



LOCAL PUBLIC RELATIONS TOOLS

TALKING POINTS

Use these talking points as a guide to help you stay on-message when working with local media outlets and when making presentations to community groups. Visit HFSC's Web site to download free **Tips for Working with Local Media** and **Home Fire Sprinkler FAQs**.

Home fire sprinklers save lives, prevent injury and preserve property and valuables

Residential fire sprinkler systems are widely seen as the next generation of home fire protection.

From federal agencies such as the U.S. Fire Administration and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to national safety organizations such as the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the Home Safety Council, and Underwriters Laboratories, sprinklers are recommended as the most effective means to substantially cut the home fire problem.

Home fire sprinkler systems protect residents; they also protect first responders.

Installing home fire sprinkler systems helps the entire community and protects the homes where they are installed for generations to come.

Most fatal fires occur at home

Each year, more than 3,000 fire deaths occur in the U.S. Eight out of 10 fire deaths result from home fires.

Young children, older adults and people with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to fires.

For additional statistics on fires and fire sprinkler protection, visit the Web site of the National Fire Protection Association: www.nfpa.org.

Fire sprinklers have a solid track record of safety

Fire sprinklers have been saving lives and protecting property for more than a century.

Today, fire sprinkler systems are common in high-rise buildings, hospitals, offices, hotels and many other types of occupancies.

This same technology has been adapted in the past two decades in order to cost-effectively bring the powerful fire protection into homes. Reduced labor costs and low-profile sprinklers have helped make fire sprinkler systems a highly desirable option, especially in new construction.

Home fire sprinkler systems add value

According to a national Harris Poll, two-thirds (69%) of homeowners in the U.S. say having a fire sprinkler system increases a home's value.

Increasing demand for home fire sprinklers is driving down the cost. Nationally, a conservative estimate for sprinkler installation is 1 to 1.5% of the total building cost. In areas where installations are common the cost is well below \$1 per square foot.

Most insurance companies provide financial incentives to encourage homeowners to protect their homes from fire. HFSC research shows that fire sprinkler system discounts range from 5% to 30% off homeowner policy premiums. Shop around for the best discount.

To read more findings from the Harris Poll, visit HFSC's Web site.

Ordinances requiring home fire sprinklers

Installing fire sprinklers in homes is quickly catching on in communities of every size. Now, national codes require sprinklers be installed in new home construction.

Similar local ordinances are in place in hundreds of jurisdictions across the U.S. and Canada.

To learn about ordinances currently in place in the U.S., visit the Web site of the Residential Fire Sprinkler Institute (RFSI): <http://www.firesafehome.org/sprinklers/Jurisdictions.asp>

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Home fire sprinkler system design and installation

HFSC recommends selecting a sprinkler contractor with residential experience to install a home system. Contractors should follow national installation standards, which help ensure proper operation.

NFPA 13D, Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems in One- and Two-Family Dwellings and Manufactured Homes, is the national standard for home fire sprinkler systems.

NFPA 13D is appropriate for one- and two-family structures and manufactured homes.

Local code authorities may have certain requirements that exceed or differ from NFPA 13D.

For a list of contractors with residential fire sprinkler experience, visit HFSC's Web site.

How home fire sprinklers work

Fire sprinklers protect a home 24 hours a day, automatically. Each sprinkler system is unique to the home where it's installed.

Most fire sprinkler systems operate off the household water main. Where water pressure is a problem, the system is fed by a storage tank.

Fire sprinklers are linked by a network of piping. Today, most home fire sprinkler systems primarily use a strong, non-combustible plastic pipe known as CPVC. Just like plumbing, the piping is typically hidden behind walls and ceilings. In unfinished basements, you may be able to see the piping in the ceiling.

There are several types of fire sprinklers made for homes: some are for installation on walls and others in ceilings; some are concealed by a plate. All residential fire sprinklers are much smaller and lower-profile than the types of sprinklers used in commercial and industrial properties.

Sprinklers operate individually, in response to the high temperature of a fire.

Each fire sprinkler has a temperature-sensitive element. Sprinklers flow only when the temperature near the sprinkler reaches 135°F-165°F and they operate for approximately 10 minutes – sufficient time to keep a fire extinguished or controlled until the fire department arrives.

Each sprinkler is designed to operate independently – sprinklers will not release water all at once when a fire starts.

Smoke, cooking vapors or steam cannot cause a sprinkler to activate – fire sprinklers operate in response to the high temperature of a fire.

To learn more about home fire sprinkler installations, visit HFSC's Web site to view free video and animated sequences.

Fire sprinklers are part of a total system of safety

Fire sprinklers have no equal, but the best protection from home fire is a total system of safety: early warning (smoke alarms), suppression (fire sprinklers) and prompt evacuation (practiced fire drills).

Only fire sprinklers can detect the fire and automatically control or extinguish it, paving the way for residents to make a safe escape – and also protecting property and valuables.

Smoke alarms are essential in every home. But they can only detect a fire; and to be effective residents must be willing and able to respond quickly to the alarm.

The best protection from fire is having both smoke alarms and a fire sprinkler system.

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Refuting stubborn myths about fire sprinklers

Sprinkler mishaps are generally less likely and less severe than conventional home plumbing system problems.

An uncontrolled fire will cause far greater fire destruction and smoke/heat damage than water damage from an activated sprinkler. From the time the fire starts and is discovered, it typically takes about 9-12 minutes for the fire department to arrive. In that time, an uncontrolled fire will have grown and spread through the home, causing tremendous smoke and fire damage before the fire department can get there.

The high heat, flames and smoke require a tremendous amount of water from fire department hoses – more than 10 times the water flow per minute of sprinklers.

The property loss in a sprinklered home fire is typically only a fraction of the loss in an unsprinklered home fire. A residential sprinkler flows 10-26 gallons of water per minute, for approximately 10 minutes (or less if the fire department turns the water off sooner).

The national sprinkler installation standard provides guidance for proper installation in cold regions, including appropriate additional insulation and anti-freeze usage.