

Some issues really are about life and death.



THE FACTS ARE THESE: If today is a typical day, eight people will die in a fire. And if there were sprinklers in every home, fewer of those people would die.

Sadly, the lack of fire sprinkler systems hits the most vulnerable the hardest: the elderly and disabled, children and beloved pets.

The lack of sprinklers puts firefighters—100 of whom die each year responding to home fires—at far greater risk. We lose more firefighters this way than any other industrialized country.

If there were a fire sprinkler system in every home, there would be less direct property damage and fewer indirect losses such as business interruptions. Direct property damage from fires costs \$47 billion a year.

A Department of Commerce Study concluded that houses equipped with *smoke alarms and a fire sprinkler system experienced 100% fewer civilian fatalities, and 57% fewer civilian injuries than homes equipped with only smoke alarms.*

Why we want your support for this life-saving technology in every home

Like automobile airbags, residential sprinkler systems are a proven technology that offers many lifesaving and economic benefits. And, just as requiring airbags met with resistance at one time, some groups are currently opposing the effort to require this life saving technology in new residential home construction in Minnesota.

Read why the International Residential Code for One & Two-Family Dwellings (IRC) sprinkler provision needs your attention and support in Minnesota.

Shouldn't This Be A No-Brainer?

Yes. But an attempt to block the installation of sprinkler systems in all new residential home construction in Minnesota is underway. The opposition groups, including some homebuilding organizations, hope to not only block the adoption of the sprinkler provision but also to prevent a deliberative process allowing for its review and debate.

What are the costs realized by fires in the home?

As stated above, every day, an average of eight people die in fires in the U.S. – nearly 3,000 citizens each year. More than 85% of these tragic deaths occur inside the home. And more than 100 firefighters die responding to *home* fires every year in the U.S. *That's more than in any other industrialized country.* The direct property damage is **\$7.4 billion** annually. And indirect losses, like business interruption, are above and beyond that figure. Simply put, these tragedies and losses can be mitigated by the adoption of the sprinkler provision.



Do smoke detectors alone provide enough protection?

While smoke detector requirements are good policy, real world research says that a family is 82% less likely to die in a house fire if sprinklers and working smoke alarms are both present. A U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) study supports these findings, concluding that houses equipped with *smoke alarms and a fire sprinkler system experienced 100% fewer civilian fatalities, and 57% fewer civilian injuries than homes equipped with only smoke alarms.*

What is the true cost of installing a sprinkler system in new home construction? How does that compare to other home amenities?

For new home construction in Minnesota, the independent Fire Protection Research Foundation estimates an average cost of \$1.61 per square foot, or \$3,864 for a 2400 square foot home. Contrast this cost with expensive amenities now commonplace in homes, such as granite countertops, and the cost for sprinkler systems is put into a clearer perspective.

Where sprinkler ordinances are in effect, what has been the long-term impact and observations?

The real world advantages of home sprinkler requirements are startling. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), sprinklers reduce the average property loss by 50-66% per fire.

In Scottsdale, Arizona, where sprinkler requirements have been in effect for more than 15 years, the average fire loss in a home without sprinklers is **\$45,019**. The average loss in a sprinkler protected home is **\$2,166**.



What are the long-term economic benefits for a homeowner and the community?

Insurance companies recognize the value of a properly installed residential sprinkler system in the same way they recognize the value of a properly installed home security system. Homeowner premiums are reduced when a home is *measurably proven* safer. Homeowner premiums for homes with sprinkler systems are reduced by between 5 and 20%. *If the cost of a new sprinkler system is amortized over the life of a new 30-year mortgage, the system will pay for itself and save lives!*

Moreover, fire departments estimate that the cost of providing fire protection to a sprinkler community will, over time, decrease and ultimately save taxpayers millions.

In Minnesota, cities such as Plymouth, Minnetonka, Woodbury, Bloomington, and Blaine are able to operate volunteer, or predominantly volunteer fire departments in large part due to the use of fire sprinklers in multi-family and apartment dwellings. *Extending them to homes can save millions in fire department budgets in the future because less equipment and fewer firefighters will be needed.*

Do sprinkler systems result in excessive water damage to homes?

The technology behind modern sprinkler systems is robust and extremely reliable. They require absolutely zero regular maintenance. And the odds of an accidental discharge are one in 16 million – *less likely than the chance of being hit from parts falling from an airplane!*

Bottom line: sprinklers greatly *reduce* the likelihood of water damage in home fires. While a sprinkler head releases 8-16 gallons per minute, a single fire hose discharges approximately 150 gallons per minute.

Why are sprinkler systems needed now in new home construction more than ever?

The unfortunate truth about new home construction as opposed to older “legacy” construction practices: the use of lightweight floor and ceiling trusses combined with “great room” designs and more combustible contents mean more fire danger. Underwriter’s Laboratory (UL) tests also show that fires in new, open floor plan homes “free burn” in larger spaces that are equipped with newer, hotter burning furnishings as well as big screen electronics that significantly increase fire load.



NIST says that escape time in new homes is estimated to be just 3 minutes, as opposed to 17 minutes in older homes with stronger trusses and more interior walls that help to contain fires. And new floor trusses fail on a regular basis in less than 15 minutes – about the time it takes for a fire department to arrive and set up firefighting equipment.

NIST reports a 292% increase in firefighter death due to homes collapsing during the past decade that these products have been used. This is not a coincidence.





THE MAJORITY OF VICTIMS OF HOME FIRES are the most vulnerable among us – our children, the elderly, disabled and loyal family pets. You must take a stand and be heard on this important issue.

The costs are modest. The investment is sound. And the cost of inaction will be measured in lives lost.

Stand together with us and make a difference.



Fire Marshals Association of Minnesota | Minnesota State Fire Chiefs Association
Minnesota State Fire Department Association | Minnesota Professional Firefighters
National Fire Sprinkler Association Minnesota Chapter