



HOME FIRE SPRINKLER DAY

A project of NFPA's Fire Sprinkler Initiative
and the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition

Illinois Communities Recognized During First Annual Home Fire Sprinkler Day

More than 100 Illinois communities that adopted ordinances requiring home fire sprinklers in all new homes were recognized at the first annual Home Fire Sprinkler Day held at the Barrington Countryside Fire station this weekend. Dave Grupp, former Long Grove Fire Chief was also recognized for passing the first home fire sprinkler ordinance in Illinois in 1988.

The Illinois event was one of 50 held across the U.S. and Canada. It included a fire and sprinkler side-by-side demonstration where two furnished rooms were set on fire, one with a fire sprinkler. People could see how quickly flashover occurred, where everything in the room ignited. People could also see the sprinkler activate, keeping the fire from becoming deadly. There was a dramatic difference between the two rooms after the fires, with everything destroyed in the unsprinklered room and very little damage in the sprinklered room.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (HFSC) initiated this North America-wide campaign to raise awareness of the growing dangers of home fires and the life-saving benefits of installing fire sprinklers in new homes. The event held in Barrington was also supported by the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association, Illinois Fire Inspectors Association and the Illinois Fire Services Association.

“Home fires can become deadly in as little as two minutes,” said Jim Kreher, Fire Chief, Barrington-Countryside Fire Protection District. “That is not much time for people to escape, especially families with small children, older adults or people with disabilities.” Kreher said last year 114 people died in home fires in Illinois. This year, 61 people have died and thousands were injured.

According to Dan Riordan, president, Illinois Fire Inspectors' Association, fires are more deadly and spread quicker because of the contents in our homes. “Our furniture, carpeting and most of material is made out of synthetic material that causes fire to spread quickly and it produces toxic smoke,” he said. “Home fires also put our firefighters at risk through exposure that can lead to cancer and other health concerns.”

Tom Lia, executive director, Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board (NIFSAB) said home fire sprinklers have been in national model codes since 2006. Unfortunately there are builder and real estate groups that fight to keep sprinklers out of codes and try to prevent towns from passing ordinances.

Lia referenced Jim Pauley, president of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) who addressed a crowd in Maryland. “Powerful sprinkler opponents have convinced uniformed legislators and decision makers that requirement for home sprinkler technology are not necessary. Fire sprinklers are a vital component to ending

our nation's home fire problem. Jurisdictions allowing new homes to be built without sprinklers are allowing substandard housing," Pauley said.

At the event, each town that has a home fire sprinkler ordinance was recognized and received a certificate. "It was great to recognize Chief Grupp, the first to pass the ordinance 30 years ago," Lia said. ". He paved the way for others to educate decision makers so they understand the importance of protecting their citizens and their firefighters. Protecting new homes with fire sprinklers will make the future safer for residents, first responders, and entire communities for generations to come.

#