



The Voice of the Fire Sprinkler Industry

The City of Portland, Me, Approves Requirement for Fire Sprinklers in All New Homes

The City of Portland, Me., has approved building code changes that will require all new one- and two-family homes and townhouses built in the city to be equipped with life-saving fire sprinkler systems. These new codes will take effect on September 15, 2010.

Portland's Code Review Board voted on August 16, 2010, by an 8-0 margin, to adopt the 2009 editions of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) codes 1 and 101 which include the requirement for life- and property-saving fire sprinklers in all new homes and townhomes. Support for the fire sprinkler requirement in the state of Maine continues to grow as Portland is the third, and largest, city in the state to adopt the requirement, following Westbrook and Rockland.

“Portland's decision to adopt the updated building codes is a great victory for the residents and fire service professionals in the city as this life-safety measure will provide significant protection from the dangers of residential fires,” said NFSA President John Viniello. “The increased support of the fire sprinkler requirement throughout the state of Maine is an indication of its previous success and evidence of its benefits for the community.”

Portland's building code changes have come during a growing fire problem in the U.S. About 85 percent of all fires occur in the home and many are fueled by new “lightweight” construction and more flammable home contents. Smoke detectors are not enough in residential fire protection, as the time to escape a house fire has dwindled from 17 minutes 20 years ago to three minutes today. This poses a severe risk to firefighters as they now have less time to do their job and save residents' lives and property.

“As the fire problem continues to grow in the U.S., it is becoming increasingly important for state and local boards to adopt the fire sprinkler requirement,” said Tim Travers, NFSA New England Regional Manager. “Portland's recent decision is part of a growing trend to provide the safety umbrella of fire sprinklers as a standard rather than an option.”

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