



Residential Fire Safety Institute

Operation Life Safety

"Working Together for a Lifesaving Solution"

OLS NEWSFLASH

JUNE 2010

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Residential Sprinklers In The News...

CANADA:

[Legislation Introduced to Require Sprinklers in All Senior Care Facilities](#)

Niagara Falls MPP Kim Craitor has introduced legislation that would require all seniors' care facilities to be outfitted with fire sprinkler systems. Currently, only those facilities built after 1997 are required by law to be equipped with sprinklers. Craitor's private member's bill, which seeks to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, received first reading Wednesday. "For me, this is the right thing to do," said Craitor. "I just believe the homes that we have our seniors in should be properly protected. Sprinkler alarm systems, to me, are an appropriate form of protection."

FLORIDA:

[Rentals' Sprinkler Policy is Changed](#)

A new Florida law prohibits local governments from requiring sprinklers in homes solely because they are used as vacation rentals. Gov. Charlie Crist signed the bill last week, overturning a year-old state fire marshal rule and affecting thousands of property owners who have turned to vacation rentals to earn money from properties they cannot sell.

ILLINOIS:

[Illinois Association of Realtors Conducts Public Opinion Survey on Fire Sprinkler Mandate](#)

The IAR Advocacy Program decided to gauge public attitudes on this local policy proposal. In early May, a public opinion survey was conducted in two regions of Illinois: northeastern Illinois and central Illinois. What the survey results strongly indicate is that there is very little public support in either region for this requirement. The phone survey respondents (likely voters) were asked to respond to the following two statements:

- A) Potential homebuyers should have the option to purchase an indoor sprinkler system if they choose.
- B) The government should require potential homebuyers to have indoor sprinkler systems installed in their new home.

[Wilmette Passes Fire Sprinkler Ordinance Due to Concerns With Lightweight Construction](#)

Officials from Wilmette, Illinois, passed the village's first residential fire sprinkler ordinance requiring fire sprinklers in all new homes that are being built with lightweight construction. With the passage of this ordinance, the Village of Wilmette becomes the 67th jurisdiction in Illinois to pass residential fire sprinkler legislation. Wilmette's residential fire sprinkler ordinance is the first occasion that a municipality or fire district has passed such an ordinance specifically over concerns with lightweight construction. For years, Wilmette has required lightweight construction commercial buildings to post placards that alert firefighters to the presence of engineered-wood trusses and joint assemblies. Now, the village is focusing on one- and two-family homes by requiring fire sprinklers after a recent study confirmed the village's suspicions about lightweight construction.

MASSACHUSETTS:

[Eatery sues city over sprinklers](#)

A Haverhill, MA, restaurant has filed a lawsuit against the city and fire Chief Richard Borden over his insistence that the business install a sprinkler system. The situation is complicated by City Solicitor William Cox's opinion that the Blue Finn Grille is not required by law to put in sprinklers because it seats fewer than 100 customers. The restaurant initially agreed to install a sprinkler system last August, but shortly thereafter retracted the offer because Bauer Engineering, a fire protection consulting firm, advised the business that such a system is not required by state law, the lawsuit said.

MARYLAND:

[Bill would require sprinklers for new homes, rehabs](#)

A Baltimore City Council committee will hear a proposal this morning to require fire sprinkler systems in new homes and -- more significantly for a city chock-full of aging rowhomes -- in most renovations. City Councilwoman Mary Pat Clarke, who sponsored the bill with Councilman Warren Branch, said she wants to prevent fire deaths. [Rehabs of one- or two-unit homes would require sprinklers](#) if the work covers at least 30 percent of the building's gross floor area or adds 30 percent more space. Story Continued Here

MICHIGAN:

[NFSA Responds to Habitat for Humanity's Campaign Against Life-Saving Fire Sprinklers](#)

The National Fire Sprinkler Association delivered the following letter to Habitat for Humanity International CEO Jonathan Reckford, in response to that organization's campaigning against governmental adoption of the recently passed International Residential Code (IRC). "Dear Mr. Reckford, Your organization's recent opposition to the fire sprinkler mandate in Michigan has not gone unnoticed. We at NFSA are extremely disheartened with your stand against the most valuable fire safety device a residence can contain. We fail to understand how an organization dedicated to helping humanity can take a stand against something proven to save lives, especially since many of the people waiting for Habitat for Humanity homes lost their original place of residence in a fire. There has never been a multiple fatality in any building with a properly operating fire sprinkler system. NEVER."

OREGON:

[Oregon Considers Fire Sprinkler Mandate](#)

The Oregon Building Codes Division has begun developing a proposal for a

residential specialty code for next year, using the 2009 international code as its model. But first, the Oregon Building Officials Association is soliciting input from local governments. Deschutes County commissioners are scheduled to discuss the issue at Wednesday afternoon's work session to give staff direction before it offers the requested input.

