



Residential Fire Safety Institute

Operation Life Safety

"Working Together for a Lifesaving Solution"

OLS NEWSFLASH

March 2010

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BREAKING NEWS

Residential Fire Sprinklers Will Not Be Challenged In The ICC Final Action Hearings In May

WASHINGTON, DC - March 16, 2010

The final action hearing agenda for the 2012 International Residential Code (IRC) has been released by the International Code Council (ICC), and the IRC Fire Sprinkler Coalition is pleased to report that there were no public comments challenging code requirements for residential fire sprinklers. Accordingly, under ICC regulations, requirements for residential sprinklers will not be subject to debate at ICC's final action hearing in Dallas in May. Instead, proposals to rescind sprinkler requirements from the IRC will be automatically disapproved, without discussion, as part of a consent agenda. For the complete details, see: [IRC Fire Sprinkler Coalition Press Release](#)

Preparations Under Way for the ICC Final Action Code Hearings: Dallas, May 14 - 23

Preparations for the International Code Council's 2010 Spring Group A Final Action Hearings are in full swing! This year's Spring Hearings in Dallas, Texas, offer you and your members the opportunity to affect the future of building safety and fire prevention. But in order to make this year's hearings a complete success, we need your help. We would appreciate it if you would distribute the hearings press release to your chapter members or constituents. If you could post this information on your website, that would also be extremely helpful. Please [click here](#) to download the press release. It contains details about the hearings, Dallas building learning tours, and a link to the Spring Hearings registration and lodging webpage.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me. With your help, we can make this year's Spring Hearings the best yet!

Sincerely,
Larry Taylor - Marketing Specialist
International Code Council

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What Is Your State's Current Legislative Action Regarding Residential Fire Sprinklers?

Across the country, legislation is being proposed in an effort to restrict a community's ability to make its own fire safety regulations. New legislation is threatening the adoption of home fire sprinkler provisions in new one- and two-family dwellings.

[This page from NFPA's Fire Sprinkler Initiative program](#) lists each state's current legislative status.

You can also access this [Fill-in-the-blank letter](#) (doc, 29 KB) that encourages state lawmakers to reject anti-sprinkler legislation, and make copies of this [Fact sheet](#) (PDF, 73 KB) that explains anti-sprinkler legislation and how to combat the effort.

And here is the latest news from NFPA's Fire Sprinkler Initiative:
[NFPA Fire Sprinkler Initiative UPDATE - March](#)

Code Adoption Resources from ICC

ICC's [Code Adoption Toolkit](#) contains briefing papers on technical issues, samples of ordinances, endorsements and support materials from national organizations. The "Who To Call" map contains links by state to ICC offices and staff members across the country who can assist with code adoption efforts and answer questions about our products and services.

Related Story: Check out the [ICC eNews for March 2010](#)

Residential Sprinklers In The News

On the Road: Three States Work Toward Fire Sprinkler Adoption

Maryland, Iowa, and New Jersey have all taken major steps towards adoption of the 2009 IRC, including the fire sprinkler requirements for new one- and two-family homes. However, additional action needs to take place in these states before the requirement becomes official, and most of these adoptions are being challenged by legislation and other legal disputes led by homebuilder groups and other opponents. [More details here.](#)

What Does It Cost To Install Residential Sprinklers?

In September 2008, NFPA's Fire Protection Research Foundation released a comprehensive report on the actual cost of installing residential fire sprinklers. [The Report: Home Fire Sprinkler Cost Assessment](#) (PDF, 634 KB) determined the cost of installing sprinkler systems to homebuilders averaged \$1.61 per sprinklered square foot.

Legislation Introduced to Block Fire Sprinkler Requirements

Two separate bills are being considered by the Alabama Legislature that would block fire sprinkler requirements in new homes as well as in some new commercial buildings. Jason Reid, regulatory affairs director for the Home Builders Association of Alabama said the issue is not one of home rule, but consumer choice. "The consumers are the ones that ought to make the call. The consumers aren't wanting them." [Read more.](#)

[Editorial: For safety's sake](#) - A measure to require fire sprinklers in newly built homes in New Jersey has unfortunately been tripped up by Gov. Christie's sweeping hold on all new state regulations.

