

Myths and facts about automatic home fire sprinklers

Automatic sprinklers systems have enjoyed an enviable record of protecting life and property for over 100 years. Statistics demonstrate that there has never been a multiple loss of life in a fully sprinklered building where the system operated as designed. Sprinklers are a cost-effective technology that provides for a high level of life safety. Residential fire sprinkler technology is proving both reliable and effective. Property losses are 85% less in residences with fire sprinklers compared to those without. As positive as this information is however, there are still common misunderstandings about the operation and effectiveness of home fire sprinkler systems. The following are some of the more common myths:

- **Myth 1: "Water damage from a sprinkler system will be more extensive than fire damage"**

Fact: Water damage from a home sprinkler system will be much less severe than the damage caused by water from fire-fighting hose lines or smoke and fire damage if the fire goes unabated. Quick response sprinklers release approximately 8-24 gallons of water per minute compared to 50-125 gallons per minute released by a fire hose.

- **Myth 2: "When a fire activates one sprinkler head, all sprinkler heads will activate"**

Fact: Residential sprinklers respond independently to a rated temperature setting of approximately 165 degrees Fahrenheit. Usually, only one sprinkler is activated to extinguish or limit the fire to its room of origin.

- **Myth 3: "Sprinklers might activate by accident"**

Fact: The odds of accidental discharge due to a manufacturing defect are 1 in 16 million per year.

- **Myth 4: "A sprinkler system might freeze in winter and cause water damage"**

Fact: Much like your plumbing system, your sprinkler system piping is installed on inside walls adjacent to the ceiling framing and then insulated to entrap the available heat lost from the living area below.

- **Myth 5: "A smoke alarm on its own offers adequate protection"**

Fact: Smoke alarms will save lives by providing a much-needed early warning system. However, smoke alarms do nothing to extinguish a growing fire. Too often, battery operated smoke alarms fail to function because of dead or missing batteries. In order for smoke alarms to be effective in saving lives, they must be working and they must be maintained on a regular basis.

- **Myth 6: "I can't afford a sprinkler system"**

Fact: This is generally a statement of priority. We rarely hesitate when buying a more comfortable couch, plusher carpet, the latest stereo equipment or an upgraded computer. A sprinkler system can be installed in a new home for as little as \$1.50 per square foot which, in many cases, would represent less than 2% of the total construction cost. System installation in existing homes is simple but more expensive. Since your family, irreplaceable possessions and home are a precious part of your life, you can't afford not to have a sprinkler system.

Myth 7: "Sprinkler Systems are unattractive"

Fact: Fire damage is unattractive. Quick response residential sprinkler systems are designed to save your life by providing attractive ceiling and side mount sprinkler heads that blend unobtrusively into your room décor. Sprinklers, cover plates, and escutcheons can be custom painted by the manufacturer to match any décor.