

the future of **fire safety**
here today





UNDERSTANDING FIRE SPRINKLER PROTECTION FOR HOMES

Fire sprinkler systems provide powerful protection from fire. They work automatically and immediately; before a fire spreads. Sprinklers put water right where it is needed, slowing or stopping the flames and poisonous smoke, so people can get out safely.

Fire sprinkler systems have been saving lives and protecting property for more than 130 years. Over the past two decades, sprinklers have been specially adapted to simplify installation and use in homes. Today, you can find fire sprinklers in homes of every size and style.

“Fire sprinklers give me peace of mind, especially at night when my children are sleeping.” SANDRA KUHNS, HOMEOWNER

The ideal time to install fire sprinkler systems is during new construction. Many homeowners opt to install, or retrofit, sprinklers when they remodel their homes.

You are at Greatest Danger from Fire at Home

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), more than eight out of 10 fire deaths happen at home. Many people don't realize how fast a home fire grows and spreads from room to room. Too often, people think they'll have plenty of time to get out.

Having fire sprinklers installed at home can save your life if fire strikes. In fact, when fire strikes at home, it can become deadly in as few as three minutes. Most fatal fires take place at night when people are sleeping. A fire sprinkler system is like having a firefighter on duty 24 hours a day.

Watch a video that demonstrates how fast a home fire can become deadly online at HomeFireSprinkler.org.

A Total System of Safety

Sprinkler systems are the ultimate home fire safety technology available today. Experts agree the most comprehensive protection from a home fire is a total system of safety:

- Prevention
- Early warning (working smoke alarms on every level)
- Quick Evacuation (well planned and practiced home fire drills)
- Suppression (fire sprinkler system)



Sidewall Sprinkler



Concealed Sprinkler



Pendent Sprinkler

HOW FIRE SPRINKLERS WORK

Fire sprinklers protect your home around the clock, automatically. Each sprinkler system is unique to the home where it's installed. Most fire sprinkler systems are connected to the household water main. If the water supply is from a well or if the water pressure is too low, a storage tank may be needed.

Fire sprinklers are linked throughout the home by a network of piping. Most home systems today use a strong, non-combustible plastic pipe known as CPVC. Just like plumbing, sprinkler piping is typically hidden behind walls and ceilings. In unfinished basements, you may be able to see the piping in the ceiling; and it may be copper rather than plastic.

There are several types of fire sprinklers made just for homes. They can be installed on walls or in ceilings. Some sprinklers are concealed by a plate. Home fire sprinklers are much smaller than the types of sprinklers used in commercial properties.

Heat Activates A Sprinkler, Not Smoke

Each sprinkler has a temperature-sensitive element and is individually activated by heat. Water flows from the sprinkler when the temperature reaches between 135°-165°F. In the vast majority of fires in sprinklered homes, only a single sprinkler will operate.

Smoke, cooking vapors or steam cannot cause home fire sprinklers to activate. Only the high temperature of a fire will operate the sprinkler.

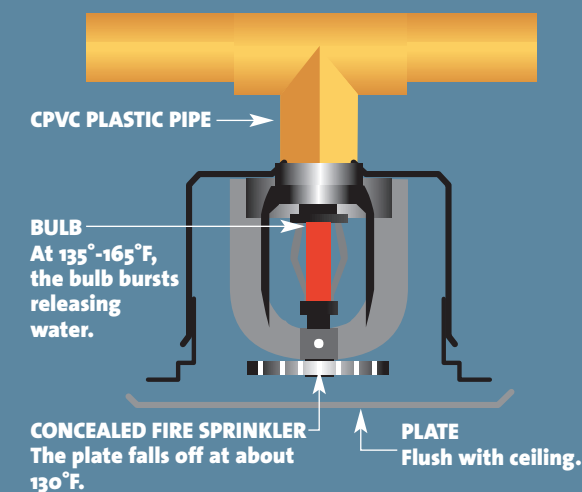
Maintenance is a Snap

Home fire sprinklers require very little maintenance. It's essential to keep the water valve turned on, so a simple visual inspection should be done routinely to ensure the valve is open. (Keeping the valve padlocked in the “on” position is a good idea.)

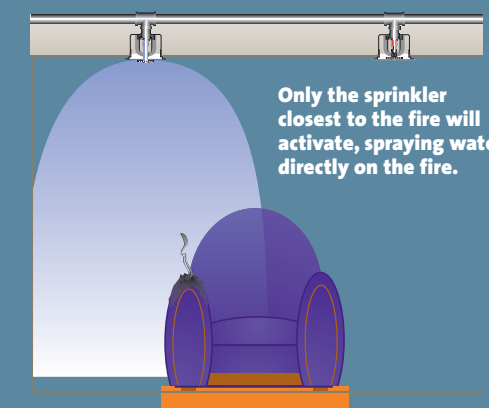
Inspect the pipes and sprinklers occasionally to make sure nothing is obstructing them.

