A Replicable Model for Increasing Voluntary Home Fire Sprinkler Installation

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FORMATIVE EVALUATION
2003: Camas was a fast-growing community

- Housing and population growth
- Increasing demands on fire department
- Home fire sprinkler requirement failed with strong opposition from builders in 2003
New-Construction Home Fire Sprinkler Codes

- CA, MD and DC adopted state- and district-wide code requirement
- 25+ states cannot adopt codes due to anti-sprinkler code efforts
Home fires can become deadly in less than two minutes

- 2/3 of all new homes are built with lightweight construction material.
- Unprotected lightweight building materials, flooring and synthetic furnishings make home fires faster.
- Response, suppression activities and exposure to toxic smoke put responders at risk of injury, death and disease.
MODEL PERFORMANCE IN COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION
Use home fire sprinklers to reduce the risk of fire to citizens and firefighters

- Participate in discussions at pre-application phase.
- Educate stakeholders about fire risks and home fire sprinklers to protect civilians and responders.
- Offer incentives to developers.
- Educate the general public.
- Advocate for adoption of a local fire sprinkler ordinance to institutionalize these gains.
PROCESS EVALUATION
Meetings with key stakeholders

- Builder Association Leaders
- Developers
- City Officials
- Real Estate Professionals
- Planners
Home fire sprinkler incentives

- Infrastructure Flexibility
- Waived Fees
- Single access point
- Additional Units/Higher density
- Street width reduction
- Longer dead-end streets
- Increased hydrant spacing
- Privacy gates/gated community
How incentives were used in Camas

Sprinklers in 60-home development allowed single entrance:

• Developer saved $1 million in infrastructure and materials costs; and
• Gained additional lots.
• Win-Win for Camas, future homeowners, developer and firefighters.
Community Education

- Safety fairs
- Side-by-side demonstrations
- Newspaper campaigns
- Parade of Homes
- Utilized free HFSC resources
Our Journey From Negativity to Acceptance

- The orchestrated (national and local) anti-code activity contributed to initial developer negativity.
- Over time, developers appreciated the benefits that fire sprinkler installation afforded.
- Measurable changes:
  - Willingness to meet with AHJ
  - Understanding/acceptance of incentive offers
  - Recognition of added marketing value of a home protected by fire sprinklers.
IMPACT EVALUATION
98% of All New Homes Protected

- Since 1998, Camas has had 2,500 sprinklered homes
  - Average cost 1.40/sprinklered sq. ft.
  - Flow-through system eliminated a back-flow valve
New-Construction Home Fire Sprinkler Codes

- Local developer trade ups as incentives solved the problem in Camas.
- They can in your jurisdiction too.
- 2008: Neighboring Washougal adopted a home fire sprinkler ordinance.
Successful Activations

- Four documented successful activations
- May have resulted in civilian or fire service casualties without sprinklers:
  - two cooking fires where occupants failed to evacuate before recognizing the sprinkler had activated
  - one electrical fire
  - one spray finish explosion fire
Successful Activations
Successful Code Enactment

2016: Home fire sprinkler requirement passes

“You did a great job of proving me wrong.”
Camas Mayor, who had voted against the 2003 bill
Source: The Columbian
RECOMMENDATIONS
You Can Do It Too

- One million new homes are built each year.
- Most with lightweight construction.
- Increased use of synthetics.
- Developers want to know about incentives.
HFSC Free Resources

HomeFireSprinkler.org/crr
Contact Information

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