

## Mayor Rawlings-Blake Signs Bill Requiring Installation of Sprinklers in New Homes

*Announced additional funding for lithium battery smoke alarms to keep communities safe.*

Today, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake joined Council President Bernard "Jack" Young, Councilwoman Mary Pat Clarke (District-14), Councilman Warren Branch (District-13) and Fire Chief James Clack to sign into law City Council Bill 10-0437, Residential Code - Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems. Beginning July 1, 2010, all new one and two-family homes built in Baltimore City will be required to have residential fire sprinklers. The City Council passed the landmark legislation on June 21, 2010. Baltimore becomes the largest city in the United States to require these life saving devices in all new residential construction.

"I would like to thank Councilwoman Clarke for her continued efforts to increase fire safety in Baltimore," Mayor Rawlings-Blake said. "With this legislation, combined with other efforts, including reduced rotating firehouse closures effective July 1 and continued outreach to provide free smoke alarms to City residents, we can continue to reduce fire related deaths."

Residential fire sprinklers have proven their effectiveness in saving lives across Maryland. Since the early 1990's when state law mandated sprinklers in new multi-family homes and townhouses, there have been no fire deaths in these protected structures. More than half of Maryland's municipalities and nine counties have adopted similar requirements for one and two-family homes.

"Sprinklers save lives," added Councilwoman Clarke, the lead sponsor of the bill. "This bill is a step in the right direction of safer homes for all our citizens."

"Home blazes are the leading cause of fire death in our city, and residential fire sprinklers will give our citizens crucial time to escape," said Fire Chief James Clack. "Working smoke alarms only alert occupants to a fire, but residential sprinklers act quickly to control blazes before they become deadly."

The Mayor also announced that the City is increasing its funding for the Fire Department's free smoke alarm program. Funding was increased from \$80,000 last year to \$100,000 for this upcoming year. The smoke alarms installed by the Fire Department have lithium batteries that last 10 years.

The Fire Department has installed over 15,000 lithium battery smoke alarms as part of this program. Residents can request a smoke alarm for their home by calling the Smoke Detector Hotline at (410) 396-7283.