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fire department is the one that has no fires, injuries or deaths. If we could stop every home fire, not only would we save people, we would have more resources to handle all the other things we have to do.”

New technology has made sprinkler systems much more affordable and easier to install. Two of the biggest concerns that consumers have about installing sprinkler systems are accidental discharges and appearance. The odds of an accidental discharge due to manufacturing defects are 1 in 16 million. Each sprinkler is individually activated by heat, not smoke. So unlike TV sitcoms, no one will ever have all the sprinklers in their house go off because someone sneaks a smoke in the bathroom. The latest residential sprinkler systems are designed to be inconspicuous and can be flush mounted in walls or ceilings or even behind decorative coves and molding. “In my house we are going to be able to put the pipes in our closets, so we will hardly have to touch the walls,” states Chief Jackson.

The effect of home fire sprinklers is shown dramatically by the slide show *A Tale of Two Families* on the HFSC Web site. Gary Keith has a very personal connection to one these families. “I was one of the fire fighters who responded to the fire in the McCabe home in West Bridgewater Massachusetts. While the family escaped with their lives, they lost their house, their possessions, and their pets. My family and I now live on the same block as the MaCabs, so everyday as I drive down the street, I am reminded of what fire did to a house that could just as easily been ours.”

It’s vitally important that more fire safety professionals install systems in their own homes. More than anyone, fire-fighters know how fast, dangerous, and devastating fire can be. When a consumer is thinking about installing a system, they can tell them about the tremendous advantages of sprinkler systems. But how will they answer when asked, “If sprinkler systems are so good, why don’t you have one?” Having a system can also help fire safety professionals answer objections, such as the worry about accidental discharges, with even more authority.

There is one other excellent reason all fire safety professionals should install sprinkler systems—fires happen in their homes too. ■

Yes, I want a free subscription to “The Solution” newsletter from the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition

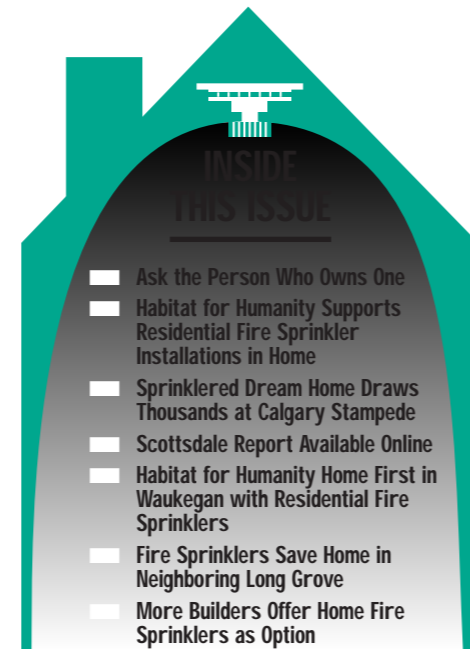
Yes, I would like to order the Home Fire Sprinkler Public Educator Kit



All the tools to help public educators increase awareness of the benefits of residential fire sprinklers. Contains the *Protect What You Value Most* video, Home Fire Sprinkler System Facts, a 45-Minute Lesson Plan, Pre- and Post-Tests and Media Kit material. \$25.

Complete this form and mail to:
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For more information about home fire sprinklers, individuals can call toll-free 1-888-635-7222 or go to the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition web site at: www.homefiresprinkler.org
For further information about HFSC partnership programs contact Gary Keith at (617) 984-7263 or via e-mail at gkeith@nfpa.org

Builders

themselves, I guarantee the fire sprinklers would become more commonplace.”


According to the HFSC, more builders around the country are adding sprinklers to their options list. In some cases, fire sprinkler systems are being installed in model or showcase homes. The Home Builders Association of Mid-Florida included a fire sprinkler system in it’s Renaissance Home, a luxurious, custom home designed to showcase some of the best architects, designers and home building talent in Central Florida.

Thanks to builders like the Marsters Company and Monarch Development, people building new homes in Sugar Land, Texas can protect their families and homes.

