MYTH: Home fire sprinklers can malfunction and cause severe water damage to my home. They’re more of a liability than a help!

FACT: It is extremely rare for home fire sprinklers to accidentally operate. In a typical home, water damage will be considerably less from unwanted sprinkler discharges than from other plumbing mishaps. National installation standards provide guidance for proper installation in cold regions to prevent frozen pipes.

MYTH: Smoke from things like cigars or burned toast will activate the sprinkler system.

FACT: Smoke from cigarettes, cigars, or burning food cannot cause a sprinkler to operate. Only the high temperature from a fire will activate the sprinkler.

MYTH: A small fire will activate all the sprinklers in the home, with the water causing more damage than the flames.

FACT: All the sprinklers do not activate at once. This scenario may be common in movies and TV shows, but it just isn’t true for home fire sprinkler systems. Only the sprinkler closest to the fire activates. Ninety percent of the time one sprinkler contains the fire. An uncontrolled fire will cause far greater destruction and smoke/heat damage than water damage from an activated sprinkler.

MYTH: Home fire sprinklers waste a tremendous amount of water. It’s better to have the fire department put out the fire.

FACT: The high heat, flames and smoke require a tremendous amount of water from fire department hoses — more than 10 times the water flow per minute of sprinklers. Sprinklers not only save people, property and valuables, they better serve the environment.

MYTH: Sprinklers are too expensive to install. They’re just not worth the price.

FACT: Increasing demand for home fire sprinklers is driving down the cost. A recent Fire Protection Research Foundation report found that the cost of installing home fire sprinklers averages $1.61 per sprinklered square foot. Nationally, a conservative estimate for sprinkler installation is 1% to 1.5% of the total building cost. In areas where installations are common, the cost is well below $1 per square foot. In addition, most insurance companies provide financial incentives for home fire sprinkler installation, with research showing discounts that range from 5% to as much as 30% off homeowner policy premiums.

MYTH: Fire sprinklers in my home are just plain ugly.

FACT: There are several types of fire sprinklers made for homes. Some are for installation on walls and others in ceilings; some are concealed by a plate. All residential fire sprinklers are much smaller and lower-profile than the types of sprinklers used in commercial and industrial properties.
Fast Facts About Home Fire Sprinklers

- Eighty-four percent of all U.S. fire deaths occur in the home.
- Fire sprinklers save lives, reduce property loss and can even help cut homeowner insurance premiums.
- Sprinklers are highly effective because they react so quickly in a fire. They reduce the risk of death or injury from a fire because they dramatically reduce the heat, flames and smoke produced, allowing people the time to evacuate the home.
- Home fire sprinklers can contain and may even extinguish a fire in less time than it would take the fire department to arrive on the scene.
- Only the sprinkler closest to the fire will activate, spraying water directly on the fire. Up to 90 percent of fires are contained by the operation of just one sprinkler.*
- If you have a fire in your home, the risk of dying is cut by about 80 percent with automatic fire sprinkler systems.
- In a home with sprinklers, the average property loss per fire is cut by one-half to two-thirds (compared to fires where sprinklers are not present.)
- A recent Fire Protection Research Foundation report found that the cost of installing home fire sprinklers averages $1.61 per sprinklered square foot. Nationally, on average, home fire sprinkler systems add 1% to 1.5% of the total building cost in new construction.
- Modern residential sprinklers are inconspicuous and can be mounted flush with walls or ceilings.
- Sprinklers operate in all but 7% of fires large enough to activate the system. Human error was a factor in almost all of the failures. The system was shut-off in almost two-thirds of the failures.

Source: Automatic Sprinklers: A 10-Year Study, Scottsdale, AZ
How to Use “Get to Know Home Fire Sprinklers”
This home fire sprinkler flyer was developed to be used by both adults and children. This piece uses many illustrations and easy-to-read language to teach people about home fire sprinklers.
Make copies to hand out to residents.
Home fire sprinklers will protect your home from fire.

Sprinklers keep a fire small and can put it out.

You still need smoke alarms. They will let you know there is a fire so you can get out.

Sprinklers are small and can be on the ceiling or wall.
Pipes behind the walls and ceiling are filled with water. The heat from a fire makes the sprinkler spray water.

Only the sprinkler near the fire will spray water. Be fire safe. Have home fire sprinklers put in your home.