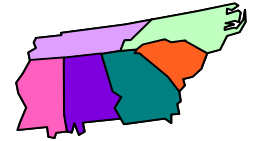




REGIONAL REPORT

Tennessee/South East Edition



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S.C. Senate passes sprinkler bill, delaying code to 2014

The S.C. Senate passed legislation today that would require homebuilders to install residential fire sprinklers in all new homes built after 2013.

In February, the state building council adopted the international code requiring all new construction to have sprinklers. The new code will go into effect in 2011 if no legislation is passed to prevent it, but the bill that passed the senate Tuesday would delay the code until January 1, 2014.

The code and pending legislation has led to a lot of debate between fire safety officials who say that sprinklers save lives and homebuilders that say it should be a personal choice and that requiring sprinklers would reduce the number of people who could buy property.

The bill that passed the senate was a compromise between the parties and will now be sent back to the S.C. House of Representatives for a vote.

Sen. Ray Cleary, R-Murrells Inlet, said that there was a lot of information initially about the cost, installation and consequences of requiring sprinklers.

"I think the Senate did the right thing by putting the code off so people can get educated," he said.

This compromise was due to the hard work of a great coalition in the State of South Carolina, this shows exactly what can happen when the Fire Service and the Fire Sprinkler Industry works together to accomplish something for a state and/or a community – The Editor

Sprinklers put out apartment blaze in North Charleston South Carolina

A fire that broke out in a North Charleston apartment Monday night was quickly extinguished by a sprinkler system, officials said.

Shortly after 10:30 p.m., the North Charleston Fire Department was dispatched to Silvana Oaks Apartments at 8439 Dorchester Road for a report of an apartment fire, said Bianca Sancic, fire public information officer.

When the first engine arrived a few minutes later, the fire had been extinguished and the building was evacuated, Sancic said. Damage was limited to a small area of the bathroom in one apartment.

Woman Found Dead After Apartment Fire in Nashville, Tennessee

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Firefighters were on the scene of high rise apartment fire in Belle Meade on Wednesday evening. An 80-year-old woman was found dead. Officials have not yet released her cause of death. The fire was contained to one room on the 9th floor and the sprinkler system put it out. The floor above and below were evacuated. There were no injuries during the evacuation. People were able to return to their apartment later in the evening. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.



*As Paul Harvey would say “now for the rest of the story”
The 80 year old lady was wearing an oxygen mask and was smoking at the time of the fire. – the editor*

A Word From A Builder Who Knows

“We believe today’s homes are built to be safe. But we also understand how devastating fire can be. One of our relatives lost their entire home to a fire caused by a candle. The fire spread quickly and they were lucky to get out. Even with that experience, we never thought about fire sprinkler systems in single-family homes until we were required to install them in an entire development. At first we were concerned about the added cost and what they would look like. Once the development was complete, the sprinkler systems increased the value of the homes and our buyers’ insurance rates were lower. The sprinklers are concealed, so you really don’t notice them. We use the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition’s free educational material during our open houses and when we do our final walk-through with our buyers. Some of our homebuyers worry that if their smoke alarm goes off when cooking in the kitchen, it will set off the sprinklers. The HFSC materials help us inform our customers that each sprinkler is activated by heat, not smoke, and it takes a real fire to activate one sprinkler. If we build another home for ourselves, we plan to protect it with a home fire sprinkler system.”



*Bill and Janet Hall
Goad & Hall Builders, Pleasant View, TN*

This information furnished by the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (HFSC) is a nonprofit and noncommercial educational organization that offers FREE information to homebuilders and their buyers. HFSC’s *BUILT FOR LIFE* video provides homebuilders with details about the design and installation of home fire sprinkler systems. Builders can request the *LIVING WITH SPRINKLERS* video for people living in sprinklered homes. For more information about HFSC’s free information, visit www.HomeFireSprinkler.org.

NFSA Offers Online Support

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Efforts to block the adoption of residential fire-sprinkler regulations prompted the National Fire Sprinkler Association to an [online resource toolbox](#), which will provide community leaders with the information necessary to make the case for fire-sprinkler code adoption.

“The NFSA has experienced an upswing in requests for information regarding local code adoption and/or standalone fire sprinkler legislation,” President John Viniello said.

The NFSA’s free resource toolbox offers reports, articles, documents and brochures related to residential fire sprinklers and fire safety that provide guidance for making the case for fire-sprinkler code adoption. The goal of the toolbox is to highlight resources that have proved beneficial at the local level. Reports include the *Home Fire Sprinkler Cost Assessment* and the *Residential Fire Sprinklers and Housing Economics /A Legislator’s Guide to Life Safety*.

“Local community leaders need all of the latest information in one place, where it is easy to access and use for their specific needs,” said Shane Ray, the organization’s director of public fire protection. “It can be overwhelming when you realize how many resources are available.”

Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act of 2009

We need your help in getting our Senators to sign up as a co-sponsors, please use the Cap Wiz program on the NFSA Web Site.

To view the up to date information on the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act please go to www.nfsa.org or click on the

Nightclub Inferno Sparked an Industry’s Push

*By Matthew Murray
Roll Call Staff*

On Feb. 20, 2003, a fire ripped through a Rhode Island nightclub, killing 100 concertgoers who had gathered to watch the glam-rock band Great White.

The tragic event made national headlines. In response to the blaze, state, county and city officials across the country scrambled to update their building and fire codes, while Members began figuring out how the federal government should intervene.

At the time, officials groused that the nightclub’s lack of a sprinkler system exacerbated the flames. An obscure trade group representing fire sprinkler companies saw an opening and began working with Rep. James Langevin (D-R.I.) and other Members to develop possible tax incentives that could benefit the industry.

The National Fire Sprinkler Association’s point man on Capitol Hill back then was Jim Dalton. A former suburban Washington, D.C., fire marshal, Dalton lobbied for four consecutive Congresses to reduce the number of years it takes for commercial and residential property owners to recoup their investments in sprinkler systems.

He got nowhere. And after 17 years with the group, Dalton retired last year.

Less than a year later, Dalton’s back.

With a new contract in hand, the one-time Montgomery County, Md., official is reviving a coalition of more than 30 corporations, trade associations and fire safety organizations that want to rewrite the tax rules for building owners who are looking to make sprinkler upgrades.

But this time, with the rock concert a distant memory, Dalton has rewritten his lobbying script to address lawmakers' most immediate concern nowadays: unemployment. While safety is still a top priority, he is gathering steam in Congress with his claim that the legislation will not only put furloughed sprinkler fitters back on the job, but also carpenters, plumbers, electricians and other tradesmen who have to come in afterward and patch up the holes around the systems.

"It's certainly easy to make the case that you're doing good things with this in a jobs bill," Dalton said in an interview this week. "When you retrofit a sprinkler system in a building, there's a lot of work."

Making a Splash

To build support, Dalton's group has begun airing radio ads that encourage listeners to call their Senators to support the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act, which he hopes will be attached to a larger Senate jobs package that is expected to come up this summer.

The legislation would allow building owners who install sprinklers to depreciate their upgrades over five years, rather than the current 39 years for commercial property and 27.5 for residential buildings. In the House, the bill is sponsored by Langevin and 137 co-sponsors, while Sen. Tom Carper (D-Del.) and five of his colleagues, including Republican Sens. Susan Collins (Maine) and Richard Burr (N.C.), are sponsoring a Senate version.

In a statement, Carper called the bill "a win-win-win for the American people" and cited industry research that says the bill would create nearly 10,000 jobs.

"This legislation would improve safety, spur economic activity, and create jobs across the construction industry which has been devastated by the recent recession," Carper said. "Small businesses, which are the heart and soul of our economy, would particularly benefit from the bill since over 70 percent of the nation's sprinkler contractors are small businesses."

Collective Voices

Dalton's coalition includes a vast swath of industry groups that could benefit considerably from a tax incentive to install sprinkler systems in older buildings. The coalition includes fire safety groups like the Congressional Fire Services Institute and the Fire Department Safety Officers Association, as well as the American Health Care Association, the American Hotel and Lodging Association, the American Institute of Architects, the American Insurance Association, the Society of Fire Protection Engineers and the Associated General Contractors of America.

Sprinkler maker SimplexGrinnell is also working with Dalton's coalition, according to a membership list. The company is a subsidiary of Tyco International, which is based in the home state of bill co-sponsor Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.).

Dalton says the biggest obstacle to the measure is its projected cost. Earlier iterations of the bill garnered a \$2.2 billion price tag from the Congressional Budget Office, he said, a figure that would mean each of the nearly 10,000 jobs expected to be created would be about \$225,000 a pop.

But he argues that Congressional bean counters aren't taking into consideration the money taxpayers would save when fewer buildings are lost to fires.

"We've got this score that we think is kind of unfair, but scoring is the biggest secret in Washington," he said. "We've met with joint tax scoring people a number of times over the last several years without much progress."

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Peter Ginaitt, who was one of the first responders at the Station nightclub the evening of the fire, which was sparked by the band's errant pyrotechnics, said earlier this week that Members should not simply decide the measure's fate on a cost-benefit analysis.

"It was a proverbial perfect storm, with a rapidly moving fire ... with walls that were totally constructed of combustible materials," Ginaitt said. "Talking to the survivors afterwards, they said the fire beat them to the door."

Now a hospital executive, Ginaitt said federal lawmakers should both apply pressure to business owners to make the upgrades and entice them to do so.

Still, he said, regardless of the motivations for passing the bill, if it does pass, it will put a bookend on a horrible situation.

"The fact that they're resurrecting this really makes me feel happy," Ginaitt added.