“It’s hard to find builders who feel this strongly about offering fire sprinklers as an option anywhere in the country,” said John Wu, Sugar Land Fire Chief. “We are very fortunate to have two builders here in our area who understand the benefits. Their customers, our residents, are living in safer homes because of these builders.” ■

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The SOLUTION

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Habitat for Humanity Supports Residential Fire Sprinkler Installations in Homes

To protect the lives and property of the families who move into their homes, Habitat for Humanity International announced that it supports the installation of residential fire sprinkler systems. In a letter to Habitat affiliates, Nevil Eastwood, Habitat For Humanity’s Director of Construction & Environmental Resources, urged affiliates to consider installing sprinkler systems in the homes they build.

The Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (HFSC) has agreed to work with individual Habitat affiliates and their local resources to supply the material, labor and technical support necessary to install residential fire sprinkler systems in Habitat homes.

Fire sprinklers have been in public buildings for more than 100 years. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). When fire sprinklers are present, the chances of dying in a fire and the average property loss per fire are both cut substantially, compared to fires in unsprinklered buildings.

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Ask the Person Who Owns One

The HFSC concentrates on convincing consumers to include residential fire sprinklers in their new construction, but a growing number of fire safety professionals are finding that retrofitting their own houses does not have to be difficult or expensive. More than anyone, a fire safety professional knows the importance of adding a sprinkler system to their home, both to protect property and family, and to show they “practice what they preach.”

One of the people who has installed a sprinkler system in his house is the Chair of HFSC, Gary Keith. “We’ve just had our 20-year-old house retrofitted with a residential fire sprinkler system. As the chair, it was something

I knew I should do. As the father of three kids, it was something I knew I had to do.” Another believer in fire sprinklers is Lonni Jackson, Chief of the Bensenville, IL Fire Department, who is currently having a system installed.

Chief Jackson sees notification as the weak point of any fire protection service. Often a fire is not discovered until it blows out the windows of a house and by then “you might as well get a bag of marshmallows, because you’re not going to save the house.”

According to Chief Jackson, fire sprinkler systems are particularly important because homes are the most combustible structures allowed by law. No commercial building, many of which are required to have sprinklers, could be built like a house because of safety concerns.

Keith, who was a fire fighter for twenty years, said the common goal was to confine a fire to the room of origin. “That’s just not good enough anymore. If we are going to really do our job of saving people and property, that fire should be out before we get there. Fire sprinklers are the only way to accomplish that.” Chief Jackson agrees, “The real measure of success for a



HFSC Chairperson Gary Keith in front of his home with Glen Morrison and Bill Gallagher of Yankee Sprinkler Corp.

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The Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition was formed in 1996 in response to the tremendous need to inform the public about the life-saving value of home fire sprinkler protection.

The HFSC has developed educational material with details about automatic home fire sprinkler systems, how they work, why they provide affordable protection and answers to common myths and misconceptions about their operation. These materials are available upon request.

Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition

Steering Committee

- American Fire Sprinkler Association (AFSA)
- Canadian Automatic Sprinkler Association (CASA)
- Sharel Stokes Fire Sprinkler Public Education Foundation
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA)
- Underwriters Laboratories (UL)

Affiliate Members

- Advanced Automatic Sprinkler Inc.
- B.F. Goodrich, Inc.
- Connecticut Fire Marshal Association (CFMA)
- Fire Protection Products, Inc.
- Florida Fire Marshal’s Association (FFMA)
- Mesa Fire Department
- National Association of Independent Insurers (NAII)
- New England Association of Fire Marshals
- Quality Fabrication and Supply
- Reliable Automatic Sprinkler Co., Inc.
- Rural/Metro (Scottsdale, AZ Fire Department)
- Viking Corporation

Sprinklered Dream Home Draws Thousands

More than 90,000 people had a chance to see a residential fire sprinkler system while touring the Dream Home during the 2000 Calgary Stampede. The Dream Home, built by Homes By Avi, featured state-of-the-



Brian Drake, Victaulic Company, with Calgary Fire Marshal Sandy MacKenzie, inside the Calgary Stampede Dream Home. Victaulic donated the sprinkler heads.

art products and design. More than 250,000 tickets were sold to win the Dream Home, with the winning ticket drawn during the last day of the event.

