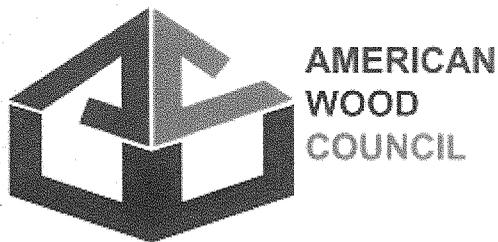


Code Officials: Keeping Fire in Its Place

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**Fire Safety**

By their design, building codes for residential construction are written so that compliant structures all provide the same levels of safety, regardless of principal materials used. As a result, when built according to code, wood-frame construction has a proven fire safety and performance record.

As the response and intensity of fire loads vary from incident to incident, the performance of all types of structures is unpredictable. Therefore, it is vital that firefighters understand methods of construction, the fire performance of different construction materials under varying conditions, and importantly, remain highly aware of their environment to ensure safe fire ground operations.

As an accredited publisher of building standards, the American Wood Council (AWC) ensures the continued regulatory acceptance of wood products, including specifications for fire resistance. Information on fire resistance for structural wood products used in residential construction is available from AWC at www.woodaware.info. Technical information on fire code requirements for wood can also be found in AWC's Code Conforming Wood Design documents, available for free download at www.awc.org.

In 2010, more than 362,000 residential fires caused 2,555 deaths, more than 13,000 injuries and more than \$6.5 billion in property damage costs.

The United States Fire Association (USFA) states that the top five fire-safety topics most frequently identified with home fire deaths are smoke alarms, escape plans, child fire safety, older adult fire safety (cooking and heating) and careless smoking.

So what can you do to prevent fires in your home? The USFA offers these statistics and tips:

- Children under age 5 are twice as likely as the rest of us to die in a home fire. So create an escape plan and make sure everyone in your home practices it. Plan two routes of escape from every room, and designate a meeting place outside of the home. Remember: get out and stay out.
- The third leading cause of fire death for older adults is cooking. Never leave cooking unattended because a serious fire can start in seconds. Don't wear loose clothing while cooking. Keep towels and pot holders away from the range. Double-check the kitchen before you go to bed or leave your home.
- The second leading cause of fire death for older adults is heating. When buying a space heater, look for the auto-off feature should the heater fall over. Keep space heaters at least three feet away from other objects. Your fireplace should have a screen large enough to catch flying sparks and rolling logs.
- The number one cause of preventable home fire deaths is smoking. If you smoke, practice these fire-safety tips to avoid putting your life, your home and your family at risk: Don't leave a burning cigarette, cigar or pipe unattended. If you feel drowsy, put it out immediately. Use deep ashtrays. And, never smoke in bed.

- More than 2,500 Americans died in home fires last year. In most cases, the home did not have a working smoke alarm. A sounding smoke alarm gives you with the extra seconds you need to get out of your home - alive. Install and maintain a smoke alarm on every level of your home. Replace the battery every year. It's a simple way to help keep you and your family better protected 24-7.

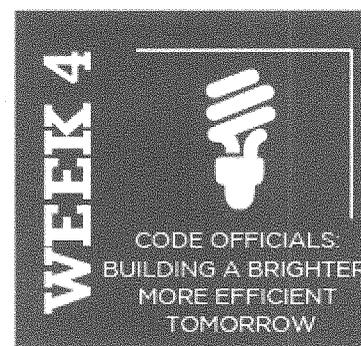
Residential fire sprinkler ordinances have been adopted by several hundred U.S. communities for use in one and two family dwellings. Such systems have been shown to provide significant life safety benefits. Adding residential fire sprinklers to the 2009 International Residential Code so that communities can adopt them as part of their local building code is the most important step to reducing residential fire deaths since requiring smoke alarms in residential structures.

In the past several years, technological advances have improved the reliability of residential fire sprinklers. [Learn the facts about residential fire sprinklers.](#)



Important Fire Safety Links:

- ["How to create and practice" a Home Escape Plan](#)
- [Watch a "Tale of Two Homes – Wildfire"](#)
- [Watch "How-To" Videos on Wildfire Safety](#)
- [Residential Fire Sprinkler Information](#)
- [FEMA Public Fire Safety Videos](#)
- [FEMA Fire is Everyone's Fight Video](#)
- [Living with Sprinklers in California Video](#)
- [Fire Safety Tips Flyer](#)



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