



Residential Fire Sprinkler Position Statement

The Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts and the Fire Prevention Association of Massachusetts adopt the position that all new construction one and two-family dwellings, should be built with fire sprinklers installed to protect the public, fire service personnel, the structure, its contents, the environment and the economy.

In an effort to reduce the number of deaths from an average of 3,000 citizens and 100 firefighters annually and to avert an estimated \$8.6 billion in direct property loss due to fires annually (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2009), we must include residential fire sprinklers as an integral part of a community's fire protection. The increased demands made today on local fire departments, and the changes in building materials and home contents, increase the risk to firefighters and the public. It's time to add in-home active fire protection as a baseline in all new building construction.

Our position is based on several key facts.

- These life-saving systems respond quickly and effectively to the presence of a fire. When sprinklers are present, they save lives.
- If you have a reported fire in your home, the risk of dying decreases by about 80 percent when sprinklers are present.
- People in homes with sprinklers are protected against significant property loss—sprinklers reduce the average property loss by 71% per fire.
- Model safety codes now require the use of home fire sprinklers in new one- and two-family homes. These requirements offer the highest level of safety to protect the people of your community.
- Home sprinkler systems respond quickly to reduce the heat, flames, and smoke from a fire, giving families valuable time to get to safety and significantly reduce property damage.
- Roughly 90% of the time, fires are contained by the operation of just one sprinkler.

Fire sprinklers have been around for more than a century, protecting commercial and industrial properties and public buildings. What most people don't realize is that the same life-saving technology is also available for homes. On average, eight people die in home fires every day in the United States – a total of 2,865 deaths. Home fires accounted for 84% of all civilian fire deaths and resulted in 13,600 injuries (Ahrens, 2009). By installing these life-saving devices in new homes a large number of residents are ensured that they can enjoy the same level of safety found in many offices, schools, apartments, and public buildings.

Now is the time for the fire service to adapt to the changes in construction techniques; new technologies have become the norm in construction (engineered light-weight construction materials and design), and building contents have become more flammable and more toxic. We must meet these changes and protect our communities in proactive, rather than reactive, approaches. The

current built environment and furnishings necessitate the addition of built-in fire protection. Fire sprinklers reduce the risk associated with these new building components to citizens and firefighters.

We further state that we do not support and will oppose regulations that prevent or discourage the installation of fire sprinklers. We also stand against fees and charges that create economic barriers to the installation of fire sprinklers. We support incentives for business owners and citizens to protect their buildings, thus protecting our citizens, their property and fire service personnel.

This position statement supports the priorities of the Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts and the Fire Prevention Association of Massachusetts and we pledge to work with the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), other IAFC divisions and states, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the home building industry and other organizations which are interested in being proactive in providing community fire protection. We welcome partners and collaborative efforts that support similar goals. It is time for us all to take action and work together to protect lives, property and the environment.

Signed

Chief Thomas Poulombe

President, FCAM

Signed

Captain Rick Justin

President, FPAM

Sources

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