



Talking Points for Residential Fire Sprinklers

Firefighter Life Safety Initiative #15 focuses on the enforcement of codes and the installation of home fire sprinklers.

Communities have successfully utilized sprinklers to reduce fires as well as create less dangerous working conditions for firefighters due to smaller, contained fires. The result is less lives and property lost and increased safety for firefighters.

Quick response fire sprinkler heads gives the fire department extra time, gives the citizens extra time....Fire Sprinklers Save Lives, Money, and Water!

Fire Problem:

- According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), there is a residential fire every 85 seconds, resulting in more than 2,500 deaths each year.
- Nationally, eight out of ten fire deaths occur in the places where people feel safest – their own home.
- According to the NFPA, half of the 20 deadliest fires in the U.S. that were limited to a single building involved public places of assembly, such as the Station Nightclub fire where 100 people died in 2003.

Fire Risk:

- The elderly, very young, and people with disabilities are at highest risk because they cannot easily escape a fire on their own.
- Residents of nursing homes and other assisted living facilities may be especially vulnerable to fire due to physical and health-related mobility limitations, cognitive issues, and personal health equipment/devices (such as IVs, oxygen, etc.).

The Solution: Fire Sprinklers

- Sprinklers are recommended as the most effective means to substantially cut the home fire problem, from federal agencies such as the U.S. Fire Administration and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, to national safety organizations such as the International Association of Fire Chiefs, National Fire Protection Association, and Underwriters Laboratories.
- All model safety codes now require the use of home fire sprinklers in new one- and two- story family homes.

- There is a great deal of *misinformation* about fire sprinklers – myths that cause needless concerns and cloud the true value afforded by sprinklers. One myth is that smoke alarms provide enough protection. However, while smoke alarms do alert occupants to the presence of danger, they do nothing to extinguish the fire.

Fire Sprinkler Facts:

- Burned toast or any smoke cannot operate a sprinkler system; only intense heat caused by a fire will activate the sprinkler.
- In 90 percent of fires in sprinklered homes, only one sprinkler activated to contain the fire.
- On average, fire hoses use eight-and-a-half times more water than sprinklers to contain a fire.
- Accidental water discharge is much more likely to come from your home plumbing system than from sprinklers.
- According to a 2008 Nationwide Cost Assessment Study by the Fire Protection Research Foundation, the cost to install a residential fire sprinkler system in a home was \$1.61/sq. ft.
- Having a home fire sprinkler system is like having a firefighter in your home, on duty 24-hours-a-day.
- There are several types of fire sprinklers made for homes; some are for installation on walls and others in ceilings, others are concealed by a plate. All residential fire sprinklers are much smaller and lower-profile than the types of sprinklers used in commercial and industrial properties.
- Most insurance companies provide financial incentives to encourage homeowners to protect their homes from fire. Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition research shows that fire sprinkler system discounts range from 5% to 25% off the fire portion of homeowner premiums.

Legislation: Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act

We support the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act, a bill that would make it easier and more affordable to retrofit an existing building with sprinklers. The bill would amend the Internal Revenue Code to include automated fire sprinkler systems as section 179 property and classify certain automated fire sprinkler systems as 15-year property for purposes of depreciation.

** Sources: National Fire Protection Association, Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition, U.S. Fire Administration*