



Residential Fire Safety Institute

# Operation Life Safety

*"Working Together for a Lifesaving Solution"*

OLS NEWSFLASH

February 2010

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### **Guest Editorial:**

**We Reap the Harvest We Sow: Budget Cuts Will Have Lasting Impact on Residents and Responders**

by Azarang "Ozzie" Mirkhah

"It is more important now than ever before, for the fire service to self-promote and better educate our public and the elected officials, about the importance of all of the various fire prevention, suppression, and the emergency medical response services that we provide; lack of which would undoubtedly impact the safety of our public one way or other. Our public should be fully aware of the impact of the policy-makers' decisions and decide whether they would be willing to accept the consequences of those decisions for many decades to come. Once again, being proactive is the key." [Full Commentary here.](#)

### **Residential Fire Sprinkler Updates**

#### ICC Final Action Code Hearing

Your participation is important at the ICC's Final Action Code Hearing in Dallas, May 14-23, 2010, to defend our success and once again vote for life saving technologies.

[Read the complete Report of Hearings](#)

#### NFPA: Legislation Puts Adoption of Sprinkler Provisions At Risk:

New legislation threatens the adoption of home fire sprinkler provisions for new one- and two-family dwellings. Across the United States, sprinkler opponents are pushing



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state legislation that would restrict a community's ability to make its own decision about model safety codes for new construction. The legislation would prevent any community from implementing any new sprinkler mandates in one- and two-family homes. If it becomes law, such legislation will put lives at risk. [Read here how NFPA says that you can help.](#)

### US Senate Takes up the Residential Fire Sprinkler Cause

Senators Tom Carper (DE) and Susan Collins (ME) have introduced the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act to the Senate. This bill would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to classify automatic fire sprinkler systems as 5-year property for purposes of depreciation. The bill, S. 2947, was referred to the Senate Finance Committee for consideration. Both Senator Carper and Senator Collins are co-chairs of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus.

[Some discussion points courtesy of NFSA are here.](#)

*Senator Jay Rockefeller of West Virginia offered the following statement:*

"The benefits of fire sprinkler systems are overwhelming, even for business owners, but one thing that inhibits their implementation is cost. Under current law, installations in residential rental property and non-residential real property must be deducted over a 27.5- or 39-year period, respectively. The financial cost of upgrading existing structures with fire safety measures is prohibitive for most property owners, and under our present straight-line method of depreciation, there is disincentive for building safety improvements due to an extremely low rate of return on investment. This legislation, by amending the internal revenue code to classify automatic fire sprinkler systems as depreciable over a 5-year period, would mitigate the expense of retrofitting older buildings with costly automated sprinkler systems. It helps businesses make the choice to take advantage of fire safety systems that have been proven to have life-saving results." [Full text of the Senator's statement can be found here.](#)

### Lawsuit Filed by Builders Association to Block Fire Sprinkler Requirement

Pennsylvania's Commonwealth Court will hear a lawsuit filed by the Pennsylvania Builders Association (PBA) asking the court to prevent implementing the recently adopted Uniform Construction Code, arguing it will hurt an already struggling housing economy. Specifically, the PBA wants to continue using the codes adopted in 2006 for the next three years while the issue is open for public debate. [Read more](#)

### Sprinklers May Soon be Required in All New Homes in Wales

Members of the Welsh Assembly have advanced a legislative competency order to require sprinklers in all new homes. The order is on its way to being formally approved by the Westminster Parliament. [More here](#)

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## **Carbon Monoxide Protection**

### Carbon Monoxide Alarm Considerations for Code Authorities:

Underwriters Laboratories has released the following information on Carbon Monoxide Alarms:

"Carbon Monoxide (CO) alarms play an important role in protecting the public against carbon monoxide poisoning. Having a basic understanding of CO poisoning, CO

alarms, how they are listed, and how they are to be installed and maintained is an important consideration for code authorities, especially those in jurisdictions where installation of CO alarms is required. [UL's full document can be found here.](#)

#### **Amanda's Law Goes into Effect February 22nd in NY**

Carbon Monoxide detectors are required to be installed in nearly all New York homes, regardless of when they were built or sold, beginning next week. Amanda's Law was passed by the NY State Legislature in 2009. [More here](#)

#### **Wisconsin Legislature Passes Carbon Monoxide Bill - Awaits Governor's Signature**

Last week the Wisconsin Legislature passed a bill requiring carbon monoxide detectors in one- and two-family homes, adding to last year's requirement they be installed in other dwellings. As the bill is written it will not be enforced, and there are no fines or violations for not having one installed. If the Governor signs the bill, it will take effect February 2011. [Read more](#)

#### **Carbon Monoxide Bill in Pennsylvania House (HB 1445)**

A bill requiring CO detectors in all new construction as well as existing homes and apartments made it out of a Pennsylvania House committee last week. Again, enforcement is not adequately addressed. [Read more](#)

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### **Elsewhere in the news**

#### **Study: U.S. Behind World in Fire Prevention**

Fire officials in the State of Guanajuato in Mexico have a belief that the best fire department isn't the one that responds to the most calls. Rather, it's the one that prevents the most fire. A new "best practices" report shows virtually the entire world does a far better job at reducing fire casualties than the United States by as much as 50 percent in some cases. [Full article, courtesy of Firehouse.com](#)

#### **U.S. Fire Administration Publishes Reports on Heating Fires**

Heating is the second leading cause of residential fires behind cooking. The USFA estimates 54,500 residential heating fires occur in the United States each year, resulting in nearly a thousand deaths and injuries and millions of dollars in property damage. The reports, Heating Fires in Residential Buildings and Portable Heater Fires in Residential Buildings, are based on data from the National Fire Incident Reporting System for 2005 to 2007. [Download copies of these reports here.](#)

#### **Massachusetts Begins Home Oxygen Awareness Campaign**

Fire officials say home oxygen use has been a factor in 24 fire deaths and 50 serious injuries in Massachusetts since 1997. [More here.](#)

Consumer Products Safety Commission Eyes Upholstered Furniture

Chairman Inez Tenenbaum, the 9th chairman of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, is pressing for rules to reduce the flammability of upholstered furniture. The Commission has been trying for decades to mandate manufacturers, and the upholstered furniture they produce, to meet flammability and other standards without success. Chairman Tenenbaum has announced fire safety as "one of her top fire safety goals." [Read more](#)

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