



The Voice of the Fire Sprinkler Industry

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**For Immediate Release**

**International Code Council Members Pass Proposal to Require Fire Sprinklers in All New Single- and Two-Family Housing in the U.S.**

*NFSA Efforts Make Fire Sprinklers “Required Equipment” Nationally*

**Patterson, N.Y. (September 22, 2008)** - The National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA), the longest-tenured fire sprinkler advocacy organization in the U.S., has reported that members of the International Code Council (ICC) approved a life- and property-saving residential sprinkler code proposal that had significant backing from the NFSA at the just-concluded 2008 Code Hearings in Minneapolis.

Requiring a two-thirds majority to pass and become part of building codes across the nation, the code change proposal received 73 percent of the votes on the September 21 ballot. This strong support for requiring fire sprinklers in new homes showed a large majority of code officials in the U.S. believe fire sprinklers are an integral part of safety in new one- and two-family housing.

ICC’s voting members – who were government or municipality representatives engaged in the administration, formulation or enforcement of laws, regulations or ordinances relating to public health, safety and welfare – passed the proposal, which stated that effective January 1, 2011, an approved automatic fire sprinkler system shall be installed in new one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses in accordance with NFPA 13D.

In addition, fire sprinklers will be required in all townhomes effective immediately with the publication of the next International Residential Code (IRC), receiving almost 75 percent of the votes at the hearing.

“Countless lives will be saved as a result of these historic code changes,” said John Viniello, president of NFSA. “I am proud of America’s fire service communities and representatives, the voting members of the ICC, and building officials for joining together for such an important cause. It has been a long fight but we’ve never wavered. Our collective dedication and perseverance has prevailed as we emerge victorious on this critical public safety issue.”

NFSA played a critical role in educating code officials on the importance of this change. NFSA mobilized its members to carry the positive messages about fire sprinklers’ benefits to

local officials throughout the country, while debunking myths promoted by the main opposition to this code change: large national and regional homebuilders.

“This code change, which will affect local and state building codes nationwide, will provide tremendous benefits to the public, saving lives and property in every state of the union,” said Fred Benn, Chairman of NFSA’s Residential Committee. “We are incredibly proud of our work in taking the simple idea that fire sprinklers save lives and property and convinced a large segment of the country’s governmental code professionals to adopt a code change that would be truly revolutionary for our nation’s residents.”

Among NFSA’s key activities in promoting this code change:

- NFSA’s Regional Managers played a leading role in assisting the International Residential Code Fire Sprinkler Coalition with a massive, nationwide “Get Out the Vote” campaign
- NFSA’s Regional Managers played a leading role in educating industry members on how to discuss the important issues with their local officials
- Its Engineering Department provided technical data on sprinkler function and systems to voters
- The NFSA Public Fire Protection unit helped show the real effects of fire, staging burn trailer demonstrations for ICC delegates and showcasing members of the NFSA’s Advocacy Coalition – people affected by fires through personal injury or the loss of a loved one

NFSA joined forces with the International Residential Code Fire Sprinkler Coalition – a large alliance of fire industry professional organizations, including fire chiefs and fire marshals, fire code associations, and citizen advocacy groups – through educating and canvassing ICC members to vote for the code change. The International Residential Code Fire Sprinkler Coalition garnered the support of over 100 allied organizations from over 45 states under the leadership of past Chief Ronny Coleman and code consultant Jeff Shapiro.

“This is not a one person or one organization victory,” added Viniello. “We are grateful to the ICC for implementing a process that allows for the call for change to be heard and provides a forum for change to take place. In addition, we thank the International Residential Code Fire Sprinkler Coalition for joining so many organizations together to bring us to victory.”

NFSA’s efforts helped the industry rise above an earlier narrow defeat. “At the previous vote in 2007, we saw 58 percent of voters vote for these fire sprinkler requirements in the national code,” Viniello noted. “With the gains shown in this 2008 vote, we have proven that fire sprinklers should be an important requirement in all new single-family and two-family homes. In achieving this goal, we have made a significant, positive impact on the lives of Americans.”

### **About the National Fire Sprinkler Association**

Established in 1905, the National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA) is the voice of the fire sprinkler industry. NFSA leads the drive to get life-saving fire sprinklers into all buildings;

provides support and resources for its members – fire sprinkler contractors, manufacturers and suppliers; and educates authorities having jurisdiction of fire control matters. Headquartered in Patterson, N.Y., NFSA has regional operations offices throughout the country. [www.nfsa.org](http://www.nfsa.org).

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