Make a Convincing Case for Home Fire Sprinklers

Support the adoption of home fire sprinkler requirements by highlighting these key points to community members, legislators, and code-making authorities.

Home fires are a major problem in North America
Fire in the home poses a significant threat to the people of your community. On average 2,500 people each year are dying in U.S. home fires. Further showcasing the enormity of this problem is that roughly 80 percent of all fire deaths are the result of home fires.

Smoke alarms aren't enough
Make no mistake: smoke alarms are crucial and significantly cut the risk of dying in a home fire. But these devices do nothing to suppress a fire. Home fire sprinklers in coordination with smoke alarms have been proven to protect lives and property against fire. In fact, sprinklers cut the risk of dying in a home fire by an astounding 80 percent.

Sprinklers do more than save lives
Sprinklers can also save your home. In fact, these devices can reduce the average property loss per home by about 70 percent.

Home fire sprinklers are cost effective
A report commissioned by the Fire Protection Research Foundation places the average national cost of installing sprinklers in new homes at $1.35 per sprinklered square foot or about one percent of the total construction cost. While costs can vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, people tend to pay more for granite countertops.

Beware of false claims
Sprinkler opponents like to tout that "newer homes are safer homes." In actuality, newer homes tend to have larger open spaces, lightweight construction materials, and furniture stuffed with combustible materials—all factors that exacerbate fire spread and lead to homes burning more quickly than ever before. These threats place both homeowners and firefighters at significant risk.

Dispel myths on sprinkler effectiveness
Hollywood has it wrong: when one home fire sprinkler goes off, the rest don't follow. Nearly 85 percent of the time, only one sprinkler activates during a fire. And since sprinklers use significantly less water to suppress a fire than a fire hose, water damage is significantly reduced.

Visit NFPA's Fire Sprinkler Initiative website for more information.

*Data referenced by NFPA and other sources