

Residential Fire Sprinklers

Statement
by the
American Fire Sprinkler Association
Dallas, Texas

The fire death problem in the United States is directly related to fires in homes. NFPA statistics consistently show that approximately eighty percent of all fire deaths occur in the home. To address the fire death problem in the U. S., we must address fires in homes.

All national model codes now contain provisions for residential fire sprinklers in new homes. For more than a century automatic fire sprinklers have saved lives and protected property. There has never been a multiple death from fire in a structure protected with a properly installed and maintained fire sprinkler system. Fire sprinklers can and do prevent tragedies every day.

Residential fire sprinklers extend benefits to the community. Less water is used in fighting fires. Fewer fires results in less landfill and less air pollution. Fire sprinkler systems allow greater design freedoms for development, with provisions for features such as fewer fire hydrants, narrower streets, reduced dwelling separation requirements, and higher densities. Because most line-of-duty deaths of firefighters occur in residential fires, lives of firefighters will be saved. The direct and indirect costs associated with fire fatalities can be greatly diminished.

For only a small fraction of the total cost of construction a home can be made fire safe through the installation of a residential fire sprinkler system, and even this small amount can be more than offset by means of the design freedoms mentioned above.

The American Fire Sprinkler Association applauds the action by the International Code Council to include provisions in the International Residential Code to require automatic fire sprinklers in all new homes built after January 2011. In addition, AFSA endorses and commends the efforts of the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition to educate homebuilders, the fire service and the general public on the benefits of residential fire sprinklers, and endorses the initiative of the National Fire Protection Association to seek requirements for sprinklers in new homes.