Every home sprinkler system should have a water flow test on a regular basis. It's a simple test that can be done by the homeowner or a fire sprinkler contractor.

A SPRINKLER COVERS A MINIMUM 12 X 12 FOOT AREA. EXTENDED COVERAGE SPRINKLERS CAN COVER A MAXIMUM AREA OF 20 X 20 FEET.



SPRINKLERS ARE LINKED BY A NETWORK OF PIPING, TYPICALLY HIDDEN BEHIND WALLS AND CEILINGS AND USUALLY DRAWING UPON HOUSEHOLD WATER SOURCES.



“An electrical short started a fire in our house. That fire was so fast and furious. The sprinkler system activated immediately. Our house is still standing. We are all still alive including our pets.” JIM MCCOLLISTER, AZ



THE ADVANTAGES OF A HOME FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM

With Fire Sprinklers

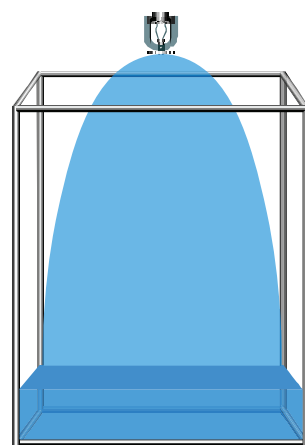
- The sprinkler closest to the fire activates
- Water contains or extinguishes fire
- Residents have time to safely escape
- Surrounding rooms are protected from damage

Fire sprinklers work so fast they often put out a home fire before the fire department arrives. Instead of launching a major fire suppression effort, arriving firefighters will simply turn off the sprinkler system and mop up the water.

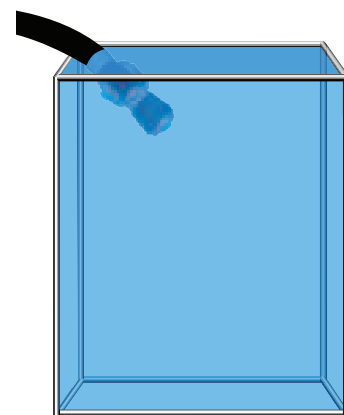
Without Fire Sprinklers

- Flames grow and move room to room
- Heat and toxic gases spread
- In as few as three minutes, the fire becomes deadly
- Flashover occurs and the gases and combustible materials burst into flames

It typically takes 9-12 minutes from the time a fire starts to the time the fire department arrives. In that time, the fire will be so advanced that firefighters will have to use high pressure hoses, applying water at 250 gallons per minute. Even if the family is lucky enough to get out unharmed, the home will likely be lost and the family displaced.



Sprinkler - 25 Gallons of Water/Minute



Fire Hose - 250 Gallons of Water/Minute

Learn more about how home fire sprinkler systems work online at HomeFireSprinkler.org.

HOME FIRE SPRINKLERS ARE A SMART CHOICE

Homebuilders know that homeowners are safety conscious. They want to protect their families and they want to secure their investment. That's why more and more homebuilders are offering their customers the option of installing a fire sprinkler system in new homes. A home fire sprinkler system is a smart choice. Unlike the many upgrades that are available in new construction – such as gourmet kitchen amenities, whirlpool tubs and high end flooring – only a home fire sprinkler system can save your life if there is a fire. And, the fire sprinkler system also protects your home and your valuables. No other upgrade can do that.

Nearly 70% of homeowners believe having a fire sprinkler system increases the value of a home, according to a recent survey conducted by Harris Interactive. Nearly half say a sprinklered home is more desirable than an unsprinklered home.

Affordable Fire Protection

The cost to install a fire sprinkler system is rolled into a new home mortgage, as are the plumbing and electrical systems.

Sprinklered homes qualify for valuable discounts on homeowner insurance premiums. Discounts vary by company and by state, so shop around to find the best discount in your area.

The cost to install a home fire sprinkler system also varies by region. Nationally on average, the cost to install sprinklers is 1 to 1 1/2 percent of the total cost of new construction. Retrofitting a home with sprinklers is typically higher. In many municipalities, increased installations have brought the cost down significantly.

Unmatched Peace of Mind

Home fire sprinklers are proven lifesavers. In Scottsdale, AZ, sprinklers have been required in new homes since 1986. A 15-year study of fire loss in Scottsdale since then found that no deaths occurred in the fires that took place in sprinklered homes during the period; 13 people died in unsprinklered homes.

Fire sprinklers also protect property and valuables. The Scottsdale study showed that where fires occurred in sprinklered homes, there was less fire damage and less water damage from suppression. The average loss per sprinklered single-family home fire was \$2,166, compared to \$45,019 for the unsprinklered home fires.



