

# Home Sprinkler Systems Provide Fire Protection



**F**ire experts agree that to minimize fire's threat, a fire must be detected and suppressed while it is still small.

**F**ire may smolder for hours before bursting into flame, but, once flame appears, it may take only two minutes for a fire to spread to the contents, walls and ceilings of an entire room. Once that has happened, heat, flames or carbon monoxide will kill every occupant of the room almost immediately.

**E**xperience and tests show that automatic sprinkler systems act early in the course of a fire. Automatic sprinklers reduce both the heat and flames and the amount of smoke produced in a fire. Everything a fire produces that threatens life is reduced by sprinklers.

**T**here are, however, some common myths about automatic residential sprinkler systems.

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**Myth:** *When a fire occurs, every sprinkler head goes off.*

**Facts:** Sprinkler heads are individually activated by fire and fires are usually controlled with one head. In commercial or industrial fires, approximately 60 percent of fires are controlled with six or fewer heads.

**Myth:** *Sprinkler systems cause excessive water damage.*

**Facts:** Fire losses in residential occupancies are 85 percent less when sprinklers are installed. The water delivered by a sprinkler head is approximately 13 gallons per minute, while water from a fire department hose stream is 175 to 400 gallons per minute.

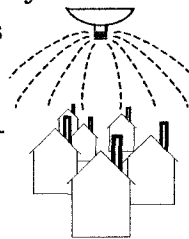


**Myth:** *Sprinkler heads frequently become accidentally activated.*

**Facts:** The accidental operation of a sprinkler head is rare. The Factory Mutual Insurance Company reports the accidental rate is one in 16 million sprinkler heads in service per year.

**Myth:** *Sprinklers are designed to protect property, but are not effective for life safety.*

**Facts:** Sprinklers provide a high level of life safety. Temperature and toxic by-products are controlled by sprinklers at levels that do not threaten occupants of industrial, commercial or residential occupancies.



**Myth:** *Fire sprinkler systems increase construction costs excessively.*

**Facts:** Residential sprinklers cost approximately \$1.00 per square foot of new construction. Design flexibility in building codes can partially offset sprinkler installation costs.

**Myth:** *Sprinkler heads are ugly and detract from the aesthetics of a home or business.*

**Facts:** Through new technology, the size and appearance of sprinkler heads have dramatically improved. Sprinkler heads can be flush-mounted in ceilings and are available in colors to match decor. Side-wall heads can replace ceiling heads. Temperature-sensitive fixtures can conceal heads.