



FEMA

June 1, 2009

A Message from the United States Fire Administrator about Residential Fire Sprinklers

The U.S. Fire Administration has promoted research, development, testing, and demonstrations of residential fire sprinkler systems for more than 30 years. The research regarding residential fire sprinkler systems has indisputably demonstrated the following:

- Residential fire sprinklers can save the lives of building occupants.
- Residential fire sprinklers can save the lives of firefighters called to respond to a home fire.
- Residential fire sprinklers can significantly offset the risk of premature building collapse posed to firefighters by lightweight construction components when they are involved in a fire.
- Residential fire sprinklers can substantially reduce property loss caused by a fire.

The time has come to use this affordable, simple and effective technology to save lives and property where it matters most – in our homes.

In the past year, the National debate about the benefits of residential fire sprinklers passed a major milestone with the adoption of a change to the International Residential Code that will require fire sprinklers in all new construction. This code change survived rigorous scrutiny, during which all interested parties had ample opportunity to comment on the technical merits of the issue. Since then, parties who oppose this life-saving technology have started a vigorous campaign to enact laws at the state level that will prohibit adoption of sprinkler requirements for new homes.

I encourage every member of the fire service to stay abreast of this rapidly changing situation, and to be ready to voice any concerns that you have about proposed legislation to your respective state legislature. The Fire Sprinkler Initiative website has been established to provide a central clearing house for up-to-date information. Log on to the site at <http://firesprinklerinitiative.org> – stay vigilant and keep the fire service community informed of developments in your area. Only by working together can we save lives.

It is the position of the U.S. Fire Administration that all Americans should be protected from death, injury, and property loss resulting from fire in their residence. All homes should be equipped with both smoke alarms and residential fire sprinklers, and all families should have and practice an emergency escape plan. The U.S. Fire Administration supports all efforts to reduce the tragic toll of fire losses in this nation, including the recently adopted changes to the International Residential Code that require residential fire sprinklers in all new residential construction.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Glenn A. Gaines".

Glenn A. Gaines
Acting Assistant Administrator
U.S. Fire Administration