

Make a Convincing Case for Home Fire Sprinklers

Support the adoption of home fire sprinkler requirements by highlighting these **key points** to community members, legislators, and code-making authorities.

Smoke alarms aren't enough

Make no mistake: smoke alarms are crucial and significantly cut the risk of dying in a home fire. But these devices do nothing to suppress a fire. Home fire sprinklers in coordination with smoke alarms have been proven to protect lives and property against fire. In fact, sprinklers cut the risk of dying in a home fire by an astounding **80 percent**.



Sprinklers do more than save lives

Sprinklers can also save your home. In fact, these devices can reduce the average property loss per home by about **70 percent**.



Home fires are a major problem in North America

Fire in the home poses a significant threat to the people of your community. On average, **2,500** people each year are dying in U.S. home fires. Further showcasing the enormity of this problem is that roughly **80 percent** of all fire deaths are the result of home fires.

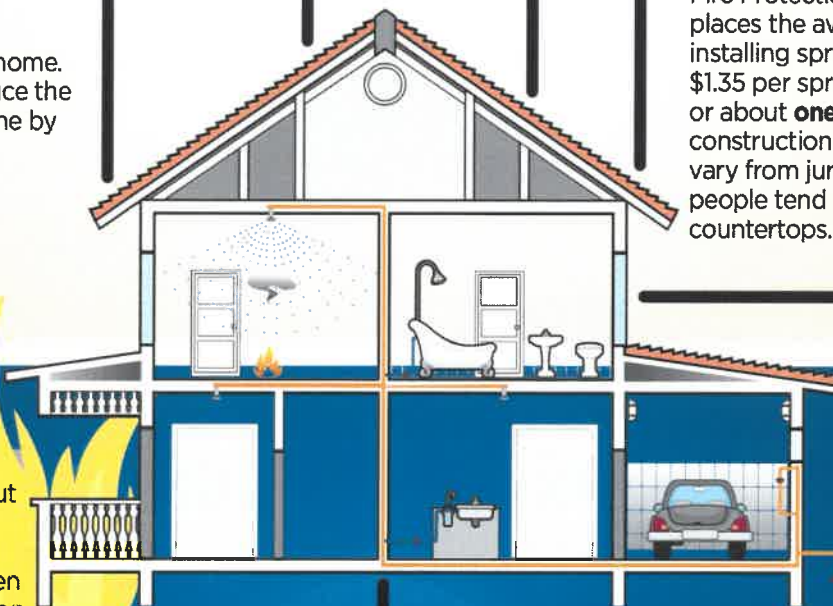


Home fire sprinklers are cost effective

A report commissioned by the Fire Protection Research Foundation places the average national cost of installing sprinklers in new homes at **\$1.35** per sprinklered square foot, or about **one percent** of the total construction cost. While costs can vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, people tend to pay more for granite countertops.

Beware of false claims

Sprinkler opponents like to tout that "newer homes are safer homes." In actuality, newer homes tend to have larger open spaces, lightweight construction materials, and furniture stuffed with combustible materials— all factors that exacerbate fire spread and lead to homes burning more quickly than ever before. These threats place both homeowners and firefighters at significant risk.



Dispel myths on sprinkler effectiveness

Hollywood has it wrong: when one home fire sprinkler goes off, the rest don't follow. Nearly **85 percent** of the time, only one sprinkler activates during a fire. And since sprinklers use significantly less water to suppress a fire than a fire hose, water damage is significantly reduced.



FireSprinklerInitiative.org

Visit NFPA's Fire Sprinkler Initiative website for more information.



FIRE SPRINKLER INITIATIVE
Bringing Safety Home

**Data referenced by NFPA and other sources*

Home Fire Sprinklers



Over 80% of fire deaths occur in the home. Home fire sprinklers can save lives. They respond quickly and effectively to fire, often extinguishing the fire before the fire department arrives. Only the sprinkler closest to the fire will activate, spraying water on the fire.

SAFETY TIPS

- » Home fire sprinklers protect lives by keeping fires small. In many situations a family who has survived a fire will also have their "home" to live in and enough of the items and space in their home to continue living their lives as they did before.
- » The cost of a home fire sprinkler system in a new home averages \$1.35 per sprinklered square foot totaling an amount similar to what is spent for carpet upgrades, paving stone driveway or a whirlpool bath.
Source: Fire Protection Research Foundation Study 2013.
- » A home fire sprinkler system can reduce the homeowner's insurance premium.
- » Fire departments typically use roughly 10 times as much water as a fire sprinkler would use to contain a fire.
Source: Fire Protection Research Foundation Study 2010.
- » Fire sprinklers are environmentally friendly. They can reduce the amount of water run-off and pollution, fire damage by up to 71%, and water usage to fight a home fire by as much as 91%.
Source: FM Global and Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition Study 2010.
- » Cigar smoke or burnt toast will not activate a fire sprinkler. Only the high temperature of a fire will activate the sprinkler.
- » A home fire sprinkler system is easy to maintain. Just inspect your home to make sure the sprinklers are not blocked by something that would prevent the water from coming out such as paint and be sure the main control valve is never turned off.
- » Home fire sprinklers are effective in cold and warm climates. Guidelines have been created for the proper installation of systems to avoid pipes freezing. A home fire sprinkler system should be winterized the same way a domestic water supply is winterized.

