

IT'S
TIME

SPRINKLERS

The Fire Chief's Role

Help guide your community to
acceptance & implementation
of the new building & fire code



Look inside for:

- ✓ Next steps to take for adoption of codes with sprinkler requirements
- ✓ How to talk to the media and other groups about fire sprinklers
- ✓ Leading the sprinkler adoption effort in your community
- ✓ Fire sprinkler myths debunked
- ✓ Where to find educational resources about fire sprinklers
- ✓ Why you should get involved in NFSA and the IAFC's Fire & Life Safety Section

This pull-out-and-save
resource sponsored by
Partners in Progress:



How Did We Get Here?

In fall 2008, the International Code Council (ICC) voted with a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority to require fire sprinklers in all new one- and two-family dwellings. This historic vote was a long time in coming. Some major milestones along the way include:

1930s

Grinnell Company first publicly promotes residential fire sprinklers, but the systems were not widely installed.

March 1968

The United States Congress creates the National Commission on Fire Prevention and Control.

May 4, 1973

The commission issues its comprehensive report, "AMERICA BURNING," which points out that almost seven of every 10 fires occurred in residential occupancies and that 84 percent of the fire deaths in building fires occurred in residential occupancies. The commission voices support for automatic extinguishing systems.

1975

NFPA 13D: Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems in One- and Two-Family Dwellings and Mobile Homes is adopted and published.

1980

As a result of multiple research studies and full-scale fire tests, NFPA 13D is rewritten to require the use of fast-response residential sprinklers. Subsequent editions have resulted in changes to the rules relating to design and installation. Communities across the U.S. begin mandating the installation of automatic fire sprinklers in residential occupancies.

2006

Three major NFPA codes are changed to include the requirement for fire sprinklers in new construction of one- and two-family dwellings (NFPA 1, NFPA 101 and NFPA 5000).

2007

A vote that would have required fire sprinklers in all new one- and two-family dwellings fails to pass at the ICC hearings.

2008

The ICC again votes on the sprinkler issue and this time, a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority is achieved. **Fire sprinklers will be required by ICC's International Residential Code (IRC) in all townhouses upon the adoption of the 2009 IRC, and all new one- and two-family dwellings, effective Jan. 1, 2011.**

In December, the ICC Appeals Board unanimously denied the National Association of Home Builders' claim that there were improprieties and/or procedural violations involved in the vote. Its decision clears the way for the code implementation and reinforces the ICC membership's recognition of the integral role sprinklers play in home fire safety.

The problem:

Most jurisdictions don't adopt the latest fire and building codes. That's why you must get involved.

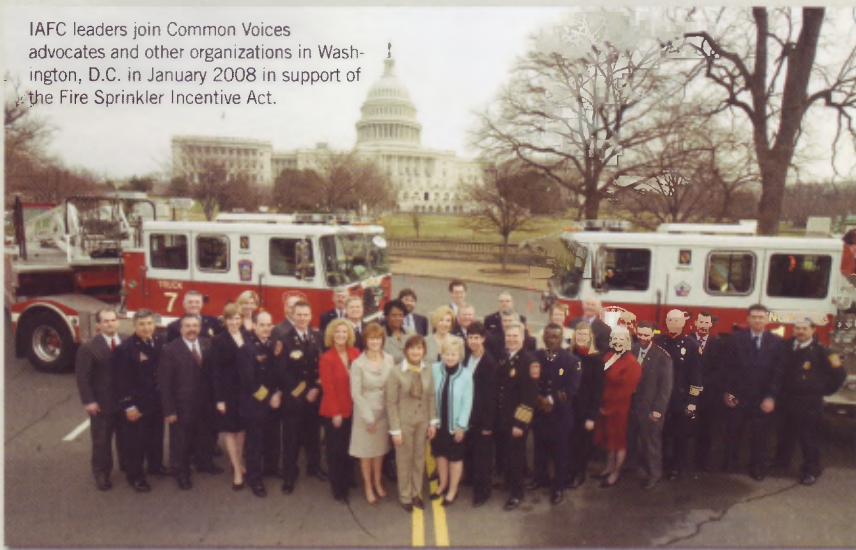
The Fire Chief's Role

Fire protection initiatives will not succeed without the support and advocacy of the fire chief and the fire department. As the head spokesperson for fire protection in the community, you must be able to speak fluently about the importance of fire sprinklers and to educate key stakeholders. Sure, your fire marshal may be the lead technical person on this matter, but never forget you are the leader and the big-picture person in this battle for life safety.

Invest the time to familiarize yourself with:

- The requirements in the new codes
- The reasons behind the new codes
- The process for getting your local jurisdiction to adopt the latest NFPA and IRC codes
- How growth and economic times will affect your community's need for and ability to adopt fire sprinklers
- How residential sprinklers will affect fire department staffing levels and response times

IAFC leaders join Common Voices advocates and other organizations in Washington, D.C. in January 2008 in support of the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act.