HARRIS INTERACTIVE® SURVEY FINDINGS

- 69 PERCENT OF HOMEOWNERS BELIEVE HAVING A FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM INCREASES THE VALUE OF A HOME.
- 38 PERCENT SAY THEY WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TO PURCHASE A NEW HOME WITH SPRINKLERS THAN WITHOUT.
- 45 PERCENT SAY A SPRINKLERED HOME IS MORE DESIRABLE THAN AN UNSPRINKLERED HOME, MOST OFTEN BECAUSE OF THE ADDED SAFETY PROVIDED BY THE SPRINKLERS (51 PERCENT).
- IF OFFERED, 36 PERCENT WOULD CHOOSE FIRE SPRINKLERS OVER HARDWOOD FLOORS; AND 35 PERCENT WOULD CHOOSE THEM OVER CABINET UPGRADES.
- FOR 43 PERCENT, THE ABILITY TO INCLUDE THE COST OF INSTALLING SPRINKLERS IN THE MORTGAGE IS AN INSTALLATION INCENTIVE.
- HOME BUILDERS WHO OFFER FIRE SPRINKLERS ARE SEEN BY HOMEOWNERS AS BEING “SAFETY CONCERNED” (70 PERCENT), “INNOVATIVE” (52 PERCENT) AND “CARING” (51 PERCENT).

NATIONAL SURVEY CONDUCTED IN DECEMBER 2005; COMMISSIONED BY HFSC

“We've lived in a sprinklered home for 25 years – nothing has made us feel safer.” JAN AND RICH GRATTON, CA



“IT'S COMFORTING TO KNOW THAT OUR TWO CHILDREN ARE LIVING IN A HOME PROTECTED WITH FIRE SPRINKLERS.”

RON HAZELTON
HFSC SPOKESPERSON

HOME IMPROVEMENT EDITOR,
ABC'S GOOD MORNING AMERICA

HOME FIRE SPRINKLER FAQS

If one sprinkler goes off, will they all go off?

No. Sprinklers activate independently; only the sprinkler(s) closest to the fire will activate. In most home fires only one sprinkler is needed to control a fire.

If I burn the toast will the sprinkler activate?

No. Fire sprinklers do not respond to smoke; they respond to the high temperature of a fire – about 135° to 165°F. Smoke caused by cooking or cigars cannot and will not cause a sprinkler to activate.

Will my sprinklers leak?

Sprinkler mishaps are generally less likely and less severe than conventional home plumbing system problems. Choose an experienced residential sprinkler contractor to install your system. Contractors follow national installation standards, which help ensure proper operation.

Is post-fire water damage from sprinklers worse than fire damage would be without sprinklers?

Fire damage and water from high-pressure fire hoses are far greater. 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). An uncontrolled fire will cause far greater fire destruction and smoke damage, requiring a tremendous amount of water from fire department hoses – more than 10 times the water per minute. The property loss in a sprinklered home fire is typically only a fraction of the loss in an unsprinklered home fire.

Won't the fire department be able to put out the fire and save my things?

From the time the fire starts, 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.

Will my sprinklers freeze in the winter?

Freezing is not a problem with proper installation. The national sprinkler installation standard provides guidance for proper installation in cold regions, including appropriate additional insulation and anti-freeze usage.

Since I have smoke alarms, why do I need fire sprinklers?

Smoke alarms are essential in every home, but they can only detect a fire. To be effective, residents must be willing and able to respond quickly to the alarm. 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. The best protection from fire is having both smoke alarms and a fire sprinkler system.

Are fire sprinklers difficult to maintain?

No. Home maintenance is simple. Regular flow tests should be conducted and homeowners can do these simple tests themselves or have the sprinkler contractor do it every year or so.

FREE RESOURCES FOR HOMEOWNERS

The Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (HFSC) is a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to educating the public about the value and availability of fire sprinkler protection for homes. HFSC is non-commercial, and works with fire departments, local officials, sprinkler contractors and others to help increase awareness of home fire safety.



YOU CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT HOME FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEMS ON THE NONPROFIT HOME FIRE SPRINKLER COALITION WEB SITE: HomeFireSprinkler.org, INCLUDING:

- ANIMATED FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM FEATURES
- COMPARISONS OF HOME FIRES WITH SPRINKLER SYSTEMS AND WITHOUT
- CHECKLIST FOR INSTALLING SPRINKLERS IN YOUR HOME
- HOW TO TALK TO YOUR BUILDER ABOUT INSTALLING A FIRE SPRINKLER SYSTEM
- HOW TO CHOOSE A QUALIFIED SPRINKLER CONTRACTOR

THERE IS NO COST DOWNLOAD THE MATERIALS ON HFSC'S WEB SITE.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CONTACT YOUR LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT'S PUBLIC EDUCATOR.

HFSC MEMBERS



This program is supported by Fire Prevention and Safety Grant funding through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security

