

Residential Sprinkler Myth and Facts

MYTH: "Sprinklers are unsightly."

BUT IN FACT: All residential sprinklers come in colors to match ceiling and wall colors and can be recessed or partially recessed.

MYTH: "The sprinklers may go off accidentally."

BUT IN FACT: Loss records of Factory Mutual Research show that the probability of a sprinkler discharging accidentally due to a manufacturing defect is only 1 in 16 million sprinklers per year in service.

MYTH: "Sprinklers heads will leak."

BUT IN FACT: Sprinkler systems are under the same pressure as the plumbing system but are tested at 2-3 times higher pressure during installation.

MYTH: "If one sprinkler head goes off, they all go off. Then, you've really got a mess!"

BUT IN FACT: Sprinkler heads are designed to react to temperatures in each room individually. Normally, only the sprinkler over the fire will activate. Data show that in residential scenarios, usually one sprinkler will control a developing fire; in commercial buildings, as few as three sprinklers will do the job.

MYTH: "They cause water damage!"

BUT IN FACT: Test conducted by a Los Angeles Fire Department and the US Fire Administration showed that damage caused by water in a sprinklered fire is substantially less than damage caused by fire department hose streams in an identical unsprinklered fire and far less than damage caused by a fire which escapes early detection and suppression.

MYTH: "Residential sprinklers don't save lives."

BUT IN FACT: The evidence on this point is overwhelming. There has not been a single residential fire fatality in a residence with a sprinkler system in either Napa, California or Cobb County, Georgia since the inception of those programs. There has not been a single fire fatality in Prince George's County, Maryland in a building with a sprinkler system. Scottsdale, Arizona credits sprinkler systems with saving up to 52 lives since the ordinance passed in 1985.