



## The New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board Sprinklers: Common Myths

*Myth: Smoke sets off fire sprinklers.*

**Fact:** Sprinklers are activated by heat, not smoke. In fact, the heat necessary to set off your average sprinkler is anywhere from 150 to 165 degrees, in other words only the kind of heat a fire would create.

*Myth: A fire sets off all the fire sprinklers.*

**Fact:** Only a sprinkler head that is close to a fire, the one affected by the initial heat of the fire, will activate. In 81% of structure fires, only one or two sprinkler heads activated.

*Myth: Fire sprinklers cause excessive water damage.*

**Fact:** The average sprinkler only produces 15-25 gallons of water per minute, versus 150-250 gallons produced by a fire hose. In structures with fire sprinklers, the average property loss by fire is cut by one-half to two-thirds, and in some cases even more, than structures without. In most cases, structures without fire sprinklers are heavily or completely destroyed by the mix of fire and water damaged caused by fire hoses.

*Myth: Fire sprinklers are expensive.*

**Fact:** Nationally, fire sprinklers cost 1%-2% on average of total building costs. In New Jersey – because of construction, property and other industry factors – this amount may be closer to 2%-4%. Overall, the cost of installing fire sprinklers is comparable to installing carpeting or cabinets. When fire sprinklers are installed in new structures, there are opportunities to decrease the costs even further. In addition, most insurance companies provide discounts to businesses and homeowners that have fire sprinklers, which compounded over time can pay back the costs.

*Myth: Fire sprinklers are unsightly.*

**Fact:** Modern advances in fire sprinkler technology have enabled architects, contractors and designers to install fire sprinklers into residential properties and businesses in ways that are aesthetically pleasing and concealing. In fact, most people do not even notice that the building or room they are in is protected by fire sprinklers.

*Sources:*

- *New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board*
- *National Fire Protection Association, Fire Analysis and research Division. U.S. Experience with Sprinklers and Other Fire Extinguishing Equipment. August 2005*