



# NFPA News

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*For immediate release*

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## **National fire service speaks out against anti-sprinkler bills** *Stand together to better protect firefighters and public*

May 4, 2009 – Citing the fact that more than 90 percent of fireground firefighter deaths occur in one- and two-family homes, leading fire service organizations warned against state-by-state legislative efforts, orchestrated by homebuilders, which are designed to prohibit communities from requiring residential fire sprinklers in new home construction. Fire service groups are reiterating their strong support for sprinklers in the wake of several legislative attempts across the country.

“Anti-sprinkler proponents are attempting to deny local jurisdictions the right to decide on critical safety code provisions and if successful, they will put firefighters and the public at risk,” said International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) President Chief Larry J. Grorud, CFO, MIFireE. “These anti-sprinkler bills will set a dangerous precedent.” Chief Grorud said there are now bills in approximately 15 states that ignore the well established, life-safety benefit of sprinklers and if passed, will take away a real opportunity to enhance public and firefighter safety.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), approximately 80 percent of all fires occur in homes, but when home fire sprinklers are present the chances of dying in a home fire decrease by about 80 percent. NFPA has no record of a multiple fatality fire in a sprinklered building where the system operated. All model safety codes now call for the installation of residential sprinklers in new home construction.

“Now is not the time to backslide on fire and life safety. It is important to move this technology forward with the adoption of sprinkler provisions from the model codes into state and local codes in order to bring this added level of safety to all citizens,” said Georgia State Fire Marshal Alan R. Shuman, president of the National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM).

“We see the devastating consequences of home fires every day, and we know sprinklers save lives,” International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) General President Harold A. Schaitberger said. “These

misguided legislative efforts will make it harder to keep people safe, protect their property, and will jeopardize the lives of firefighters.”

“Home fire sprinklers provide an added level of safety because they control heat, smoke and flames allowing occupants time to escape and giving firefighters a safer environment,” said National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) Chairman Philip C. Stittleburg. "The NVFC's state association members have been fighting and will continue to push back against attempts to restrict fire sprinkler installation in new residential construction."

Roughly 90 percent of the time, fires are contained by the operation of just one sprinkler. When sprinklers are not present, the fire can burn for minutes, raging out of control, filling the home with toxic smoke and resulting in far greater losses. A recent NFPA report states that sprinklers reduce the average property loss by 71 percent per fire.

Anyone interested in public safety and learning more about home fire sprinklers can visit [www.firesprinklerinitiative.org](http://www.firesprinklerinitiative.org) .

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