

# Maryland State Fire Marshal

# News Release

Larry Hogan  
Governor

Brian S. Geraci  
State Fire Marshal



## STATE FIRE MARSHAL PROVIDES FACTS ABOUT HOME FIRE SPRINKLERS

**STATEWIDE** (February 2, 2016) – More than 2,500 fire deaths occur throughout the U.S. each year. Eight out of ten of those fire deaths resulted from home fires. In Maryland, during 2015, 45 fire deaths occurred in one and two family homes out of the reported 61 total fire deaths recorded in the state. ***“Most home fire deaths can be eliminated with the installation of residential fire sprinklers,”*** stated State Fire Marshal Brian S. Geraci. ***“The advantage of having fire sprinklers in your home far surpasses the ability of a working smoke alarm alone. A smoke alarm will notify you of a fire; however a fire sprinkler can react and in most cases extinguish a fire before it reaches excessive heat and lethal doses of carbon monoxide, as well as other dangerous toxins released during an uncontrolled fire”.***

Residential fire sprinklers are designed to allow more time to escape the effects of fire. The added benefit, in most cases, is a single fire sprinkler operates and either controls the fire or extinguishes it entirely before excessive irreparable fire damage occurs. Additionally, the quick action of a fire sprinkler helps to protect first responders by containing the fire to the fire origin, thereby reducing the chance for injuries and/or death. It should also be noted that residential fire sprinklers promote the longevity of the volunteer fire and rescue system.

Many myths and falsehoods about fire sprinklers exist in the minds of some Marylanders. The following facts and safety tips are provided to educate the public with factual information about the life saving benefits of residential fire sprinklers:

- Home fire sprinklers save lives and property by reacting during the early stages of the fires occurrence.
- Smoke does not affect fire sprinklers. Home fire sprinklers react to high heat temperatures of 135° - 165°.
- The risk of dying in a home fire decreases significantly when the home is equipped with a fire sprinkler system.
- Home fire sprinklers are easy to maintain by ensuring nothing is hanging from or blocking individual sprinkler heads, and a simple test by the homeowner or a contractor can be performed annually to ensure proper water flow. See a video about residential fire sprinklers on our website under the ‘NEWS’ category: [www.mdsp.maryland.gov/firemarshal](http://www.mdsp.maryland.gov/firemarshal)

- Only the sprinkler closest to the fire operates and sprays water directly on the fire. Due to the quick response of the fire sprinkler, the fire is almost always controlled and/or extinguished prior to the fire departments arrival.
- Homeowners experience lower insurance premiums with installed fire sprinkler systems. Insurance companies offer discounts from 5% to 30% off the fire related coverage of the home.
- Fire sprinklers are environmentally friendly. The amount of water run-off, pollution and fire damage is reduced by as much as 71%. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), water usage to fight a home fire can be reduced by as much as 91%.
- Materials found in homes today burn faster and at a higher heat release rate as compared to furnishings and small appliances made twenty or more years ago. Fires tend to grow much faster, which allows even less time to escape the deadly heat and toxins produced during a fire. From the first sounding of a smoke alarm, you only have approximately **three** minutes to escape the poisonous effects of fire.
- In 2015, 55.5% of the fatal home fires in Maryland occurred between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. when Marylanders are most vulnerable – while sleeping.

When considering moving into a home or when having a new home constructed, be sure to demand residential fire sprinklers as a requirement to protect your family, friends, pets and property.

Additional information about residential fire sprinklers may be found at these listed websites:

[www.homefiresprinkler.org](http://www.homefiresprinkler.org)  
[www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)  
[www.firesafefhome.org](http://www.firesafefhome.org)  
[www.mdsp.maryland.gov/firemarshal](http://www.mdsp.maryland.gov/firemarshal)  
[www.mdlifesafety.org](http://www.mdlifesafety.org)



The Office of the State Fire Marshal is an agency of the Department of State Police dedicated to helping protect citizens from fire and explosion through a comprehensive program of education, inspection, investigation and fire protection engineering.

For more information on fire safety call 1-800-525-3124, log onto our website at:

[www.mdsp.maryland.gov/firemarshal](http://www.mdsp.maryland.gov/firemarshal)  
[www.facebook.com/MarylandStateFireMarshal](https://www.facebook.com/MarylandStateFireMarshal)

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