

Factsheet: Sprinkler Myths

- **MYTH:** Home fire sprinklers can malfunction and cause severe water damage to my home. They're more of a liability than a help!
- **FACT:** It is extremely rare for home fire sprinklers to accidentally operate. In a typical home, water damage will be considerably less from unwanted sprinkler discharges than from other plumbing mishaps. The world statistic for an accidental activation is 1:16,000,000! National installation standards provide guidance for proper installation in cold regions to prevent frozen pipes.
- **MYTH:** Smoke from things like cigars or burned toast will activate the sprinkler system.
- **FACT:** Smoke from cigarettes, cigars, or burning food cannot cause a sprinkler to operate. Only the high temperature from a fire will activate the sprinkler.
- **MYTH:** A small fire will activate all the sprinklers in the home, with the water causing more damage than the flames.
- **FACT:** All the sprinklers do not activate at once. This scenario may be common in movies and TV shows, but it just isn't true for home fire sprinkler systems. Only the sprinkler closest to the fire activates. Ninety percent of the time one sprinkler contains the fire. An uncontrolled fire will cause far greater destruction and smoke/heat damage than water damage from an activated sprinkler.
- **MYTH:** Home fire sprinklers waste a tremendous amount of water. It's better to have the fire department put out the fire.
- **FACT:** The high heat, flames and smoke require a tremendous amount of water from fire service hoses - more than 10 times the water flow per minute of sprinklers. Sprinklers not only save people, property and valuables, they better serve the environment.
- **MYTH:** Fire sprinklers in my home are just plain ugly.
- **FACT:** There are several types of fire sprinklers made for homes. Some are for installation on walls and others in ceilings; some are concealed by a plate. All residential fire sprinklers are much smaller and lower-profile than the types of sprinklers used in commercial and industrial properties.



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