



Fire Sprinkler Systems in Qualifying Accessory Dwelling Unit Condominiums

Community and Economic Development Committee

November 18, 2024

Item d(3)

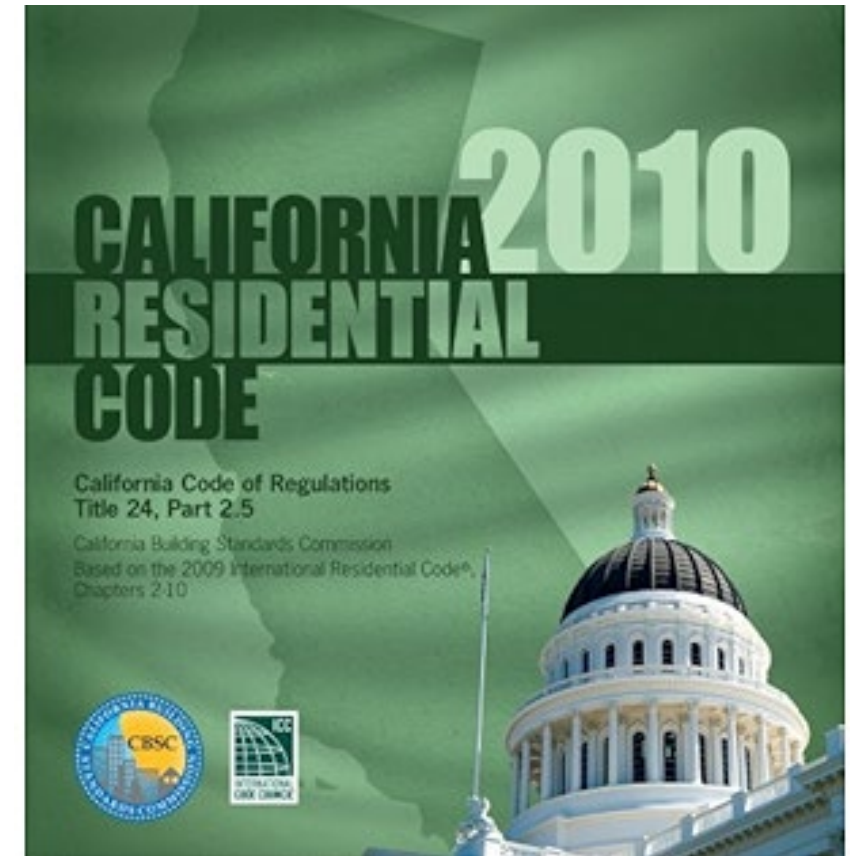
Presenter:

James Dobson, Deputy Fire Chief/Fire Marshal – Fire Department, Bureau of Fire Prevention

Overview of Fire Life Safety Measures



- Based on furniture and materials found in residences, a home fire can become deadly within 2 minutes or less.
- Since January 2011, the California Residential Code and Fire Code mandated that all residential developments, including new single-family homes, be equipped with fire sprinklers.
- The current Fire Code requires the installation of fire sprinklers for condominium projects.