[Home Sprinkler Advocate Voices Opposite Opinion](#)

My piece on home sprinklers, published on 15 May, caused a bit of a stir among those who endorse the mandatory use of sprinklers in the home. A fire marshal based in Oregon wrote me a note and I'd like to feature it here at this time. Be sure to read my reply at the end. Nick Markowitz - Nick's Fire & Electrical Safety Blog

PENNSYLVANIA:

OP-ED [Sprinkler Systems Needed](#) by John R. Waters

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has mandated that local government provide for fire protection in their communities, yet there are attempts to limit the authority of those same local governments by prohibiting the implementation of a community fire protection plan which includes a requirement for residential fire sprinkler systems. Clearly, one should not give responsibility without the corresponding authority.

Letter to the Editor: [Fire Sprinklers are a life-safety Device](#)

Cumberland County Volunteer Firefighters Association

Cumberland County fire departments are stretched like never before. Although we are fast to respond, fire departments cannot travel to and make rescues from fires within four minutes of the fire starting. Sprinklers go a long way toward relieving pressure on responders and taxpayers. The Pennsylvania Builders Association is putting its profits ahead of the safety of residents and firefighters by conducting a lobbying effort full of propaganda and misinformation, which will bring Pennsylvania's homes below national building code standards.

SOUTH CAROLINA:

OP-ED: [Residential Fire Sprinklers - Discussing the Impacts of H.4663](#)

There's been a lot of discussion about H.4663 regarding the new construction requirements for residential fire sprinkler systems. Some say it's turning South Carolina in to a "Nanny State," while others tout sprinklers' safety benefits. In the interest of full disclosure, I represent two Upstate fire districts. While that gives me a certain insight in to the fire protection implications for the bill, I also have information about the legislation's financial implications. Since that seems to be what the legislation's opposition is focusing on, that's what I'll focus on, too.

[South Carolina delays Sprinkler Requirement until 2014](#)

Gov. Mark Sanford on Monday signed into law a bill that delays until January 2014 a requirement that new homes be built with fire sprinkler systems. As reported by the [HBA of Greenville...](#)

[SC House concurs with sprinkler bill \(AUDIO\)](#)

TENNESSEE:

[Franklin consider tougher sprinkler rules](#)

Franklin, Tennessee, City Aldermen are set to adopt the new 2009 International Residential Building Code in the weeks ahead. Franklin must periodically update its building code requirements and now uses the 2006 code. Aldermen will have a special session devoted to fire sprinklers sometime later this summer and will adopt that measure separately from the larger code. Franklin leaders can choose

to opt out of any part of the code. "It's a board decision and a community dialogue," said Eric Stuckey, city administrator.

[Similar story - Chattanooga, Tenn.](#)

TEXAS:

[Sprinkler incentive package narrowly passes](#)

The Rowlett, Texas, city council voted 4-3 to pass an incentive package to encourage new home builders to install residential fire sprinkler systems. "Fire sprinklers are a wonderful thing. I think we need more of them in homes. If I had my preference I would simply require them. (Unfortunately we are) prohibited by the state from doing so. Staff has presented (the cost as) \$2,200 to \$2,300 per home. That's millions of dollars that would have to come from the citizens. At the end of the day the citizens would be the one subsidizing them. I don't think the citizens should have to pay the cost to get it done," Councilman Chris Kilgore said.

Carbon Monoxide Protection In the News...

[Oregon Requires CO Detectors in Rentals](#)

A state law requiring landlords to equip residential rental units with carbon monoxide (CO) alarms goes into effect July 1. Under the new law, landlords who enter into rental agreements creating new tenancies are required to ensure that their properties have one or more properly functioning CO alarms in or near all sleeping areas. Only residential units that contain a source of CO or are situated within structures that contain a source of the poisonous gas are subject to the law. This includes units in structures that have attached garages or may be connected by ventilation or ducts to areas with potential CO sources such as heaters, furnaces, fireplaces and fuel-burning cooking sources.

Training/Reports/Tools...

Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition reaches out to homebuilders with education

A video titled "You've got questions; we've got answers" is intended to help homebuilders understand more about home fire sprinkler systems. It was sent to more than 80,000 members of the home building industry on May 18th. [Click here to watch the video.](#)

[NFPA: Home Fires Account for 92 Percent of Structure Fire Deaths](#)

According to a new National Fire Protection Association study called [Home Structure Fires](#), home fires account for 92 percent of fire deaths that occur in structures. These fires cause an average of 2,840 civilian deaths each year. "This study strongly underscores the need to aggressively work to reduce the number of home fires in this country in order to save lives from fire," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of communications for NFPA.