Hampshire & Isle of Wight FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

Sprinklers

Document number (AP003/PS003)

Next Review Due **31/03/2025**

1. Purpose

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Authority (HIWFRA) is committed to ensuring that Hampshire and the Isle of Wight have an efficient and effective fire and rescue service which makes life safer for everyone.

This is HIWFRA's Position Statement for Sprinklers and forms part of the HIWFRA's Protection Policy.

2. Authority's Position

Sprinklers

The correct installation and use of fire sprinklers provides an effective means of securing life, property and firefighter safety. When sprinklers are used within a building, some conventional design requirements can be waived. Without these conventional measures, significant costs can be saved in the design of a building.

We will promote and campaign for the use of fire sprinklers in high risk premises to enhance and improve public and firefighter safety.

Sprinklers in Schools

The prevention of fires in educational establishments remains a priority for us, because of their standing as a public and community asset and their importance for the educational wellbeing of children. The loss of course-work, the implications in terms of wider economic and social costs, property protection and environmental damage means fires in schools have far reaching consequences. Schools also tend to be a target for arsonists.

We will recommend that new schools should have sprinklers fitted.

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Sprinklers in Residential Care Premises

Fire deaths and injury data indicates that those most at risk are children, older people, people with mental health problems and particularly those with mobility problems who are unable to leave buildings easily. These buildings are an asset to the community due to their importance in looking after those most vulnerable and remain a priority for us to protect.

We will strongly recommend that all new residential care homes should be fully fitted with sprinklers for the protection of residents from fire.

Sprinklers in High Rise Buildings

The risks to firefighters in high-rise buildings are substantial. Fires in this type of building can present additional risks and considerations for the occupants and firefighters. The design and construction of these buildings delay intervention by the fire service, meaning fires can escalate.

We will campaign for sprinklers to be a mandatory requirement in all buildings above 30 metres in height.

Sprinklers in Commercial Buildings

The risks to firefighters in large commercial buildings are substantial, due to the size and potential for rapid collapse of the building. This is particularly relevant when considering modern methods of construction. Sprinklers would assist to reduce risks associated with firefighting operations.

The presence of more large commercial buildings with sprinklers will aid growth in the economy, as it will reduce business losses from fire, as fewer businesses will financially fail or be forced to relocate. It has been recorded that the carbon footprint of a building increases by a factor of 3 when destroyed by fire. The environmental impact of fires in commercial premises is great. Using sprinklers to control fires will reduce this impact on the environment.

We will promote the installation of sprinklers in all large commercial buildings based on improved firefighter safety.

Sprinklers in Timber Framed Constructed Buildings

Unlike traditionally built property, a timber framed building is at the greatest risk of fire during the construction phase, due to the amount of exposed and unprotected combustible elements. Fires in timber framed buildings have resulted in very rapid fire development, leading to early structural collapse, and the severity of radiant heat generated has caused fire spread to neighbouring buildings up to 30 metres away.

We will recommend that substantial timber framed buildings are installed with sprinklers and installation should be completed early, to protect the building during the highest risk construction phase.

Sprinklers in Domestic Premises

Fire safety measures such as smoke detectors, may sometimes not be sufficient to protect the most vulnerable when there is a fire within their home, due to their inability to evacuate themselves. This vulnerability can be due to factors such as lifestyle characteristics and those with less mobility. The ageing population and changes in social care policy, mean that more vulnerable people are remaining in their own homes.

We will recommend that sprinklers should be installed in the homes of those residents who are most vulnerable from a fire or have adapted housing and recommend a review and more work to seek the integration of sprinkler systems in new builds.

We will continue to report sprinklers saves to the recognised national professional sprinkler association, to highlight sprinklers importance within people, property and environmental protection.