And Don't Forget...

- If **MOVING** into an apartment or condominium building, make sure common areas and individual apartments are sprinklered.
- If **BUILDING** a new home or remodeling an existing home, consider installing a home fire sprinkler system.

FACTS

- ❗ More than **2,500** people die in home fires each year.
- ❗ If a home fire occurs, the risk of dying decreases by about **80%** when the home is equipped with a fire sprinkler system.



Your Source for SAFETY Information www.nfpa.org/education
NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

The truth about home fire sprinklers

Fires in the home pose one of the biggest threats to the people of your community. In 2013, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated 1,240,000 fires. These fires caused 3,240 civilian deaths. Of those deaths, 83% occurred in the home, the very place people feel most safe.

All national model safety codes include fire sprinklers as a minimum safety requirement for new home construction. Homes built without sprinklers lack a crucial element of fire protection.

Because sprinklers have been around for so long, the evidence is clear that they are a proven way to protect lives and property against fires at home – responding quickly and effectively to the presence of a nearby fire, and requiring minimal maintenance by homeowners.

Fast Facts

- In 2013, there was a civilian fire death every 2 hours and 42 minutes in the United States.
- The risk of dying in a home fire decreases by about 80% if sprinklers are present.
- Home fire sprinklers reduce direct property damage by about 70%.
- The cost of installation averages \$1.35 per sprinklered square foot for new construction.

MYTH: “A smoke alarm provides enough protection.”

FACT: Smoke alarms alert occupants to the presence of danger, but do nothing to extinguish the fire. In a fire, sprinklers can control and may even extinguish a fire in less time than it would take the fire department to arrive.

MYTH: “Newer homes are safer homes.”

FACT: In a fire, lightweight construction materials, used in many modern homes, burn quicker and fail faster. New homes often contain modern furnishings made of synthetic materials which, in a fire, can create a highly toxic environment, greater fuel load, and faster fire propagation.

MYTH: “Home fire sprinklers often leak or activate accidentally.”

FACT: Leaks are very rare, and are no more likely than leaks from a home’s plumbing system. A sprinkler is calibrated to activate when it senses a significant heat change. They don’t operate in response to smoke, cooking vapors, steam, or the sound of a smoke alarm.

MYTH: “When a fire occurs, every sprinkler will activate and everything in the house will be ruined.”

FACT: In the event of a fire, typically only the sprinkler closest to the fire will activate, spraying water directly on the fire, leaving the rest of the house dry and secure. Roughly 85% of the time, just one sprinkler operates.

MYTH: “Sprinklers are unattractive and will ruin the aesthetics of the home.”

FACT: New home fire sprinkler models are very unobtrusive, can be mounted flush with walls or ceilings, and can be concealed behind decorative covers.

MYTH: “Sprinklers are not practical in colder climates, as the pipes will freeze and cause water damage.”

FACT: With proper installation, sprinklers will not freeze. NFPA 13D, *Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems in One- and Two-Family Dwellings and Manufactured Homes*, includes guidelines on proper insulation to prevent pipes from freezing.

MYTH: “The water damage caused by sprinklers will be more extensive than fire damage.”

FACT: In a fire, sprinklers quickly control heat and smoke. Any water damage from the sprinkler will be much less severe than the damage caused by water from firefighting hose lines. Fire departments use up to 10 times as much water to extinguish a home fire as fire sprinklers would use to extinguish the same fire.

Free information about home fire sprinklers



The Fire Sprinkler Initiative (FSI), a project of the National Fire Protection Association, aims to increase the number of new, one- and two-family homes protected by sprinklers. The FSI website offers free research and resources to help advocates promote the fact that sprinklers are necessary in new construction.
www.firesprinklerinitiative.org



The Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (HFSC) is a leading resource for accurate, noncommercial information and materials about home fire sprinklers for consumers, the fire service, builders, and other professionals. HFSC offers free educational materials about sprinklers and how they provide affordable protection to your community.
www.homefiresprinkler.org