

Libertyville Passes Ordinance Requiring Fire Sprinklers In All New Homes Tops Fire Safety List in Lake County

Orland Park, March 10, 2005—In an effort to increase fire safety and protect its citizens, the Libertyville Village Board unanimously approved an ordinance requiring the installation of automatic fire sprinkler systems in all new single-family homes according to NFPA 13D. Libertyville is the 25th municipality in the Chicago area to require residential fire sprinklers.

Because of the new ordinance, Libertyville has moved to the top of the fire safety list in Lake County. The Village upgraded their building and fire safety codes last year and require fire sprinklers in all new commercial buildings with a minimum 1,000 square feet.

According to Bob Kleinheinz, Libertyville Fire Marshal, the process to include a residential ordinance began over a year ago when the village updated their codes.

“Since we were re-writing the codes, we knew it would be a good time to try and get the residential ordinance,” Kleinheinz said. “We submitted the idea to the Village Board. Because they knew it was an important issue, they wanted to make sure they studied all the details, so they assigned it to a special committee.”

Kleinheinz said another important part of the process was meeting with members of the home building industry who did work in the Village.

“At least 50 builders and architects attended the meeting. We let them know our plans to update the codes and introduce the residential ordinance. We answered their questions and asked them to reply with any questions or concerns in 10 days. We received six letters, all were positive,” Kleinheinz said.

The Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board (NIFSAB) provided Libertyville with background information and resources about NFPA 13D including essential fire report data, cost comparisons, insurance research and copies of the *America Burning Re commissioned* and *Firefighter Life Safety Summit* reports from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

“I have such a respect for our Village’s committee process,” Kleinheinz said. The three trustees on the committee did a great job reviewing all the material. All three were in favor of the residential ordinance.”

The subcommittee reported back to the board February 8th. The Village Board voted to unanimously approve the ordinance March 8th. Kleinheinz said Trustee Davis Giza who chaired the committee announced that the vote to approve the residential ordinance was a historic event for the Village of Libertyville.

Kleinheinz said the Village Board supported upgrading the codes last year and passed the residential ordinance for the life safety of their citizens and to protect their firefighters. The Village Board includes Mayor Duane Laska and Trustees Dean Larson, Davis Giza, Jeffrey Harger, William Westerman, Kathy Haan and Luke Lukens.

According to Tom Lia, NIFSAB Executive Director, Chief Bob Zamor and Fire Marshal Kleinheinz did an outstanding job educating the mayor and the board, as well as the citizens.

“To help educate about the dangers of fire and to help them understand flashover, the fire department did live burn side-by-side demonstrations at Libertyville’s Safety Days,” Lia said referring to the demonstration where two furnished rooms are set up with and without fire sprinklers. Fires are started in both rooms to demonstrate flashover and how quickly a fire sprinkler activates. Lia said Libertyville also did a live test using a house that was being demolished.

Other municipalities and fire districts that require residential fire sprinklers include: Barrington, Berkeley, Clarendon Hills, Countryside Fire Protection District, Des Plaines, Glen Ellyn, Hickory Hills, Hoffman Estates, Huntley (Village and Fire Protection District), Indian Creek, LaGrange Park, Lake Barrington, Long Grove, Matteson, Mount Prospect, North Maine Fire Protection District., Park Ridge, Round Lake Beach, Skokie, Streamwood, West Dundee and Wheeling. Several other communities are also progressing towards this goal.

For a copy of the presentation materials and ordinance used in Libertyville, contact NIFSAB at (708) 403-4468 or email sprinktoml@aol.com.

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