

FIRE SPRINKLERS FAQ's

<http://firemarshal.sccgov.org>

1. When does the Fire Marshal require my house to be sprinklered?

- A.** The following conditions require the installation of fire sprinklers throughout your house:
- (1) All new construction for structures over 3,600 square feet, or three or more stories in height.
 - (2) The addition of more than 500 square feet to an existing structure, causing the total area of the structure to exceed 3,600 square feet.
 - (3) All new construction of any size or an addition to an existing structure exceeding 500 square feet, where available fire-flow does not meet the minimum required fire-flow or the hydrant is located too far from the structure.
 - (4) All new construction, and additions greater than 500 square feet, where the property is located within the Wildland Urban Interface Fire Area.
 - (5) All structures served by an access road or driveways, which exceed 15% in slope.
 - (6) Projects where Standard Hydrants do not meet the required fire-flow or the nearest hydrant exceeds the maximum distance allowed by the Code may use sprinklers as outlined in our Standards CFMO-W1. See our **Standards** webpage to download this Standard.

2. What is a "Modified NFPA 13D" residential sprinkler system?

- A.** The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is an agency that writes nationally recognized standards and guidelines relative to fire and life safety. The California Building Standards Commission adopts many NFPA Standards by reference, including NFPA 13D, *Installation of Sprinkler Systems for One-and Two-Family Dwellings and Manufactured Homes*. The County Fire Marshal's Office has modified certain provisions of NFPA 13D for application within our jurisdiction when sprinklers are used as a mitigation. See our website Standards to view and download Standard CMFO-SP6 for details.

3. If I install fire sprinklers in my house do I have to worry about water damage?

- A.** A sprinkler head discharges far less water than a fire hose, and begins to control the fire long before the fire department arrives. Most fires in sprinklered homes are controlled, or even extinguished, by activation of a single fire sprinkler. Additional sprinklers will only activate (one at a time) if the first sprinkler is unable to control the fire. Many insurance companies offer discounts to homeowners with sprinkler systems for these reasons. For more information about how residential sprinkler systems operate, and can save your life, please visit the **Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition** website at <http://www.homefiresprinkler.org/>.

4. I'm worried that a sprinkler head will accidentally go off and damage my home.

- A.** Sprinkler heads do not activate without cause unless they have been damaged. It takes the high heat of a fire to independently activate each sprinkler, setting off that sprinklers discharge of water. Before the Fire Marshal's Office approves each system we require a pressure test at 200 psi (normal pressure is usually 50-70 psi) for two hours to look for leaks in the piping or at the sprinkler heads. Rest assured, residential sprinklers have been used throughout the country since the 1960's, and history has shown that the chances of accidental activation are 1 in 16,000,000.