



# Community Outreach Ideas

**EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY** about home fire sprinklers will help residents better understand their tremendous value, and will help support your efforts to require home fire sprinklers locally.

## Hold a Public Education Forum

A public education forum on home fire sprinklers serves as a focused, informative opportunity to educate residents about sprinklers, their benefits to the community, and your efforts to adopt codes locally. By proactively reaching out to residents, you'll be able to thoughtfully present your plans for protecting the community, with time to answer questions and concerns. During this forum, make sure to address the overall value of home fire sprinklers and how they work, and be prepared to dispel unsubstantiated fears or doubts.

Find a local contractor or builder who installs sprinklers and can address the installation process and costs. Also consider inviting a home insurance representative who can educate the group about reduced homeowners' insurance premiums associated with sprinkler installation. Be prepared to explain how residents can support your efforts to adopt codes requiring sprinklers locally.

If possible, use a live sprinkler demonstration (see "How to Make a Sprinkler Demonstration") or an NFPA video, Fire Power (**1-800-344-3555** to purchase), to show exactly how sprinklers operate in a real fire. Also, have handouts available for people to review and take home, including "Myths vs. Facts" and "Fast Facts," which are provided in this kit.

Once you've sold residents on the power of home fire sprinklers, make sure you can assist them in taking the next step. Fill out and distribute the resource list in this kit to identify organizations and/or individuals they can contact to begin the sprinkler installation process.

## Attention Shoppers

Interactive demos, such as a live sprinkler demonstration, are a great way to get the public's attention. Think about partnering with big box stores (Home Depot, Lowe's, Wal-Mart) to arrange a public demonstration. Make sure to have materials on hand that reinforce the overall value of home fire sprinklers.

## Stop the Presses

Local media can give you a lot of bang for no bucks. Use the sample press release, op-eds, and letters to the editor provided in this kit to give them the facts. You can also provide them with the print PSAs included in this kit as well.

## Cable Access

Contact your local cable station to present the home fire sprinkler PSA included in this kit.

## Forum Tips

**Pick a Date and Location:** Your event can be held during the day or evening, but it must be a time that people in your community are available. Saturday and Sunday afternoons are often most convenient, and fewer events tend to take place on weekends. However, your fire department's public educator or coordinator should check the community calendar to make sure there are minimal conflicts. The event may be held at your firehouse, the public library, a community center, or the town hall.

**Make It Fun:** Hold activities that allow visitors to meet firefighters and learn about fire sprinklers in the process. Build a live sprinkler demonstration in the fire house, and hold a demonstration to show how they work in a fire. Have at least one computer available for kids to play "Sprinkler Smarts," watch an online sprinkler demonstration, or see how a real fire spreads through a home on the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (HFSC) Web site at **www.homefiresprinkler.org**. Have actual sprinkler heads handy to show how different models look and operate.

**Promote, Promote, Promote:** No matter how great your plans are, it won't be a success if no one knows about it. Use the home fire sprinkler "fill-in-the-blank" news release in this kit to promote your event to local media outlets.