Members of the Calgary Fire Department set up a home fire sprinkler display in the Dream Home garage and answered questions from people who toured the home. Residential sprinkler contractors from Calgary were also on hand to provide information.

According to Sandy MacKenzie, Calgary Fire Marshal, the Dream Home event was a major success to promote and increase awareness about home fire sprinklers. "We had really good coverage on all the media and as a result, the sprinkler companies received about 80 phone calls regarding sprinklers. They have installed fire sprinklers in about 10 homes since the Stampede," he said. "Because of the support from Homes By Avi, who agreed to showcase the sprinkler system, we were able to take home fire safety to the next level here in Calgary," MacKenzie added. ■

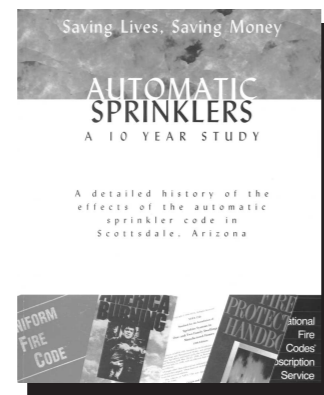


More than 90,000 people toured the Dream Home during the 12-day event.



Visitors saw how inconspicuous sprinklers protect a house.

Free Scottsdale Report Available Online



In 1996 the Rural/Metro Fire Department developed *The Scottsdale Report* which examined local fire records for the last 10 years. During that time there were 598 home fires, 44 were in homes with sprinklers. There were no deaths in the homes with sprinklers. Unfortunately there were 10 deaths in the homes without sprinklers.

This valuable report is now available for free on the HFSC Web site (www.homefiresprinkler.org). The report is an excellent information resource for promoting the use of home fire sprinklers and for answering people's concerns about them. The report shows that the average fire loss in a house without sprinklers was \$17,067. Houses with sprinklers suffered only \$1,945 in damage, an almost 90% reduction.

Not only do sprinklers extinguish fires before they spread, often they put out fires before the fire department arrives, and they use far less water to do it. According to *The Scottsdale Report*, sprinkler systems release an average of 209 gallons per fire incident, compared to 3,290 gallons used by firefighter hoses. When a fire occurs, only the sprinkler closest to the fire will activate. Ninety percent of the time this one sprinkler is enough to contain the fire. ■

Habitat for Humanity Home First in Waukegan with Residential Fire Sprinklers



Chicago Tribune file photo

Sonja Miller inspects the installation of her new home fire sprinkler system

A Habitat For Humanity home currently under construction will be the first residence in Waukegan, Illinois to have an automatic fire sprinkler system. This is especially good news for Sonja Miller, the homeowner, because her aunt who has Alzheimer's Disease will be living in the new home.

"I don't know how my aunt would react if she heard a smoke detector or saw a fire or smoke in our house. I'm sure she would be very confused," Miller said. "My aunt will probably have difficulty getting around the house because it is new. Having a fire sprinkler system makes me feel much safer."

In an effort to provide a safe environment for those who move into its homes, Habitat for Humanity (HFH) International recently teamed with the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (HFSC) to support the installation of residential fire sprinklers in Habitat homes. HFH is asking local affiliates to consider installing fire sprinklers in homes, while HFSC has agreed to find resources to donate the material, labor and technical support necessary for the installation.

"When we were approached to install residential fire sprinklers in one of our houses, we thought it would be a good idea to try out the process and see what it is like," says Julie Donovan, executive director of Habitat for Humanity Lake County. "This home was ideal because the homeowner is the caregiver for her aunt and she often takes care of young grandchildren," Donovan said.

The fire sprinkler system material for the Waukegan home was donated by the Viking Corporation and B.F. Goodrich. U.S. Fire Protection, Lake Forest, IL, donated the time to design and install the system. The grant to fund the construction of this home was provided through a partnership between The USAA Foundation, A Charitable Trust and Habitat for Humanity International. The USAA Foundation provided funding to Habitat for Humanity to fund the construction of homes in locations near military installations. This permitted military personnel and their families to volunteer their time and talents in support of this worthy cause.

