

Courier News

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State Must Move On Sprinkler Mandate JUNE 30, 2010

As the recent fatal fire in Manville demonstrates, installing smoke detectors and creating an emergency response plan are two very important steps to help citizens in the event of a fire. However, neither of these actions actively work to keep a fire contained or extinguish it, like fire sprinklers do.

If fire sprinklers were present in the single-family home, the tragic death of a 77-year-old woman and her dog may have been prevented and property damage may have been drastically reduced.

Properly installed and maintained fire sprinklers help control fires from spreading. In many cases, automatic fire sprinklers extinguish a fire before the fire department even arrives on the scene. More importantly, the presence of fire sprinklers could have mitigated the risk to individuals affected by the blaze, including firefighters who may have been injured fighting the fire.

Currently, New Jersey is inexplicably delaying the implementation of a national code that is designed to prevent tragedies such as this. There is a pending life safety regulation in the state, which has already been approved by the New Jersey State Code Advisory Board, Department of Community Affairs and most recently, Gov. Christie's own Red Tape Review Commission, that would make it mandatory for all newly constructed one- and two-family homes, as well as townhomes, to be equipped with fire sprinklers, starting in 2012.

Please call your local legislator and urge them to find out why the state is taking so long to adopt the residential fire sprinkler requirement. This requirement will help protect New Jersey residents in the places where they feel safest — their homes.

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