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From: [Jennifer Anderson](#)

Sent: Friday, December 18, 2020 1:25:43 PM

To: [City Council](#); [Ray Allshouse](#)

Cc: [Rachael Markle](#); [Nathan Daum](#)

Subject: [EXTERNAL] residential fire sprinklers

Response requested: No

Sensitivity: Normal

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Good afternoon Mayor Hall, Councilmembers, and Mr. Allshouse

I'm writing to provide you with some additional information from the residential homebuilding industry related to mandatory fire sprinklers, their effectiveness and the discussion at the Dec. 7 City Council meeting.

To my knowledge Shoreline is the only jurisdiction in King County currently considering adoption of the mandatory fire sprinkler amendment to the 2018 Building Code. Many cities have adopted some version of a sprinkler requirement to mitigate risk similar to what Shoreline adopted in 2006, but are not pursuing a mandatory requirement for all new construction. Few have adopted this blanket mandate in the region. More broadly, 44 states have rejected fire sprinkler requirements. Only two, require them for all new one and two family homes. And, an overwhelming majority of homebuyers have decided that the systems are not worth the additional expense.

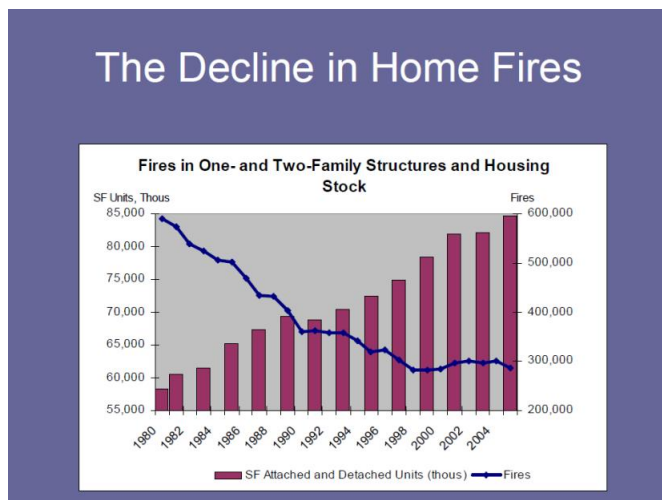
Safety is the main reason cited for requiring residential fire sprinklers. Safety is very important to MBACKS members, and the industry as a whole. New homes are safer today than ever before because of cost effective building codes, new building techniques and advances – all which have been embraced by the industry. Today's smoke alarms, coupled with advances in building science in the codes make new homes safer than ever before.

Code provisions and technological innovations provide safety:

- Fire blocking
- Draft stopping
- Emergency escape and rescue openings
- Electrical circuit breakers
- Outlet spacing and capacity
- Fire walls and fire separation
- Adequate heating systems and energy efficient homes
- Interconnected hardwired smoke detection systems

The information brought forward at the Dec. 7 meeting relative to fires and types/size of structures did not include any information as to when they were built, or if they were equipped with working smoke detectors. Is it possible to see a breakdown of structure fires for newer single family and duplex construction? And, if they were equipped with working smoke detectors? National statistics show that fire safety continues to improve dramatically in new construction without the requirement of residential fire sprinklers.

The chart below provided by the National Association of Home Builders illustrates the steady decline of fires in one and two family structures.



We believe fire safety can be effectively provided without mandating fire sprinkler systems. Hardwired smoke detectors with battery back-up are proven to be very effective. Mandating fire sprinklers in new construction does not target homes where fire deaths are occurring. We do not support fire sprinklers to be used in an effort to mitigate property damage. A mandatory requirement will increase the cost to build homes, at a time when housing affordability is one of the region's biggest challenges.

I encourage you to read the Home Building and Fire Safety article on the effectiveness of smoke alarms published in Fire Protection Engineering Magazine:

MBAKS and its members would welcome the opportunity to participate in a stakeholder meeting to discuss this proposal. Would the City Council consider allowing an opportunity for staff, residential home builders and the Fire Chief to discuss the thresholds for fire protection, challenges and costs to implementing a mandate and the potential for offsets/incentives to the cost?

I appreciate your time and consideration of our comments. Please consider MBAKS a resource and feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely,



**Jennifer Anderson** | King County Manager

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