



# City of Oroville

Building Division - Community Development Department

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## RESIDENTIAL FIRE SPRINKLER FACT SHEET

**Residential fire sprinklers will be required to be installed in all newly constructed single-family dwellings as of January 1, 2011 per the 2010 California Residential and Fire Codes.**

80% of all fire deaths occur in the home. The single most effective way to prevent fire-related deaths is the installation of residential fire sprinklers. Combined fire sprinklers with smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in a home fire by 82%.



In 2002, 79% of fires occurred in the home, resulting in 2,670 deaths. The number of deaths could have been reduced to 481 if smoke alarms and fire sprinklers would have been installed in the homes.

Fire sprinklers are also an advantage for the environment. U.S. fire department responded to nearly 400,000 home structure fires in 2007. Fire sprinklers minimize the amount of materials burned, property damaged, and amount of water used in the event of a fire. Fire hoses on average use 10 times the water sprinklers do to contain a fire.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

#### **What is the cost to install residential fire sprinklers?**

The cost for residential fire sprinkler systems are approximately \$0.38-\$3.66 per square foot depending on the home type/floor plan and if the home is built by a developer or owner-builder. The average cost for fire sprinkler installations is \$1.61 per square foot based on the 2007 study completed by The Fire Protection Research Foundation. Fire sprinklers have a similar cost per square foot to carpeting, tile, etc.

#### **When a fire occurs does every sprinkler head activate and release water?**

No, sprinkler heads are individually activated by heat. Studies have shown that 92% of all fires were controlled by two or less sprinkler heads.

#### **Is damage from the fire sprinklers more than the fire itself?**

No, water damage from a home fire sprinkler system will be much less than the damage caused by the water used by firefighters to put out the fire and much less smoke/fire damage as well.

#### **If I burn a piece of toast will the sprinklers activate?**

No, fire sprinklers do not respond to smoke, they respond to high temperatures of a fire— about 135-165 degrees F. Smoke caused by cooking, cigars, or similar sources of smoke will not cause the sprinklers to activate.

#### **Are fire sprinklers designed to save property and not lives?**

Fire sprinkler systems offer a high level of life safety. There is not any record of any multiple fire related deaths in a completely protected sprinklered public assembly, educational, institutional, or residential building where the fire sprinkler system operated properly.

#### **Is the fire sprinkler system aesthetically pleasing in the home (i.e. are they ugly)?**

Residential sprinkler systems are designed so that they can be recessed in the ceiling and blend in with most décor.

#### **Do fire sprinklers increase or affect my homeowner's insurance?**

Most insurance companies provide financial incentives to encourage homeowners to protect their homes from fire loss. A study completed with insurance companies Allstate, State Farm, Farmers, Auto Club Enterprises, and Nationwide show discounts ranging from 0 to 10%.

- State Farm 10% discount
- Farmers 10% discount
- Allstate 10% discount
- Auto Club Enterprises 0% discount
- Nationwide 6% discount

#### **With Fire Sprinklers**



#### **Without Fire Sprinklers**

#### **How are fire sprinkler systems maintained?**

A residential fire sprinkler system is basically maintenance free. The only testing required on a regular basis is opening the drain/test valve to check the alarm operation. The rest of the system is designed to operate properly for 20 years or more without any maintenance.

#### **References:**

- [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)
- [www.firesprinklerassoc.org](http://www.firesprinklerassoc.org)
- [www.fire.ca.gov](http://www.fire.ca.gov)
- [www.homefiresprinkler.org](http://www.homefiresprinkler.org)