



Smoke Detectors & Fire Sprinklers – Saving Lives and Property Every Day!!

Smoke detectors are the most important early notification device in your home to alert you to a fire! But it takes more than changing the battery at least once a year to ensure that you and your family are properly protected. Many fire deaths in homes occur where there were either no smoke detectors present or the detectors did not work. This is not acceptable! Residential fire sprinklers, in conjunction with smoke detectors, give you the best chance of surviving a fire and help to minimize the devastating effects of fire. Please read the important information on both sides of this paper!

Did You Know?

Most smoke detector manufacturers recommend that detectors be replaced at least every ten years. Some recommend replacement even sooner. Do you know how old your detectors are? If you don't know how old they are or, if they are more than 10 years old, now is a great time to replace them! But did you know there will soon be new requirements for the type of smoke detectors you install in your home?

Technology is Good!

Effective April 1, 2010, the State Fire Marshal is requiring all new residential construction to be equipped with dual-sensor smoke detectors. So how are these detectors different from what I have in my home now? Most detectors in homes currently use 'ionization' technology to detect the smoke. Ionization detectors are best at the early detection of rapidly spreading, flaming fires. Some homes may have detectors that use 'photoelectric' technology to detect the smoke. Photoelectric detectors are best at the early detection of slow burning, smoldering fires. Dual-sensor smoke detectors combine both technologies into one detector.

What if My Detectors Don't Need to be Replaced Right Now?

If the ionization or photoelectric smoke detectors in your home currently meet all the manufacturer's recommendations, you are not required to immediately replace them with dual-sensor detectors. However, when you have a detector that needs to be replaced, **it needs be replaced with a dual-sensor detector.**

Will I Notice Anything Different with the Dual-Sensor Detectors?

Not really. The appearance, mounting instructions, maintenance, and testing procedures mimic the detectors you currently have in your home. It is important that you read and follow the manufacturer's recommendations that come with the dual-sensor detector.

Please do your part to help reduce the number of fire injuries and death. Properly installed and maintained smoke alarms are the key to ensuring early notification in the event of a fire. Dual-sensor smoke detectors and residential fire sprinklers are the best ways to improve the chance of surviving in a fire!

Other Important Safety Tips

- **Develop and practice a home fire escape plan!**
- **Never leave food unattended on the stove. Cooking is the leading cause of home fires!**

RESIDENTIAL FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM FACTS

Some homeowners are reluctant to install sprinklers because they don't know the facts about their operation and/or are misled by anti-fire sprinkler groups. Currently, most single-family homes are not required to have fire sprinkler systems installed. However, the Urbandale Fire Department strongly encourages residents to install a fire sprinkler system in their home and support the requirement for these systems in new homes that are built.

Myth: Requiring fire sprinklers makes housing "unaffordable."

Fact: A recent study conducted by the Fire Protection Research Foundation showed the average cost for a fire sprinkler system in a new home is \$1.61/square foot*. Compare that to the cost/square foot of granite counter tops, carpeting, tile, and other features for a new home.

Myth: Sprinklers go off accidentally, causing unnecessary water damage.

Fact: Accidental sprinkler discharge is extremely rare. And, despite the Hollywood "sight gags," burned toast and cigarette smoke will not trigger sprinkler operation. Each sprinkler works independently and only in response to the heat of the fire.

Myth: A smoke alarm provides enough protection.

Fact: Smoke alarms alert occupants to the presence of danger, but do nothing to extinguish the fire. Home fire sprinkler systems respond quickly to reduce heat, flames, and smoke from a fire, giving residents valuable time to get out safely. If you have a reported fire in your home, the risk of dying decreases by about 80 percent when sprinklers are present.

Myth: Fires are a problem exclusive to older homes.

Fact: The leading causes of fires in both old and new homes are directly related to human behavior, such as:

- cooking (both attended and unattended)
- heating fires (including space heaters)
- careless smoking
- children playing with matches and lighters

None of these are related to the age of the house! In addition, the materials used in home construction today are prone to collapse sooner when exposed to fire. This gives occupants less time to escape and firefighters even less time to perform a rescue.

SPRINKLERS: A SAFE, SMART CHOICE

Several recent studies have shown that home fire sprinklers save lives, reduce property loss and can even help cut homeowners' insurance premiums. Not only do home fire sprinklers dramatically reduce the risk of home fire deaths, they also decrease fire damage by as much as two-thirds when compared to homes without sprinklers.

Many communities across the U.S. are seeing impressive results from installing home fire sprinklers in all new construction. In Scottsdale, AZ fire sprinklers have been required in all new homes since 1986. Today, more than 40,000 homes in Scottsdale are protected with fire sprinklers. There have been no deaths in sprinklered homes, while 13 people died in homes without sprinklers. There was less fire damage in the homes with sprinklers. The average fire loss per sprinklered incident was \$2,166 compared to more than \$45,000 loss per fire in homes without fire sprinklers**. There are also over 60 municipalities in the Chicago area that have residential fire sprinkler ordinances, and several in the Washington D.C. area. States such as California, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Maryland will soon require all new homes to have fire sprinklers.

* A copy of this study can be downloaded from www.nfpa.org or contact UFD for a copy.

** A copy of this report can be obtained from the Urbandale Fire Dept.