

# Alarmed grad sparks inquiry

By LAURA LUSH

Inaudible fire alarms in some areas of York's five graduate residences has prompted an approximate \$200,000 upgrade to the residences' existing fire alarm systems.

"We want to make York a more safe and comfortable place to live," said John Taylor, Assistant Manager of Housing and Food Services. Housing and Food Services is expected to award tender to one of the three bidders for the upgrading project this week, Taylor said, adding that the contractor will "probably start working a couple of weeks after the tender has closed."

Taylor also credited the upgrading initiative to concerned graduate resident Carol Suschnigg, who, after a

small fire began last November, Taylor said that efforts to upgrade the system began. "Either we had to put extra bells in the residences or we had to put bigger ones in, so everyone could hear," he said. The final decision was to have bells installed in each apartment.

Although efforts to upgrade the fire alarm system are being finalized this week, Suschnigg had written two letters to Housing and Food Services since November inquiring about the response to the upgrading demands. Taylor said the reason the upgrading process has been slow is because "there was a lot of different people to deal with." By April, testing of the alarm system was carried out by both the University and an independent contractor, Taylor said.

Another upgrading initiative has

been the addition of chemical extinguishers to existing water hose closets in May. Colpitt said that although the fire hoses also met Ontario Fire Code guidelines, they couldn't put out grease fires. "Housing advised us to keep salt on hand for grease fires," Suschnigg said. Both Colpitt and Taylor could not cite off-hand, but Colpitt estimated there have been about "a dozen small fires" which have been "mostly cooking related." As a fire report is required after each incident, Colpitt added, none of the fires resulted from faulty wiring. Also, according to Taylor, small fire extinguishers for apartments will be made available to the Superintendents of the graduate residences next week for distribution to any tenant who would like one.



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