



PETALUMA FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU
11 English Street, Petaluma, California 94952
Phone (707) 778-4389 * Fax (707) 776-3642
www.cityofpetaluma.net/firedept/prevention.html



INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN: FIRE SPRINKLER INSTALLATION REQUIREMENTS FOR EXISTING RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS
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BULLETIN NUMBER: 1-3-12

EFFECTIVE DATE: 1-1-2010

CODE REFERENCES: PETALUMA MUNICIPAL ORDINANCE SECTION 903.2.19.4-REMODELS, ALTERATIONS, OR REPAIRS; 2010 CALIFORNIA FIRE CODE
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NOTE: <i>THIS GUIDELINE IS A SUMMARY OF FIRE DEPARTMENT CLARIFICATIONS OF CITY AND STATE CODES. INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN APPLIES TO TYPICAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND MAY NOT ADDRESS ALL SITUATIONS.</i>
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Scope

This standard details the requirements for installation of fire sprinklers in existing residential buildings. The requirements apply as follows:

1. The remodel/alteration/repair of any residential structure, which affects a floor area exceeding fifty percent (50%) or greater of the square footage of the structure.
2. Any addition to a residential structure that increases the square footage of the structure by fifty percent (50%) or greater.

Exception: This requirement does not apply to the replacement and upgrade of residential roof coverings.

Definitions

Remodel/Alterations: Any changes made to a building, such as to walls, columns, beams or girders, floor or ceiling joists and coverings, roof rafters, roof diaphragms, foundations, piles or retaining walls or similar components.

Repair: Any changes made to a building, such as to walls, columns, beams or girders, floor or ceiling joists and coverings, roof rafters, roof diaphragms, foundations, piles or retaining walls or similar components as a result of damage (ie: fire, flood, earthquake, pest, etc.)

Addition: The increase of square footage of the existing structure.

Application

This requirement applies primarily to major interior remodel projects as follows: When alterations, repairs or remodels are made to an existing residential building which involves the demolition, removal, and/or repair of more than 50% of the interior, the installation of an automatic fire sprinkler system compliant with the California Fire Code and NFPA 13D will be required. The same fire sprinkler installation requirement shall apply for additions to existing residential buildings that increase the

square footage of the structure by 50% or more. In this case, the entire house must be retrofit with sprinklers, not just the addition.

Example: The addition or removal of walls, raising or lowering ceilings, relocation or addition of rooms. During major remodels, when rooms, walls or ceilings are removed, the drywall is typically removed and this provides easy access to install fire sprinklers. This code section does not apply to single room or small remodels such as to a kitchen and/or to a bathroom, window/door replacement, floor covering replacement, roof covering replacement, and other minor improvements.

Purpose

In 2010, U.S. fire departments responded to 369,500 home structure fires. These fires caused 13,350 civilian injuries, 2,640 civilian deaths, and \$6.9 billion in property damage. The structures involved in these reported fires did not have fire sprinklers. Fire sprinklers have proven to save lives, prevent injuries, and limit property damage resulting from residential fires.

The Fire Marshal in coordination with the Chief Building Official will make the determination regarding applicability of this code section on a case by case basis.

For additional information contact the Fire Prevention Bureau at 707-778-4389 or visit our website at <http://cityofpetaluma.net/firedept/prevention.html>.

Sprinklers—The Solution

Fires in residences have taken a high toll of life and property. In 2010 there were:

- 362,100 residential building fires
- 2,555 civilian fire deaths
- 13,275 civilian fire injuries
- \$6.6 billion in property damage

Studies by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's United States Fire Administration indicate that the installation of residential fire sprinkler systems could have saved thousands of lives, prevented a large portion of these injuries, and eliminated hundreds of millions of dollars in property losses.

For more information on residential fires and home fire safety, visit the National Fire Protection Associate website at www.NFPA.org and <http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files/PDF/Homesfactsheet.pdf>.