



RESIDENTIAL FIRE
SAFETY SYSTEMS

FREQUENTLY
ASKED QUESTIONS

Builder FAQs About Residential Fire Sprinklers

With the International Code Council (ICC) voting to make residential fire sprinklers mandatory in the 2009 International Builders Code, many professionals in the building industry are asking how to best prepare for and comply with this mandate. With more than a decade of experience in the residential sprinkler market, Uponor is your professional resource to answer questions and provide products and technical support to lead you smoothly through the process.

Please use this FAQ sheet as a resource guide to navigate through the common questions builders have regarding the new mandate and residential fire sprinkler systems.

Will I need to hire a new sprinkler contractor? Will installing a sprinkler system slow my production schedule?

Uponor's multipurpose system is integrated into a home's cold-water plumbing, so it can often be installed by the plumber you already have on the job site. This eliminates any additional coordination or scheduling issues with multiple trades.

Why would I choose a multipurpose sprinkler system?

A multipurpose system combines a home's cold-water plumbing and fire sprinkler systems, providing three key benefits:

1. It usually eliminates the need for expensive and high-maintenance backflow preventers.
2. It often allows your plumber to simply install both systems.
3. It confirms the sprinkler system is functioning each time a cold-water plumbing fixture is used.
4. It eliminates the need for complicated anti-freeze systems.

Are plumbers qualified to install sprinklers?

Uponor provides one of the best training programs in the industry, which includes both classroom and job-site instruction. Additionally, our plumbers are experts in residential construction, unlike commercial sprinkler installers. And each Uponor installation concludes with an actual sprinkler flow test, assuring everyone (including your inspector) that the system is installed properly, fully functional and operating as designed.

What industry regulations, codes and standards should I be aware of?

The industry standard for the installation of residential fire sprinklers is NFPA 13D, published by the National Fire Protection Association. Uponor's sprinkler systems fully meet this standard as well as all other applicable standards, including UL, NSF and ASTM.

Feel free to contact us at 800.321.4739 for support with addressing any local code or approval issues you might encounter.

What about my liability?

Uponor's residential fire sprinkler systems use the same flexible PEX-a tubing and reliable ProPEX® connections that you use in your Uponor plumbing systems. This flexible tubing means fewer connections, which reduces potential leak points and minimizes your liability. And since we can provide your sprinkler layouts, your design liability can also be limited to Uponor. And because Uponor requires an actual water flow test on every single installation, this ensures the system is fully operational and meets all performance requirements.



Why would I want to choose a system that uses PEX tubing?

PEX is a flexible, crosslinked polyethylene tubing that's been reliably used in the building industry for more than 35 years. Flexible PEX provides many advantages over a rigid PVC type of pipe, including fewer connections, fewer fittings and fewer potential leak points.

What about reliability?

Uponor's proven and trusted PEX-a tubing and ProPEX connections have been successfully installed and used in thousands of homes for years. And for added peace of mind, Uponor backs its tubing and ProPEX fittings with a 25-year warranty when installed by an Uponor-trained professional. As for the sprinkler itself, Uponor uses Reliable® brand sprinklers, a company with more than 90 years in the fire safety industry, for consistent, dependable systems that provide results.

How do I get sprinkler layout designs?

With a team of certified in-house designers, Uponor can provide the sprinkler system designs you need at below-market costs. All we need from you or your contractor is the house plans and information on the available water supply. If you would rather use your own design firm, Uponor will gladly assist your designer with the necessary hydraulic equivalents.

What specific information do you need from me to create designs?

Uponor's Design Information Form easily allows your contractor to provide us with water supply information, including available water pressure, distance from the street to the meter, water supply pipe size and water

meter size. Our designers will take this information, apply it to the house plan design you have also provided, and quickly create your sprinkler layout.

What if the house is not on city water?

Uponor's design team has a great deal of experience creating sprinkler plans for homes on well systems. Our team will help you ensure your home's well and pump is able to supply the necessary water flow.

What if house plans change?

This is very common. Uponor's flexible pipe systems allow simple and easy field modifications. Contact Uponor's design team at 800.321.4739 for quick change validation.

Do I need to worry about installing sprinklers in cold-climate homes?

When properly installed, there is virtually no danger of tube freezing with Uponor's system. Since Uponor's multipurpose system is connected to a home's plumbing, water moves through the system every time a cold-water plumbing fixture is used, reducing the likelihood of unexpected freezing. Uponor also offers wall-mounted sprinklers, which can eliminate the need to install sprinklers in cold attics. In addition, Uponor's PEX tubing is flexible and better able to withstand freezing when compared to rigid-pipe alternatives.

Will my homebuyer care what type of sprinkler system I install?

Your home buyer will likely be concerned with sprinkler maintenance, reliability and aesthetics. Uponor's multipurpose system, which features concealed sprinklers, addresses all these issues.

Since a multipurpose system is part of the cold-water plumbing, it doesn't need a backflow preventer, which often requires annual maintenance. And every time the homeowner uses a cold-water fixture, he or she knows that water is also reliably available to the sprinkler system. As for aesthetics, Uponor's concealed sprinklers are recessed into the ceiling and hidden by an inconspicuous cover plate, making them virtually invisible while protecting them from damage. Uponor can provide you with educational and marketing materials designed specifically for your homebuyers to address any additional questions or concerns.

Is there any reason for me to offer sprinklers before they're mandated?

Progressive and forward-thinking builders have an opportunity to differentiate themselves from their competition by providing homebuyers with a desirable upgrade. And when the mandate does take effect on Jan. 1, 2011, those leading builders will be well-positioned and prepared to take advantage of the code change.

How can I contact Uponor for assistance and support?

Contact Uponor at 800.321.4739 or contact one of the national builder representatives below.

- Dean Wenzel, sales manager, Midwest/East Region, 612.850.8118
- Rick Piratzky, sales manager, South Region, 904.477.5777
- Carl Hines, sales manager, West Region, 972.765.2412
- Jackie Sharrock, director, National Builder Sales, 303.249.9663

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