

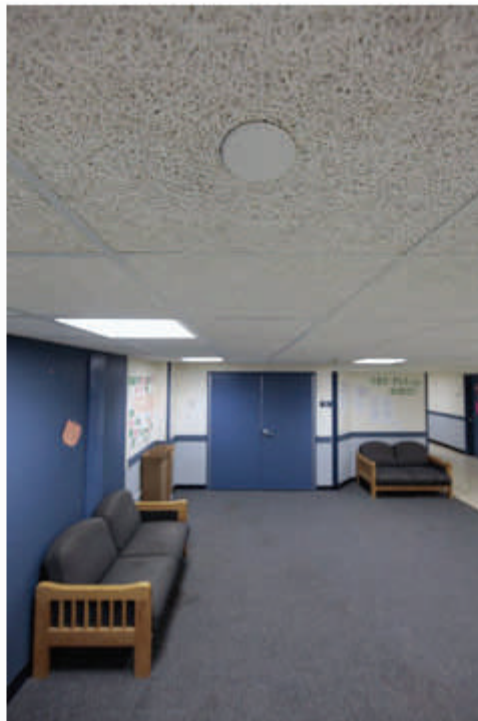


**Date:** March 10, 2010 **Subject:** IRC Regulation Freeze **Circulation:** N/A

## **Residential fire sprinkler law: Don't delay on life-saving rule in N.J.**

**By** [NJ Voices Guest Blogger/For NJ.com](#)

March 10, 2010, 5:11PM



**Matt Rainey/The Star-Ledger**

**Sprinkler head caps in the ceiling of a dormitory at Seton Hall University. New regulations would require fire sprinklers in some newly constructed residential homes.**

**By David Kurasz/ NJ Voices Guest Blogger**

Gov. **Chris Christie** has put on hold a pending regulation that would save lives of New Jersey residents.

When he took office in January, Christie's first action was a 90-day freeze on the majority of new regulations. Those include the 2009 International Residential Code (IRC) and its requirement that all newly constructed one- and two-family homes and townhomes built after Jan. 1, 2012, contain a residential fire sprinkler system.





**Date:** March 10, 2010 **Subject:** IRC Regulation Freeze (cntd) **Circulation:** N/A

---

The Christie administration needs to finish the regulatory process that is so close to the finish line and adopt this life safety regulation — which has already been vetted by numerous code professionals and governmental agencies, including the Department of Community Affairs, over the past two years. The public has voiced its overwhelming support for this regulation during the recent public comment period, sending 1,675 letters in support of the IRC codes and only four letters against.

Including this regulation in the freeze demonstrates that the governor does not realize the vast importance of the residential fire sprinkler requirement and how it will help protect New Jersey residents and its firefighters, who risk their lives to save others. The governor is also overlooking the fact that residential fire sprinklers can take some of the burden off of the local fire service infrastructure, which should lead to lower property taxes.

Homebuilders have been critical of the cost of fire sprinklers, often throwing about extravagant numbers and claiming this will harm their sales. Nationally, the cost to install residential fire sprinklers in a new home is about \$1.61 per-square-foot, approximately one percent of the value of the home, according to a FEMA benefit-cost analysis on residential fire sprinklers. This is a small price to pay when it comes to saving lives and homes, and similar in cost to upgraded rugs and cabinets that builders typically sell to homeowners.

The residential fire sprinkler requirement was included in the country's primary building code as a result of the growing fire problem in this state and the nation due to new "lightweight construction" materials and more flammable home contents. These have created an alarming fire safety threat to our citizens and our fire professionals. About 85 percent of all fires occur in the home, a place where people should feel the safest.

I sincerely hope that the Christie administration will take decisive action in approving the residential fire sprinkler regulation and demonstrate to the residents of New Jersey that the state cares about the safety of its citizens and first responders.

*David Kurasz is executive director of the New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board.*

