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Fire sprinklers

save lives

As the recent fatal fire in Trenton demonstrates ("Smoke killed boy in Vine St. house fire," Aug. 31), installing smoke detectors and creating an emergency response plan are two very important steps to help citizens in the event of a fire. However, neither of these actions actively work to keep a fire contained or extinguish it, as fire sprinklers do. If fire sprinklers had been present in the single-family home on Vine Street, the tragic death of a 7-year-old boy may have been prevented and property damage may have been drastically reduced.

Properly installed and maintained fire sprinklers help control fires from spreading. In many cases, automatic fire sprinklers extinguish a fire before the fire department even arrives on the scene. More important, the presence of fire sprinklers can mitigate the risk to individuals affected by the blaze, including firefighters who might be injured fighting the fire.

Recently, New Jersey had a unique opportunity to adopt a national code that was designed to prevent tragedies such as this. However, the state decided not to adopt the residential fire sprinkler requirement. The life-saving requirement, which received approval from the New Jersey Uniform Construction Code Advisory Board (CAB), and most recently, from Gov. Chris Christie's own Red Tape Review Commission, would have made it mandatory for all newly constructed one- and two-family homes, as well as town homes, to be equipped with fire sprinklers starting in 2012.

Please call the governor's office to find out why the state decided not to adopt the important life-saving requirement. This requirement was designed help protect New Jersey residents in the places where they feel safest -- their homes.

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