

CASE STUDY

BlazeMaster® FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS

CORAL RIDGE TOWERS SOUTH

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.
Established: 1968

TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION:

Residential

INSTALLATION TYPE:

Retrofit

BLAZEMASTER® FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS MAKES FLORIDA HIGH-RISE RETROFIT TROUBLE-FREE

Adrian Peschi, LCAM, knew that if the retrofit went badly he'd hear it from hundreds of unofficial supervisors – the residents of the high-rise apartment building he manages in Fort Lauderdale.

As general manager of the 338-unit Coral Ridge Towers South, Peschi feared the fire sprinkler retrofit required by state law would disrupt the lives of residents and

“The project in every sense was superb,” said Peschi. “We had good comments from our residents. We were happy with the entire process and it moved along much faster than we thought it would.”

Coral Ridge is one of hundreds of older high-rise residential buildings in Florida complying with new sprinkler requirements. While new buildings three stories or higher have been required since 1994 to have fire sprinklers, that left many older high-rises unprotected. To close that gap, the state legislature set a Dec. 31, 2019, deadline for unsprinklered high-rise buildings (generally 75 feet or higher) to add fire sprinklers.

In place of a sprinkler system, buildings can choose an Engineered Life Safety System (ELSS), which is less expensive and less disruptive to install. This requires:

- Sprinklers in common areas
- One sprinkler head inside the front door of each unit
- Integrated smoke detection and alarm system
- Adequate exits from common areas
- Compartmentalization to contain fires (fire doors, fire walls, etc.)

Peschi said once it became clear that the sprinkler requirement would not be overturned or delayed, his priority was choosing the best contractor for an ELSS.

“If we had picked the wrong company and something went awry halfway during the job, we're the ones who look bad, so we were very concerned about choosing the right company,” he said.



bring complaints about noise, dirt, blocked hallways and other problems. But thanks to a decision to use BlazeMaster® CPVC Pipe & Fittings and to hire Sprinklermatic Fire Protection Services to install it, the retrofit was problem-free.

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-ADRIAN PESCHI,
General Manager,
Coral Ridge Towers South



The company first interviewed Sprinklermatic, Southeast Florida's leading fire safety company. The family-owned business explained to Coral Ridge owners, management and residents what the job required and why using BlazeMaster CPVC pipe would make the retrofit faster, less disruptive and less expensive than using steel. It also recommended a fire engineering company which drew up plans for the work.

"I did not know anything about CPVC, but the more I learned, the more obvious it was that it was the right material for a retrofit," Peschi said.

Though Coral Ridge officials interviewed other contractors, they kept returning to Sprinklermatic. "We knew they were a company that would help us look good as managers and as a board," Peschi said.

Work began in summer 2018, and it quickly became apparent that Coral Ridge had made the right choice of contractor and material. "At every junction with this we've been pleasantly surprised and impressed," Peschi said. "The guys are very clean and professional and we work well together."

Peschi said that during the project, officials from nearby high-rises came over to examine the work in progress and were impressed by the lack of disruption and the speed of the work, both made possible by the selection of BlazeMaster pipe over metal. They've also taken note of the lower cost of BlazeMaster CPVC, which means smaller assessments to unit owners.

Sprinklermatic Vice President Timothy O'Brien said BlazeMaster CPVC is superior to other materials.

"It's a product that we've been able to incorporate in multiple sectors – hospitality, residential. Anywhere we can use the product, we do. I find it to be the absolute best product to do fire protection with," O'Brien said.

BlazeMaster pipe is ideal for retrofits because it's easy to handle; does not require power tools, welding or threading; and does not pose the same worksite fire risk that steel does.

"It's faster and it reduces the pain (for customers)," said Sprinklermatic President Robin Collier. "The quicker I'm able to get crews in and out, the faster building residents can get back to a normal life – and that's what they're concerned about."

The retrofitting at Coral Ridge is done, but with the 2019 deadline looming, Sprinklermatic is working on other high-rises and using BlazeMaster Fire Sprinkler Systems to stay on schedule and keep managers and residents happy.

BlazeMaster[®] FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS

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