

## Frequently Asked Questions for Fire Sprinkler Systems in Manufactured Homes

### **Why was there a need for State regulation?**

Manufactured homes generally cost less than other types of homes. The method of construction is the reason for the lower cost. Manufacturers construct homes on an assembly line under a federal building code, known as the “Housing and Urban Development –Code,” or “HUD-Code.” The HUD-code provides uniformity that allows builders to use assembly line construction, which then lowers the cost of building a home.

The HUD-code does not include rules for Fire Sprinkler Systems (FSS). This lack of rules caused a problem because numerous California communities require FSS in single-family dwellings. Because these community FSS requirements are not all the same, the cost of HUD-code homes in these communities may increase due to a lack of uniform rules.

This lack of uniform rules also caused delays in the manufacturing process due to the necessity to custom design and install FSS based on individual community rules which slowed the assembly-line process and increased the cost of homes. Thus the State adopted regulations governing FSS installation to help preserve affordability while concurrently protecting life and property.

### **How did California adopting rules solve this problem?**

The California Department of Housing and Community Development adopted rules for the design and installation of FSS in manufactured Homes. The rules apply uniformly throughout California, whenever a community requires FSS or a buyer wants FSS. Thus, an individual community’s rules are preempted and the uniform assembly-line construction of manufactured homes is maintained.

### **Do the rules apply only during the construction of a home?**

No. The rules also apply to the design and installation of FSS in any existing manufactured home located in California that is required to have FSS installed or that is voluntarily retro fitted with a FSS.

### **Can only a builder or manufacturer install FSS?**

No. Following State rules and regulations, either a homeowner or a fire protection contractor can install FSS in a manufactured home.

### **Do FSS rules contain technical requirements?**

Yes. State regulations include technical requirements. They are specified in the California Code of Regulations, Title 25, § 4302 (1).

### **Do FSS rules require a review of plans?**

Yes. An HCD-approved Design Approval Agency must review and approve plans for FSS to ensure the system meets technical requirements. The Design Approval Agency also ensures the installation will not harm a home's structural, plumbing, mechanical, or electrical systems.

### **Do FSS rules require an inspection of installed FSS?**

Yes. An HCD-approved Quality Assurance Agency inspector or HCD inspector must inspect and approve the completed installation of the system. The inspector ensures the installed system follows the approved plans and no harm to the home has occurred during installation.

### **Why are plans reviewed and installation inspection of FSS required?**

California communities that mandate the installation of FSS, homeowners that choose to install FSS, and fire fighters responding to a fire need to know that the installed FSS will perform as required and designed. Plan review and FSS inspection provides this assurance.

### **Does FSS installation require any follow-up paperwork or certifications?**

Yes. Installers must complete a "Fire Sprinkler System Information and Installer Certification" label. This label then is attached to the inside wall or door of the home's water heater enclosure. This label notes all design specifications and water supply requirements of the FSS.

### **Why do the rules require a certification label?**

Upon sale or movement of a manufactured home, a homeowner may require new design and water supply requirements for the FSS. The label and the information it contains provide water supply requirements for each homeowner.

### **Who maintains the installed FSS?**

The homeowner maintains the installed system and should inspect the sprinklers on a regular basis, replacing any damaged sprinkler. The homeowner also must replace a sprinkler if it operates. The new sprinkler must match the original sprinkler.

### **May a person change the installed FSS?**

Yes, a homeowner or a fire protection contractor may alter an installed system. However, before an alteration may be performed, an HCD-approved Design Approval Agency must review and approve the plans and an HCD-approved Quality Assurance Agency inspector or HCD inspector must inspect and approve the completed alteration(s).

## **What types of changes are considered an alteration of an installed FSS?**

The following activities are considered alterations of installed FSS

- Alteration to provide greater protection against property damage.
- Replacement of parts of the system with sprinklers or materials that differ from the original.
- Extension of the system to provide coverage to additional area or areas.
- Movement of a location of system riser, sprinkler or piping.
- Removal of a part or all of the FSS.

## **How do I obtain further assistance or a permit to install a FSS?**

A person may contact the nearest HCD Area Office for further assistance or to obtain and complete an Application for Permit (HCD 415). The HCD 415 may also be obtained on the Internet at: <http://www.hcd.ca.gov/codes/mhp/hcd415.pdf>

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