

Sprinklers Pay Off

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Here's in a story that proves the point – that residential sprinklers work! The Wilsonville, OR, Spokesman reported a fire incident that occurred at the Canyon Creek Apartments on the evening of January 5, 2002. While a man slept on his living room couch, he left a candle burning on the floor of his bedroom. The candle burned down, ignited the carpet, a chest of draws, then the door and a wall.

Alarms activated but the man did not wake. Shortly thereafter a single sprinkler head in the apartment hallway discharged and extinguished the fire. The man slept on. He awoke when a neighbor pounding on his door stirred him before fire crews arrived. *No one can say what the outcome would have been if the apartment complex had not been fitted with a sprinkler system*, reported the Spokesman.

After an apartment fire in 1995 which killed five children, a Wilsonville building official and the Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue personnel pushed the state to let cities require sprinklers in apartment buildings more than one story or more than 16 units in size. The state permitted the request in October 1999 and made the sprinkler requirement an optional part of the building code. Other towns have suite followed with requirements of their own.

The Office of State Fire Marshal believes that sprinklers can save lives, not just in multi-family housing but also in single family dwellings too. To promote this concept, the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal joined forces with others and formed the Oregon Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (OHFSC) in the spring of 1998.

Participants include Oregon fire service organizations and local fire departments, the Office of State Fire Marshal, Building Codes Division, Local 290 Plumbers & Steamfitters, Insurance Information Services of Oregon and Idaho, Aruba Fire Group, "en LIGHT en" and other associations. The coalition's mission is: Promote the installation of home fire sprinklers to save lives and property.