FIRE SPRINKLERS — GUIDE

Residential sprinkler rules and NFPA 13D

Use the residential installation standard as a starting point. Confirm local adoption and coverage with the building authority.

Updated November 10, 2026

NFPA 13D is an installation standard for sprinkler systems in one- and two-family dwellings and manufactured homes. The Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition explains its purpose and scope. That does not tell you whether your local authority requires sprinklers in a particular project.

Separate the design standard from the local rule

The Coalition says local building requirements can exceed the standard. Before you order work, ask the building authority which code and edition apply to your project. Describe whether it is a new home, an addition or work to an existing building. Ask for the applicable requirement and review process in writing.

Do not use a rule from a nearby city or another province as a substitute. Do not treat a contractor's preferred design as proof that the authority has approved it.

Ask about coverage and water supply

The Coalition describes living-area protection and identifies spaces that the standard may not require to be sprinklered. It also warns that local requirements can be more extensive. Do not use that summary to omit a room from a design. Have the designer show the basis for coverage and any omission on the project documents.

The same source describes stand-alone and combined multipurpose layouts. Ask the contractor which layout is proposed and who coordinates the domestic and fire water arrangements. Ask which records will show that the supply meets the design.

Prepare a project brief

- Address and local building authority.
- Existing use and proposed work.
- Available plans and details of concealed spaces.
- Water supply information already available.
- Access constraints and planned construction sequence.
- Named person responsible for permits, design review and completion records.

Ask for the proposed standard, permit responsibilities and exclusions in the quote. Confirm who deals with changes after the layout is approved. Keep the accepted design and final records with the property documents.

Plan the handover

Ask the contractor to explain the system identification, owner instructions and service contacts. Ask for a maintenance plan for this specific residential arrangement. Do not apply a commercial inspection checklist merely because both buildings have sprinklers.

This guide does not state a nationwide residential mandate or a universal retrofit trigger. It helps you get a documented answer for the home in question.

Sources

- Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition, NFPA 13D: The National Standard. Fetched 2026-11-10.

For information only. Confirm the adopted code, local rules and system requirements with the authority having jurisdiction and a qualified contractor.

Frequently asked questions

Does NFPA 13D itself tell me whether my project needs sprinklers?

Use the local building authority to establish the applicable requirement. The Coalition notes that local requirements can exceed the standard.