



RESIDENTIAL FIRE SPRINKLERS

In 1990, the Montgomery County Code (the “Code”), Section 8-29A, “Residential Fire Sprinklers,” was modified to require sprinklers in multi-unit residential construction and to require that they be an option in single-family construction. The exact wording in the Code is as follows:

A building permit must not be issued for the construction or reconstruction of any multiunit residential building, townhouse, or group home, unless the plans include the installation in each dwelling unit and any attached accessory structure of a fire sprinkler system...

Before a contract for construction or sale is signed, the builder of each detached single-family dwelling unit must offer to install, at the buyer's option, a fire sprinkler system that complies with this Section. The builder must list the fire sprinkler system as an option on sales brochures, and the builder or an agent must provide each buyer point-of-sale information that clearly and fairly explains the benefits and costs of the sprinkler system.....[also]....The builder of each subdivision that contains more than 4 detached single-family dwelling units must install in the primary sales model a fire sprinkler system that complies with this Section before any model home is shown to a prospective buyer.

The Director of the Department of Permitting Services, Robert Hubbard, and Deputy Chief of Fire and Rescue Services, Leroy Oettinger, want to remind builders of these code provisions so that the intended public benefit of reducing fire-related deaths and injuries in single-family dwellings can be realized.

To ensure that builders are complying with Section 8-29A, the Departments of Permitting Services (“DPS”) and Fire and Rescue Services (“DFRS”) will jointly undertake inspection of residential construction, beginning in October 1998. Inspectors will check sales

models for sprinkler systems; check sales brochures for mention of fire-sprinkler systems as a buyer option; and check point-of-sale information for mention of the benefits and costs associated with fire-sprinkler systems.

DPS and DFRS staff are ready to work with builders to assist them in complying with these important code requirements. However, non-compliance can cost up to \$500 in civil citations for an initial offense and \$750 per day for each repeat offense.

Questions concerning residential sprinklering should be directed to Captain James Barton of DFRS at (240) 777-4783, or to Environmental Protection Manager Dreck Wilson of DPS at (240) 777-6229.