Report Concludes Anti-Freeze Behind Deadly Explosion

A California State Fire Marshal's Office report concludes that antifreeze in a Truckee family's home sprinkler system likely contributed to the explosion that killed a woman and injured her husband and three children. Others believe a conclusion is being rushed. "It's still under investigation and still pending lab testing - ultimately it has to be duplicated, and that is supposed to be done by the (property owner's) insurance company's investigation team," said Bob Bena, Truckee FPD assistant chief and fire marshal. "As we speak nobody knows for sure that's what happened." [Read more](#) or view a complete [Copy of the Report](#).

Bill Introduced in South Carolina Senate to Reverse Code Adoption

Home builders are not pleased with the decision by the South Carolina Building Codes Council to adopt modifications to the proposed building code which would require installation of sprinkler systems in all new residential construction. Legislation has been introduced in the S.C. Senate, SB 1057, which would undo the action taken by the Building Code Council. [More](#)

More Review Before Adoption? That's One Route Being Considered

The Utah House of Representatives is considering legislation, HB 45, which would exempt the state from the 2009 IRC requiring fire sprinklers in all new homes. Rep. Mike Morley, R-American Fork, and two other legislators are sponsoring three separate bills, the result of which will likely be that fire suppression systems will not be required in new construction, according to Rep. Morley. [More here](#)

Florida Legislation Seeks to Ban Adoption of Fire Sprinkler Requirement

A House committee moved to block the Florida Building Commission from adopting a provision that would require all newly constructed homes to install fire sprinklers. The proposal (PCB GAP 10-22) was unanimously adopted by the House Governmental Affairs Policy committee. Currently, the Florida Building Commission adopts the state building codes based on recommendations of the International Residential Code. The legislation, approved by the committee, would ban the commission from adopting the fire sprinkler requirement. [Read more](#)

Sprinkler Advocates Win One in Kansas

A battle between firefighters and builders in the Kansas State House went to the firefighters on a tie vote Wednesday. At issue was House Bill 2515, which would have banned cities and counties from requiring fire sprinklers in residential buildings of four units or less. The bill was strongly supported by the state associations for Realtors, builders and mobile home manufacturers. It was just as strongly opposed by firefighter groups and associations of cities and counties. [Full story](#)

No Injunction for Penn. Builders Association, ICC Codes Remain in Effect

March 10, 2010, Commonwealth Court Judge Johnny J. Butler denied the Pennsylvania Builders Association (PBA) request for a preliminary injunction enjoining the Department from enforcing its regulation adopting the 2009 International Codes. The result of this decision is that the 2009 ICC Codes remain in effect in Pennsylvania, including the requirement of fire sprinkler systems in one- and two-family homes and townhomes.

The case will proceed from here but developments are not expected in the short term. Until final resolution of the case the PA UCC remains in full force as currently adopted, including all 2009 ICC code provisions. [Maria Figueroa, NFPA](#)

Carbon Monoxide Protection In the News

Wisconsin to Require CO Detectors in All Homes

Beginning April 1, 2010, in Wisconsin, all three-family and larger buildings that

have attached garages or "fuel burning devices" - gas heat, oil heat, gas dryers, gas stoves, etc. - will be required to have carbon monoxide detectors. The Wisconsin legislature recently passed a law requiring all one- and two-family buildings, including owner occupied, to have a carbon monoxide detector effective February 2011. [More here](#)

Other Home Fire Safety News

Sprinkler May Have Provided Extra Time for Firefighters

Hampton, New Hampshire - A ferocious overnight blaze fueled by high winds at Hampton Beach claimed a block of businesses. The five-alarm fire started sometime before midnight at a motel, when heavy, storm-force wind gusts quickly spread the flames to adjacent buildings, destroying the entire block before it was extinguished shortly before 5 a.m. Lack of sprinklers in the motel contributed to the block's quick demise. Only one injury was reported. [More here](#)

Construction Concerns: Residential Stairways

In residential and commercial construction, especially in buildings of Type III and Type V construction, not all stairways are created equal. They may include single- and multi-family residences of all types, apartment buildings with interior common corridors and stairways, and buildings with offices and retail space on the first floor and apartments on the floors above. They also include structures built under the current and earlier editions of the building codes, as well as structures built before building codes were adopted, and building conditions ranging from well-maintained to run-down to dilapidated. [Article and Photos](#)

For information on the Residential Fire Safety Institute please contact Lane Wintermute, Field Director, at lwintermute@firesafehome.org