

Five experts will share fire safety and prevention measures in homes. They are Anthony Lee Tee, Architect Centre accredited building inspector and trainer; Chong Lee Siong, principal architect of Lee Siong Architect; Hamdan Ali, assistant commissioner of the Fire and Rescue Department Malaysia's Fire Safety Division; Low Hon Keong, executive director at Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont'Kiara) Sdn Bhd; and Nur Faidarina Alias, executive of The Energy Commission's Electrical Equipment Unit — Electrical Safety Regulation Department.

EdgeProp.my managing director and editor-in-chief Au Foong Yee says the symposium is aimed at raising awareness on the need for everyone to stay vigilant and updated on fire safety procedures and responses.

Unfortunately, there are people who think they know what to do if there is a fire, and others who, worse still, choose to brush it off because they think it will not happen to them, she adds.

"Fire safety awareness goes beyond the correct selection and use of fire extinguishers, for instance. If you are staying in a high-rise building, do you know if it has been designed, built and managed with fire safety in mind?"

"In communal living especially, what role does one play to keep fires from happening? What can and should you do to help yourself in case of a blaze? Suffice to say, there is no room for apathy," Au comments.

One of the speakers, Lee from Architect Centre, believes fire safety awareness is lacking among Malaysians.

"We have seen many fires, electrical accidents and fatalities in Malaysia and other parts of the world. Many people may know how to put out a fire, but not many know where the fire staircase of their apartment or condominium is. So, the first thing is to create awareness, and the next is taking the correct proactive action."

In his talk on "Burning facts that

FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT MALAYSIA



Hamdan: The four Es pretty much cover the role of the developer, authorities and users in building fire safety

LOW YEN YEING/EDGEPROP.MY



Au: In communal living especially, what role does one play to keep fires from happening?

MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM/THE EDGE



Lee: Many people may know how to put out a fire, but not many know where the fire staircase of their own apartment or condominium is

LOW YEN YEING/EDGEPROP.MY



Low: Have you ever considered that your expensive property may disappear into thin air if you do not have fire prevention equipment?

LEE SIONG ARCHITECT



Chong: Imagine if you accidentally removed some important structure or misused something

you cannot ignore", Lee will share facts and figures of real-life fire incidents in Malaysia, as well as electrical safety issues.

Meanwhile, Bomba's Hamdan will speak on "Fire safety and building regulations — Is Malaysia outdated?"

"I will be focusing on the four Es — Engineering, Education, Enforcement and Emergency Response Plan. The four Es pretty much cover the role of the developer, authorities and users in building fire safety," Hamdan says.

"There are certain regulations all buildings have to follow with regards to fire safety. I would say, generally, that new buildings in Malaysia meet fire safety standards but older buildings, which were built before the regulations [were drawn up] have yet to comply. The department is ready to provide guidance and assistance in upgrading fire safety standards for older buildings. But most importantly, the residents have to understand the basic structure of the buildings they are living in."

Henry Butcher's Low concurs with Hamdan that understanding a building's structure is vital in saving people and property in a fire.

"We have noticed that people are often concerned about the condition of the house and how many parking bays are allocated rather than what the fire prevention features are when shopping

for a property. Have you ever considered that your expensive property may disappear into thin air if you do not have fire prevention equipment?"

In his talk, "Fire safety in communal living", Low will highlight the importance of fire prevention features, such as fire staircases and fire-fighting water pumps, when a developer hands over a property.

"More than half of the new residential projects in the city are high-rise, so fire staircases and other fire prevention features are crucial," he says.

Lee Siong Architect's Chong will touch on a similar topic, but focusing on home fire safety, in his talk, "So, your home was built with fire safety in mind?"

"Some people do not know their building structure well. Some don't even know whether the building is up to authority standards or not, but this is very important, especially if you are going to live there. Imagine if you accidentally remove some important structure or misused something. Bad things may not happen immediately but it is a time bomb," he says.

It is vital to have basic knowledge of what is the standard building's structure, features and requirements to avoid making a wrong decision when renovating your unit, he warns. ■