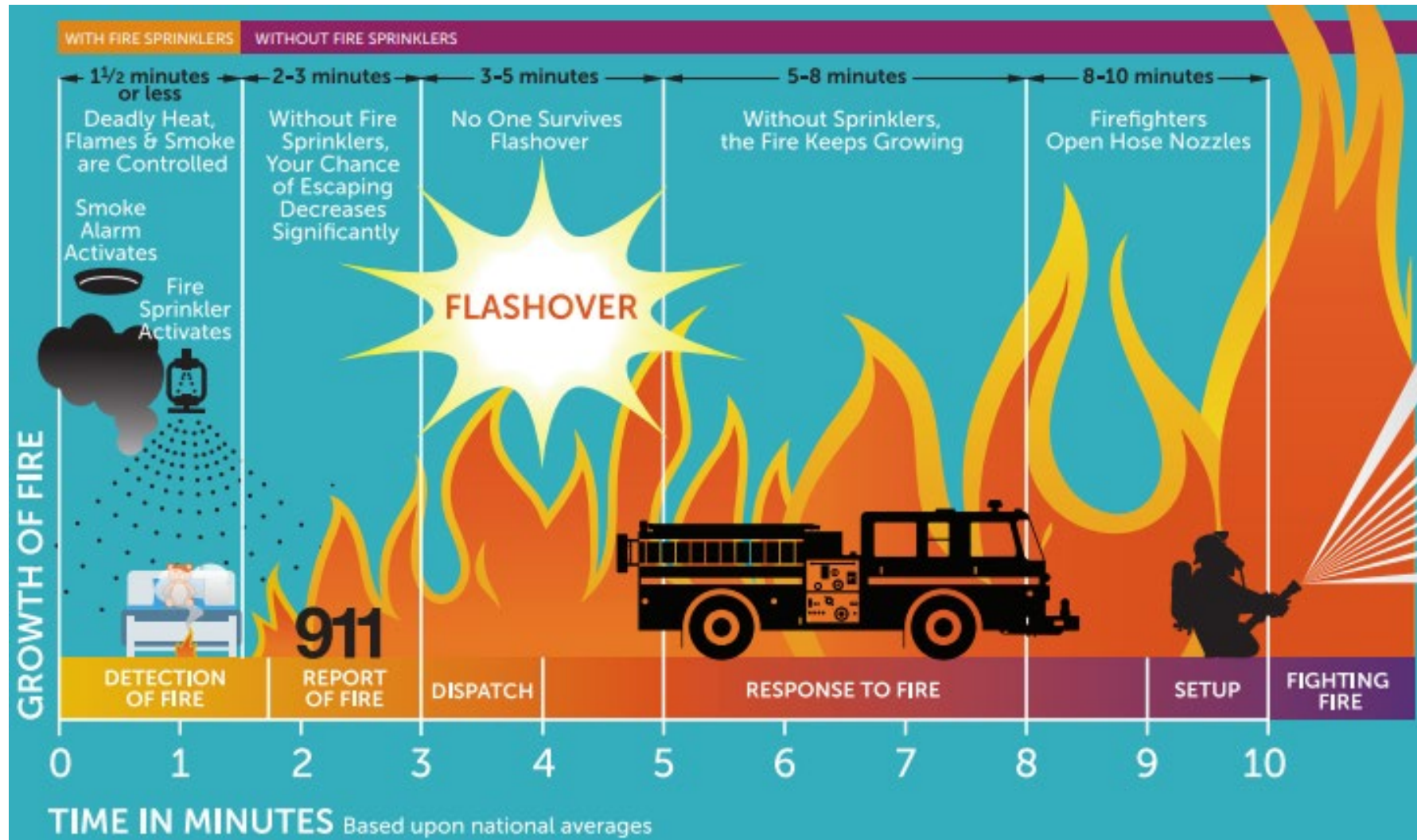


Background



- Effective January 2017, state law allows the construction of non-sprinklered Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) when built on properties with non-sprinklered single-family homes.
- Effective January 2020, further amendments to the California Government Code made local ADU ordinances that did not meet the new state law requirements null and void.
- Effective January 2024, AB1033 allowed municipalities to adopt local ordinances to allow the conveyance of an ADU as a condominium.
- On June 11, 2024, City Council approved and incorporated state provisions into an ordinance specifying that permitted and qualifying ADUs that meet all conditions may be converted and sold as condominiums.

Fire Spread

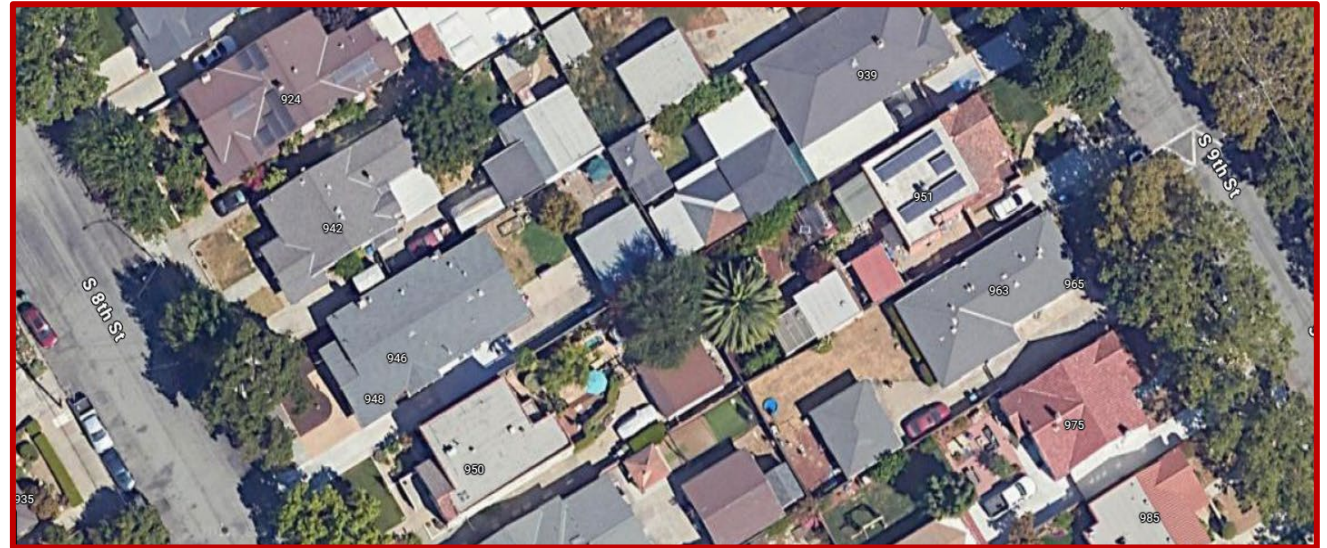


Source: Reproducible-Safety-Sheets.indd

Building-to-Building Fire Risk



- ADU laws allow parcels with existing non-sprinklered homes to have non-sprinklered ADUs on the same parcel.
- The result is that older-construction neighborhoods are densifying with ADUs that have less fire protection compared to newer-built neighborhoods which are required to have sprinklers.
- State ADU law does not require any upgrades to existing structures to harden their construction to prevent building-to-building fire spread.



Vulnerable Populations



- ADUs are sometimes used to house aging family members in multigenerational living arrangements while maintaining separate living spaces. This is particularly common in regions with high housing costs such as San José, where families seek to provide affordable housing solutions for their members.
- Sprinklers provide critical life-saving intervention for populations who may have difficulty evacuating during a fire.



Discussion with State Partners



- The California Office of the State Marshal is exploring modifying legislation to include a sprinkler requirement for ADUs converted to condos.
- There are no restrictions within AB 1033 that prohibit local jurisdictions from requiring sprinklers in ADUs converted into condos.





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