

Staff Responses to Council Questions

June 13, 2017

7. First Reading

Ordinances C-K: Building Codes

Which municipalities adopted the 2009 or newer codes and did not require fire sprinklers for new single family houses? What reasons were provided?

There are over 150 communities in Illinois that have adopted the 2009 or newer code families. There is not a comprehensive list of whether communities retained the sprinkler requirement. The list below reflects the nearby communities that elected to remove the sprinkler requirement:

- Darien - Cost and a concern the municipal water system was not strong enough in some areas to provide enough volume and pressure
- Lisle - Concern about slowing new home building in the community and being at a competitive disadvantage as nearby communities did not require sprinklers
- Lombard - Concern about slowing new home building in the community, cost, and the feeling that other code advancements made the homes safer with or without sprinklers
- Wheaton - No specific reason known for the decision to remove sprinkler requirement, but an amendment was passed requiring a heat detector in the garage to provide some additional fire protection.
- Naperville - Included the requirement but provided easily achievable exceptions. If two exits are provided and the underside of all stair framing is protected with gypsum board then sprinklers are not required.

The list of municipalities requiring sprinklers contained information in the third column of the table which appears to address commercial buildings. Please provide a list of municipalities which require sprinklers for new single family houses (if different than the list previously provided).

The list provided shows all of the communities that require residential sprinklers. The third column speaks directly to commercial sprinkler requirements and if there are any triggers or conditional requirements for residential sprinklers.

What would the Village role be in enforcing compliance with sprinkler regulations?

The Village would review all new single family permit applications to confirm compliance with regulations and would conduct an inspection during and after the installation of the sprinklers to confirm the system was installed as designed. Further, the Village would be responsible for enforcing State backflow prevention requirements summarized in the response to the next

question.

Is there an annual maintenance cost to the owners of a house with sprinklers?

An annual inspection would be required for the backflow prevention device that would be installed with the sprinkler system. This inspection is required by the Illinois Plumbing Code which was adopted by the Village. The annual cost of the backflow prevention device is approximately \$150. The Village is responsible for enforcing state regulations and contracts with BSI to track backflow preventers and annual inspections. BSI would contact the homeowner with the backflow preventer to remind them of their annual inspection requirements. The homeowner hires a plumber to complete the test and file the inspection report with BSI. The Village is notified of any non-compliance whether that be a failure to test or a failure of the device. Typically, if a repair is needed, the plumber completing the inspection can do the repair at the same time. If there is noncompliance, the Village is tasked with working with the homeowner to correct the issue.

There is no additional annual maintenance or inspection requirement for the sprinkler system. Staff would recommend homeowners complete an annual inspection of the sprinkler system to ensure the system remains in good working order. An inspection is estimated to cost between \$200 - 300.

*If sprinklers are required to be installed, are property owners required to keep them operating?
Can the owners decide to turn them off?*

While a homeowner will always have the capability of turning off their sprinkler system via a shut-off valve, this action would violate a required life safety provision and the International Property Maintenance Code which requires the system to be operable at all times.

*Several months ago there was heavy water damage at Immanuel Residences – due to sprinkler.
Can you get some details as to what happened?*

On February 29, 2016 the fire department was called to the Immanuel Residences (1122 Gilbert) for an activated fire alarm. Fire crews found a single sprinkler activated in apartment 218. The fire crew found no fire and no reason for activation of the sprinkler head. Fire crews along with Immanuel Residence's building maintenance shutdown the system and building maintenance contacted the building's sprinkler company.

According to Immanuel's building maintenance, the insurance investigator was reviewing the cause of the sprinkler activation. There have not been any other false sprinkler activations since this instance.

Where in the house will the sprinklers be located?

Sprinklers would be located in all spaces where you would anticipate people gathering, including kitchens, living rooms, family rooms, dens, basements and bedrooms. Sprinklers would not be located in small bathrooms, closets, garages, porches, unused attics, unused crawl spaces and concealed spaces between floors.

Please provide a photo of a typical sprinkler head.

The image below shows from left to right, a recessed ceiling sprinkler head, a concealed ceiling mounted sprinkler head and a sidewall sprinkler head.



This image below shows a concealed sprinkler installed on a finished kitchen ceiling.



Attachments

There are no rEmarks this week.