

**Gwinnett County,  
Department of Fire and Emergency Services  
Community Risk Reduction**

**Engage Gwinnett Questions  
January 14, 2010**

1. Residential Sprinkler Requirements – Does Cobb County have a density requirement?

In past years Cobb County has promoted automatic sprinklers with education, and their ordinance is built around aggressive placement of sprinklers in many occupancies. Cobb County does not have any building density requirements in relation to the requirement for automatic sprinklers. Cobb does not currently require sprinklers in single family dwellings with the exception of as an alternate equivalency in detached one and two family dwellings, if the residence is greater than 500 feet from a hydrant. Cobb does require sprinklers in new apartments, multi-story hotels, and dormitories.

Smyrna somewhat mirrors Cobb in Residential Sprinkler requirements however they do have a separation distance requirement for single family dwellings: “Single-family dwellings that do not meet minimum separation distance applicable by federal and state requirements shall: (1) Be sprinklered per NFPA 13D or (2) Have non-combustible, masonry, adjacent walls with no openings and the roof covering shall be Class A or Class B.”

Marietta – We are waiting on a response from Marietta.

2. Do residential sprinklers affect the ISO Rating?

Not at this time. To our knowledge, Residential sprinklers are not considered in the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule.

3. What is the impact of Residential Sprinklers on Insurance Premiums?

US Fire Administration states, “Insurance from homeowner underwriters will vary depending on type of coverage. The discounts now range from 5-15%, with a projected increase in available discounts.” Not all insurance companies provide discounts for residential sprinklers.

A 2007 study/report, by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) showed that insurers do provide meaningful discounts for residential sprinkler systems in the range of 3% - 10%. (See Attached)

The greatest impact over several years could be the prevention of actual loss.

4. What are our priority code changes?

We are just beginning our Ordinance update research and have only preliminary ideas at this time. The priorities listed below may change as we get further into the revision process.

Priority One – Update the existing ordinance to ensure all items match existing conditions. For example, certain code modifications are added for codes that are no longer adopted by the state. Simply correct what we have now.

Priority Two – Clarify the outdoor burning regulations to enable consistent enforcement. Secondly, consider additional restrictions or a total outdoor burn ban.

Priority Three – Clarify existing code language regarding sprinkler requirements for new Residential Board and Care facilities (Personal Care Homes). Sprinklers would be required in all new Residential Board and Care Facilities regardless of evacuation capability.

5. Ban on outdoor burning. What other jurisdictions has this worked in?

Some such as Valdosta and Alpharetta have partial bans but allow some burning. East Point advises they are on a year around burn ban because of air quality issues. Smyrna advises they have a total ban. We have not yet reviewed the ordinances or details for these jurisdictions.

5. What is the success rate for the Jr. Firesetter Program?

From January 1, 2008 until December 31, 2009, there have been 30 total cases. As of January 2010 there have been no repeat offenders.