National Fire Sprinkler Association

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Patterson, NY 12563
845/878-420
www.nfsa.org
info@nfsa.org

International Association of Fire Chiefs

4025 Fair Ridge Drive,
Ste. 300
Fairfax, VA 22033-2868
703/273-0911
www.iafc.org

Common Voices/ Fire Team USA

108 Centre St.
Pleasant View, TN 37146
615/533-0305
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www.fireadvocates.org
www.fireteamusa.org

ABOUT THE COVER: Fire Marshal David Kerr of the Plano (Texas) Fire Department discusses the features of the sprinkler system installed in his home. Photo Glen Ellman

Debunking the Myths: Fire Sprinkler Talking Points

When you're in front of the media, city councils, homebuilders' associations or homeowners, you need to know the facts about fire sprinklers and how to respond to common arguments. Following are just a few points these groups may make and how to rebut them.

Point: Mandating sprinklers for all homes nationwide or in any jurisdiction has not been demonstrated to be a cost-effective improvement to fire safety in homes meeting today's residential building codes.

Counterpoint: Fire sprinklers installed in one- and two-family homes are exceptionally cost-effective. For example, data from Scottsdale, Ariz., shows an average loss with fire sprinklers present at \$2,166 and non-sprinkler losses at \$45,019. Stated another way: When sprinklers are present, there's a 95.2% reduction in loss.

Point: There have been significant improvements to the fire safety of homes over the past few decades leading to a dramatic and continued decrease in fire incidents, injury, death and property loss. There is no data to suggest that sprinklers will significantly improve this decline.

Counterpoint: While the success of smoke detection devices has been remarkable, smoke detectors are effective only to the point where the occupants are cognitively and physically capable to respond in the very limited timeframe of rapid fire growth. National statistics have shown disproportionate fire deaths for the young and the elderly for decades. A detailed study by the non-stakeholders National Institute for Science and Technology (NIST) reported more than 20 years ago that by

placing a fire sprinkler next to the smoke detector, fire deaths in our nation would reduce by 83%. And since this report, fire sprinkler technology has only advanced.

Point: The National Association of Home Builders supports fire safety education programs for consumers coupled with cost-effective residential fire protection technologies that are required by current codes. NAHB believes this to be the most effective and reasonable means of preventing residential fires and reducing death, injury and property loss.

Counterpoint: Fire sprinklers *are* low cost systems. According to a 2008 Home Fire Sprinkler Cost Assessment report by the Fire Protection Research Foundation, the cost to the home builder to install a fire sprinkler system averaged \$1.61 per sprinklered square foot.

Point: Maintenance adds additional costs, though this is difficult to determine because the sprinkler industry has not been clear on exactly what maintenance is required, its frequency and how it must be performed.

Counterpoint: There is no substantive maintenance for a residential fire sprinkler system. The owner is responsible for maintaining the system's readiness, just as they're responsible for maintaining other appliances in their homes. The simple task of periodically observing the water pressure gauge—if it reads zero, call a contractor—is neither onerous nor expensive.

For more, see the guidebook "Residential Fire Sprinklers: A Step-by-Step Approach for Communities," available through the NFSA and the IAFC.

Fire Sprinkler Facts

- Eight out of 10 fire deaths occur in the home.
- Fire sprinklers save lives, reduce property loss and can even help cut homeowner insurance premiums.
- Home fire sprinklers can contain and may even extinguish a fire in less time than it would take the fire department to arrive on the scene.
- Installing both smoke alarms and a fire sprinkler system reduces the risk of home fire death by 82 percent, relative to having neither.
- Only the sprinkler closest to the fire will activate, spraying water directly on the fire. Ninety percent of fires are contained by the operation of just one sprinkler.
- The national average for home fire sprinkler systems costs is 1–1.5 percent of the total building cost in new construction.
- Home fire sprinklers use only a small fraction of the water used by fire department hoses.
- Modern residential sprinklers are inconspicuous and can be mounted flush with walls or ceilings.

Common Voices is here to help you!

Looking for additional ways to spread the fire sprinkler message in your community? Common Voices can help put a personal face on the need for residential fire sprinklers.

Common Voices is an Advocates' Coalition sponsored by the National Fire Sprinkler Association. The advocates use their personal experiences with home fires to illustrate the need for residential fire sprinklers. And they're available to help you be proactive with fire sprinkler legislation.

Common Voices has developed five new public service announcements (PSA) that are available for download at www.fireadvocates.org or on YouTube.



Common Voices has recently released five new PSAs, available at www.fireadvocates.org.

Members of the Coalition are also available to speak and provide testimony where needed. If you would like to request an appearance of a Coalition member, please contact us at 615/533-0305 or via e-mail at vickiepritchett@aol.com.

Get Involved!

