

Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC)

Strengthens Canada's Building Codes

Improve Public and Firefighter Safety

BACKGROUND

The CAFC is actively participating in the 2015 review cycle of Canada's National Building Code and National Fire Code. The CAFC is confident that, by working with the Canadian Codes Centre and with the support of parliamentarians throughout this review, both property and lives can be saved.

Currently, Canada's National Building Code does not require new residential structures to be equipped with automatic sprinkler systems. Provincial building codes reflect the standards that are set in the National Building Code. By strengthening the National Building Code, the federal government can take a leadership role and encourage provinces to adopt these public safety standards.

THE FACTS ABOUT RESIDENTIAL SPRINKLERS

Residential sprinklers result in an 80% reduction in fire related deaths and fire related injuries

- Modern residential constructions and most new home furnishings have a greater combustible fire load, burning exponentially faster than older buildings, increasing the importance of sprinklers in new buildings.

Installation of sprinklers is a cost-effective way of improving the safety of new buildings

- It is a myth that residential sprinklers are cost-prohibitive. A residential sprinkler system costs 1-1.5% of the building costs.
- Installation of a sprinkler system can also reduce insurance rates, and drastically reduces fire related insurance claims.

Sprinkler systems do not react or activate the same way that smoke alarms do

- It is a myth that sprinkler systems are sensitive and false activations damage belongings.
- Unlike smoke alarms, sprinklers only activate when they detect heat and they release water in a fine mist. The sprinkler suppresses or extinguishes fire, preventing its spread and the production of lethal smoke.

Recommendation:

The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC) supports changes to the National Building & Fire Codes to mandate that all new residential occupancies, including single family dwellings, require the installation of residential fire sprinklers. The CAFC believes that the requirement for residential fire sprinklers will save lives, will reduce serious injuries to residents and firefighters and will reduce property damage to homes across Canada.