Donovan believes it will be good for her volunteers to see how the fire sprinkler is installed. "It will expand the knowledge base even more. If they go back and tell their friends, we have already accomplished something important." ■

Fire Sprinklers Save Home in Neighboring Long Grove

A residential fire sprinkler system prevented major destruction to a Long Grove, Illinois home. On the Monday before Thanksgiving, a fire started in a child's bedroom filled with stuffed animals. Lisa Bailey, at work in her home office, heard the smoke detector go off in her son's room. Her assistant immediately got Lisa's son and his friends out of the basement where they were playing, while Lisa and the father of one of the other children attempted to put out the fire with fire extinguishers. Fortunately, the home had a sprinkler system which extinguished the blaze, and left only minor burning under the bed for the fire department to put out. According to Fire Marshal Greg Cook, without the fire sprinkler system, the fire would have spread beyond the bedroom causing major fire, smoke and water damage.

Since 1988, fire sprinkler systems have been required in all homes built in the Village of Long Grove. Ms. Bailey stated, "If it weren't for the sprinklers we would have lost much more. We would not have had sprinklers if they weren't required. Now we wouldn't live in a house without them. They saved our lives, our home, and my business." ■

More Builders Offer Home Fire Sprinklers as Option

Marsters Company and Monarch Development are two of the first builders in Texas to offer residential fire sprinkler systems as an option in all of their new home construction. The Marsters Company, which builds custom homes near Houston, sees the advantages to installing home fire sprinklers, including their ability to save life and property.

"Building high-end custom, we started offering fire sprinklers as an option on all our custom jobs because we are always trying to find unique ways to offer our clients value-added components," explains Frank Marsters, III, President of Marsters Company.

Though the Marsters Company installed its first fire sprinkler in a spec home in 1977, Marsters believes many homeowners in the Houston area and throughout the country are still unaware of the benefits residential fire sprinkler systems offer.

"Approximately 25 percent of our clients choose to have fire sprinklers installed in their homes," says Marsters. "It should be more, but I see several challenges associated with increasing the numbers. First, insurance companies do not give a big enough discount on premiums for homes with fire sprinklers, even though the risk of major fire damage in these homes is greatly reduced. Secondly, there needs to be more done to educate buyers as to the advantages. If buyers were educated enough to start asking for sprinklers

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"The installation of residential fire sprinkler systems can help save thousands of lives and billions of dollars each year. The best place to install fire sprinklers is where the risk of fatal fire is highest—the homes of the poor." Keith added, "Statistics show that low-income households are at the greatest risk of fire death, many times that of the rest of the general population. As just one example, a study of cities of 250,000 or more population found that cities with at least 25% of the population living below the poverty line had a median fire death rate per 100,000 population seven times the rate for cities with no more than 10% of the population living below the poverty line."

"This is an exciting opportunity for the Habitat affiliates," said Eastwood. "People in general are just starting to learn that fire sprinklers are an option, especially when building a new home. In some areas, the Habitat homes will be the first in the community to include these life-saving systems. It will be a great opportunity to work closely with the local fire department and be a part of educating the community," Eastwood said.

While smoke alarms are essential early warning devices, home fire sprinklers take fire protection a step further. According to Keith, fire sprinklers work against a fire immediately. "Since the system reacts quickly, it can reduce heat, flames and smoke, often containing or even extinguishing a fire before the fire department arrives at the scene. Research shows that installing both smoke alarms and a fire sprinkler system reduces the risk of death in a home fire by 82%, compared to having neither," Keith added.

According to research conducted for HFSC, the most common myth about sprinklers is that they may discharge accidentally. "Each sprinkler is activated by heat, so only the sprinkler closest to the fire will release water. Ninety percent of fires are contained by the operation of just one sprinkler," Keith said.

Eastwood said the volunteers who construct the sprinklered homes should feel good because all of their hard work will be protected from fire. "But even more important, the fire sprinklers will protect the lives and property of the families who live in the homes and that's a value added that you just can't beat," he said. ■

"In some areas, the Habitat homes will be the first in the community to include these life-saving systems."

*— Nevil Eastwood
Habitat for Humanity*