

Frequently Asked Questions Continued

Q: Can cigarette smoke, burnt food, or other smoke activate sprinklers just like smoke alarms?

A: No. Sprinkler systems only activate under the high heat conditions of a fire. Each sprinkler head is held shut by a fusible link that needs to be heated to a pre-determined temperature (usually at least 160 degrees F) before activating and letting water out.

Q: Why should I put in a system when there's going to be a lot of damage to my home during a fire anyways?

A: Sprinkler systems have been shown to significantly reduce the amount of damage to a home during a fire. Keep in mind, only one sprinkler head activates at a time, not all the heads throughout the home. The water spray keeps the fire size small and prevents toxic smoke from spreading throughout your home. In contrast, a fire that grows without intervention can engulf an entire room in as little as 3 minutes, cut off escape routes, spread toxic gases that can overcome people in their sleep, and require much more water to extinguish by the time the fire department arrives.

Q: Do I get an insurance discount?

A: Studies have shown that many insurance companies offer from 5 to 10% discounts. That amount may vary if your system is monitored by a security company, or if any extra areas (such as garages) are also protected. Contact your insurance agent to find out more.

The City of Castle Pines wants you to decide what level of fire protection is appropriate for your new home. We encourage you to talk to representatives of the City, fire department, and homebuilder to find out more. Your fire department web sites and the Colorado Fire Sprinkler Coalition (<http://www.firesprinklerinitiative.org/colorado>) may also be helpful and include links to videos showing sprinkler activations, fire behavior, answers to common concerns, and much more.

Automatic Residential Fire Sprinkler System Consumer Information Handout

Congratulations on deciding to purchase a new home! With this purchase, you will make an important decision for your family about whether to have an automatic residential fire sprinkler system (the "sprinkler system" or "system") installed in your home. We hope this information will help you understand sprinkler systems and encourage you to contact your homebuilder or fire department to find out more.



The City of Castle Pines Passes a Law Regarding Home Fire Sprinklers

Townhouses: Effective March 1, 2013, the City of Castle Pines requires all new townhouses to be protected by an automatic residential (“home”) fire sprinkler system.

Single-family detached homes and duplexes: Effective March 22, 2013, the City of Castle Pines requires home builders to offer purchasers the option of having a fire sprinkler system installed in their new home, at the purchaser’s cost. This law requires that the purchaser be given the right to accept or decline the option to install a sprinkler system.

What is an Automatic Residential Fire Sprinkler System?

Sprinkler systems are designed to control or extinguish most home fires in order to allow you and your family more time to escape. Similar to your household plumbing system, the system is a series of pipes located in the walls of your home. The pipes are filled with water and connected to sprinkler heads located strategically throughout the home. The pipe supplying the sprinkler heads is protected from freezing by insulation and the heat within your home. In some cases, an antifreeze solution is used for added freeze protection. Typically, the sprinkler heads are either completely concealed behind cover plates or protrude out of the ceiling or wall about an inch.

A sprinkler system may be designed as a separate network of pipes (stand-alone systems) or combined with your household plumbing pipes (multipurpose systems). The specific design options available for your home and associated costs will be provided by your homebuilder, and each system must be designed and installed in accordance with applicable building codes.

During the high heat of a fire, individual sprinkler heads are heated to a temperature of at least 160 degrees F before they activate and spray water on the fire. Contrary to what you might see on TV or the internet, all of the sprinkler heads do not activate at the same time; only the head closest to the fire. Most fires are extinguished or controlled by one or two heads.

Why Automatic Residential Fire Sprinkler Systems are recommended by your Fire Departments

Your new home will have modern safety features including smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, emergency exit windows on each floor, modern appliances, and modern electrical wiring. These features have reduced home fire deaths over the past decades. However, fires, deaths, and injuries still occur in homes, and many are caused by cooking, smoking, heating, candles, and other unintentional activities or equipment failures. And if a fire does start, it can burn hotter and faster than years ago.

A properly installed and functioning system may provide an added layer of life and property protection by quickly extinguishing or controlling fires before the fire department arrives, limit smoke and toxic gases spreading throughout your home, and help to maintain the structural integrity of the home for the safety of your family and firefighters.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do automatic residential fire sprinkler systems require additional maintenance?

A: Sprinkler systems are designed to require as little maintenance as possible. All systems should be periodically scanned to ensure nothing is blocking or hanging from sprinkler heads, there is no paint on sprinkler heads or cover plates (unless applied by the manufacturer), insulation is in place, and all rooms remain heated during winter months. Multipurpose systems combined with your household plumbing require no further maintenance. Stand-alone systems that use antifreeze solutions should be checked annually to ensure proper antifreeze solutions. The installer of your system will be able to provide other helpful tips.

Q: Are sprinkler systems prone to leaking or accidental discharge?

A: No. With proper installation, testing, and maintenance, sprinkler systems are even more reliable than household plumbing. The systems are installed by licensed plumbers or sprinkler fitters and the system piping and components are tested to higher standards than regular plumbing. Similar to plumbing, rare causes of damage can include physical damage to system components, forgetting to keep a home heated while away in the winter, and puncturing pipe with drills or nails.