

St. Charles Passes Home Fire Sprinkler Ordinance to Protect Citizens and Firefighters

Orland Park, IL (July 22, 2010) — Officials from St. Charles, Illinois, passed the village's first residential fire sprinkler ordinance requiring fire sprinklers in all new townhouses and one- and two-family homes beginning January 1, 2012. With the passage of this ordinance, the Village of St. Charles becomes the 69th jurisdiction in Illinois to pass residential fire sprinkler legislation.

As a measure leading up to the ordinance's enforcement in 2012, the village council also motioned for an ordinance requiring homebuilders to present their clients with information about fire sprinklers in order to choose whether or not to install fire sprinklers.

The fire sprinkler ordinance comes after months of discussions about updating the city's building and fire codes. It also comes at a time when numerous local jurisdictions and states nationwide are passing the 2009 International Residential Code (IRC), which includes the installation of residential fire sprinkler systems.

Long Grove was the first municipality in Illinois to pass this type of ordinance in 1986. Recently, the Village of Wilmette passed a residential fire sprinkler ordinance because of concerns about today's homes built with lightweight construction, which shortens the amount of time for homeowners to exit their homes and for firefighters to fight fire. Recently, Underwriters Laboratories (UL) conducted a study to understand the hazards to firefighters posed by use of lightweight wood trusses and engineered lumber used in today's new home construction. In addition to facing potential peril in lightweight structures, the study found that the synthetic construction of today's home furnishings add to the increased risk by providing a greater fuel load.

“With this fire sprinkler ordinance, St. Charles has become a model community for fire safety,” said Tom Lia, executive director of the Northern Illinois Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board. “Congratulations to Mayor Donald DeWitte and the City Council for recognizing

the important role that fire sprinklers play in protecting the lives of St. Charles residents and their firefighters.”