

RESIDENTIAL FIRE SPRINKLERS RECEIVE LANDSLIDE SUPPORT
International Code Council Vote Confirms Need for Life-Saving Technology in New Homes

MINNEAPOLIS - September 21, 2008 - Voting members of the leading building code body in the nation, the International Code Council (ICC), overwhelmingly supported a residential fire sprinkler requirement for all new one- and two-family homes and townhouses.

Fire service and building code officials united to approve the requirement and countered opposition. The code proposal, RB64, easily overcame a procedural requirement that mandated a super-majority of two-thirds approval. This represents an unprecedented step forward in advancing home fire safety in the United States.

The vote, held today in Minneapolis, was supported by 73 percent of the voting members in attendance.

The IRC Fire Sprinkler Coalition, an association of more than 100 fire service, building code official, and safety organizations representing 45 states, assumed a leadership position and secured unified support for this issue over the past 18 months.

"Our team worked hard to rally support throughout the United States for a residential fire sprinkler requirement, but our supporters deserve the recognition for showing up en masse in Minneapolis," said Ronny J. Coleman, president of the IRC Fire Sprinkler Coalition. "They know from experience that sprinklers are the answer to the nation's fire problem."

Fire deaths in the United States realized a dramatic decline over the past three decades as smoke alarms became common - today, more than 95 percent of homes have them. Still, more than 3,000 people die each year from fire, and a home burns every 80 seconds. Residential sprinklers are the only fire protection technology that works to rapidly contain fire, effectively giving families more time to escape the deadly heat and poisonous gases of an unchecked fire. Therefore, the proposal's passage has also pleased home safety advocates across the country.

"We work with families every day that are directly affected by the ravages of fire," said Meri-K Appy, president of the Home Safety Council. "We are thrilled not only because this moment has taken decades of demanding work to achieve, but because it provides protection for potential victims of future fires."

Kaaren Mann, a fire safety advocate and the mother of a fire victim stated in her testimony, "the cost to put sprinklers into the home where my daughter died would have been less than what I had to pay for the flowers at her funeral."

The sprinkler mandate will first appear in the 2009 International Residential Code® (IRC), which will be published by the end of the year. Forty-six states use the IRC as the basis of regulating new home construction.

"The vote was a historic moment in residential fire safety - and is a significant step in a long journey before sprinklers are installed in every new home," noted Ronny J. Coleman, president of the IRC Fire Sprinkler Coalition. "We're now going to move forward at the state and local level to ensure new code requirement is adopted."

About IRC Fire Sprinkler Coalition

Founded in 2007, the IRC Fire Sprinkler Coalition has grown to include more than 100 international, national and regional public safety organizations, including associations representing 45 states, all of whom support the mission of promoting residential fire sprinkler systems in new home construction. The Coalition was formed to educate public policymakers on the value of residential sprinkler systems and to support related legislation. More information can be found at www.IRCFireSprinkler.org.