



**The Voice of the Fire Sprinkler Industry**

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CONTACT: DAVID VANDEYAR

1-8-09  
845-878-4200

**National Fire Sprinkler Association & Common Voices  
Participate in Washington, D.C. Press Conference  
with National Fire Service Leadership**

The National Fire Sprinkler Association participated with National Fire Service Leadership at historic Station 3 in a national media advisory on Wednesday, January 7, 2009. Associate Director of Public Fire Protection Vickie Pritchett, joined Philadelphia Fire Commissioner Lloyd Ayers, Baltimore Fire Chief James Clack and Washington, D.C. Fire Chief Dennis Rubin, United States Fire Administrator (USFA) Greg Cade, International Association of Fire Chiefs FLSS Representative Mike Love, and Dr. Burt Clark of the National Fire Academy to highlight recent tragic fires and offer solutions, which include having working smoke alarms, installing residential fire sprinkler systems, and having a fire escape plan. This national effort is a result of one of the deadliest holiday seasons in recent memory and several significant fires in the first days of 2009. Since Thanksgiving 2008, there have been more than 158 fatal fires in the United States resulting in over 200 fire fatalities.

“The 2008 holiday season and the start of 2009 may be recorded as one of the deadliest for residential fires in recent memory of the fire service,” said Cade. “Not only has there been a significant number of preventable fires, but the occurrences of multiple fatalities resulting from these fires are simply unacceptable within our nation. The USFA reminds everyone to have a comprehensive fire protection plan that includes smoke alarms, residential sprinklers and practicing a home fire escape plan.”

- On Christmas Eve, four died in a house fire in Mount Sterling, Kentucky. All of the victims were children and officials cannot be certain whether smoke alarms worked.
- Four adults and three children died in a southwest Philadelphia home the day after Christmas when gasoline was used to fuel a kerosene heater. There were no working smoke alarms in the home.
- In Baltimore, two people died in a fire above a grocery store. A young couple died in the blaze and investigators found no working smoke alarms in the building.

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- In Washington, D.C. on New Year's Day, six individuals died in a house fire on Jackson Street, Northeast. While the cause was listed as accidental/electrical, officials are not sure smoke alarms worked properly.
- Yesterday, eight people died in a residential fire in Oswego County, New York. The cause is still under investigation.
- Three people, including two teenage girls, died after an early morning house fire in Ringling, Oklahoma. Officials say the fire started early Monday morning while at least two of the victims were still in bed. For the two teenage girls who lived inside the house, this was supposed to be their first day back to school after winter break. Officials say once flames broke out at 4 a.m., the girls, along with another relative, never made it out of the home.

“The facts have been presented well by the fire service leadership present. Now, our challenge is to take action,” said Pritchett. “We need to utilize the resources available and take the lead in community fire protection in order to prevent future tragedies. Lives will be saved if we work hard to educate everyone and share the information presented today.”

Pritchett unveiled two new resources created by a partnership between the National Fire Sprinkler Association and the International Fire Chiefs Association. *Look Up For Safety*, a CD/DVD set, coupled with *Residential Fire Sprinklers...a Step-by-Step Approach for Communities* provides local leaders resources to help educate citizens and fire service members on the importance of planning for fire protection by including residential fire sprinklers in new home construction.

“I am glad to have participated in this National alert,” added Vina Drennan, a Common Voices advocate. “Too many people are dying and we can do something about it. Fire Sprinklers Save Lives and the time is now to support their installation.”

“Now is the time to focus attention on what is a national dilemma,” said District of Columbia Fire & EMS Chief Dennis Rubin, who hosted the event. “Families must act now to safeguard their homes from fire.”

Ray Lonabaugh, Mid-Atlantic Regional Manager for the National Fire Sprinkler Association coordinated the Maryland Fire Rescue Institute live burn sprinkler demonstration trailer being at the event to provide a live demonstration for those in attendance.

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