In the fight to reduce home fires and associated losses, fire chiefs won't be successful without the right information and relationships to help them spread the fire safety and sprinkler message. That's why you should consider getting involved in the IAFC's Fire & Life Safety Section and the National Fire Sprinkler Association.

The IAFC's Fire & Life Safety Section (FLSS)

The FLSS is specifically tailored to meet your needs and keep you in-the-know on critical industry issues concerning fire prevention and public safety education. Currently the FLSS is monitoring such critical issues as fire-safe cigarettes, residential sprinklers, smoke detectors, new smoke characterization study, lightweight and wood-truss construction, CO detectors, ethanol safety issues, biodiesel, fire retardants and more!

FLSS' mission is to provide leadership and vision to chief fire officers and managers to reduce the risk of injury and loss of life and property in their communities through effective fire-prevention efforts.



**JOIN
TODAY!**

www.iafc.org/join
or 866/385-9110

The National Fire Sprinkler Association Subscriber Membership

Another membership with direct value for those who care about fire prevention: Subscriber member of the NFSA. Membership is \$85 per year and includes the following benefits:

- *Engineering Services.* Have a code question? Call the expert of the day for a direct answer to your specific question.
- *Sprinkler Quarterly.* Published six times a year, this four-color magazine is packed with articles and information from leading fire sprinkler experts.
- *Sprinkler Technotes.* Published bi-monthly, this publication keeps members up-to-date on changes and proposed changes to fire sprinkler codes and standards, as well as the rapidly developing fire protection technology.
- *Grass Roots.* This monthly newsletter covers the local, state, regional and national activities of the NFSA.
- *Regional Reports.* Every month our regional operations team will keep you informed of local and national legislation, updates in codes and standards and other updates.



**JOIN
TODAY!**

[www.nfsa.org/
departments/
membership](http://www.nfsa.org/departments/membership)

Looking for additional resources?

Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition - www.homefiresprinkler.org

Provides supplies to help you educate stakeholders within your community, including the fire service, building officials, homebuilders, policy makers, realtors, water purveyors, and insurance agents. Order online today!

Home Safety Council – www.homesafetycouncil.org

Visit www.mysafehome.org to view a virtual reality home that demonstrates the advantages of home fire sprinklers.

Fire Team USA – www.fireteamusa.com

Offering workshops across the country.

Register today! 2009 confirmed dates include:

- Mississippi, Jan. 28–29
- Illinois, Feb. 3–4
- Texas, March 18–19
- West Virginia, April 15–16
- Florida, May 6–7
- Kansas, June 17–18
- Delaware, June 17–18
- Virginia, TBA



National Codes

Both International Code Council (ICC) and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) codes now include residential sprinkler requirements.

History was made in September 2008, with RB64 and RB66 passing with $\frac{2}{3}$ majority votes. RB64 includes the installation of fire sprinklers in new construction of one- and two-family dwellings with an implementation date of Jan. 1, 2011.

RB66 includes the installation of fire sprinklers in townhomes with no delayed implementation date. For more information, visit www.iccsafe.org

NFPA codes have included fire sprinklers since 2006 in NFPA 1 and NFPA 101. For more information, visit www.nfpa.org.

Community Fire Protection Timeline ... Proactive Leadership Includes Fire Sprinklers!

2009 IRC Code
published –
Spring 2009

Community
adoption
begins – 2009

Single-family home
implementation
date – Jan. 1, 2011

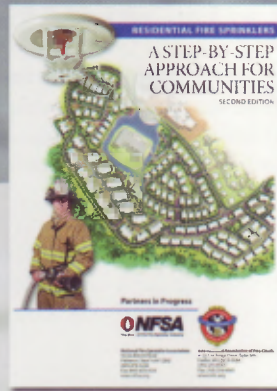


NFSA & IAFC:

Partnering to bring you the fire sprinkler resources you need!

The Second Edition of *Residential Fire Sprinklers: A Step-By-Step Approach for Communities* and the updated CD/DVD set, *Look Up For Safety*, are available now!

The updated resources were released in December 2008 and build upon the original editions. "We are pleased to once again partner with the IAFC to bring this important document to both fire service and community leaders across America," says NFSA President John Viniello.



The revised guide brings together all of the latest information for community leaders who wish to pass fire sprinkler legislation or adopt a national code. Success stories from communities across the nation highlight specific steps and how-to advice from those who have successfully led fire sprinkler adoption efforts.

Get your copy now!

Visit www.nfsa.org or www.iafc.org

"We as fire chiefs possess a unique capacity to shape the lives of those we serve. If we don't seek the reduction of fire deaths and injuries through residential fire sprinklers, then we will continue to live in a country that suffers needlessly from fire. Our journey must not be determined by the will of others, but by those who see the impact fire has on our daily lives. Won't you help us help others by joining the effort to bring residential fire sprinklers to every community? Get involved—The time is now!"

—Alan Perdue
Director, Guilford County (N.C.) Emergency Services
International Director, IAFC Fire & Life Safety Section