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National

Viking Corp. Sued

Over Alleged Patent Infringement of Flexible Sprinkler Connections

According to the *Pennsylvania Record*, September 22, 2015, Victaulic Co. filed a civil action complaint September 18th in the U.S. District Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania against The Viking Corp. and Supply Network Inc., doing business as Viking SupplyNet, alleging patent infringement.

The complaint states that Victaulic patented certain flexible sprinkler connection models, the 399 patent, with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on March 3.

The complaint states that Viking infringed upon this patent with its own flexible sprinkler connection models.

Victaulic seeks a judgment declaring patent infringement against the defendants and ordering them to pay damages for their infringement, plus interest,

court costs, and attorney fees.

Victaulic is represented by Robert R. Baron Jr. and Marc S. Segal of Ballard Spahr, LLP in Philadelphia, and of counsel by Darle M. Short of Oliff, PLC in Alexandria, Virginia.

U.S. District Court of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania case number 5:15-cv-05206-JFL

National

NY Times Shoots Sprinkler Myth

An article in the September 2015 edition of NFPA's *Fire Sprinkler Initiative News* said if there's one myth fire sprinkler advocates hear ad nauseum, it's the one about fire sprinkler ordinances driving up housing costs and forcing homeowners to seek cheaper alternatives in neighboring communities or states. A recent article in *The New York Times*, August 19, 2015, notes this notion couldn't be further from the truth.

California has been requiring sprinklers in new homes since 2011, and has not seen a negative impact on housing stock or affordability. In fact, as the story states, "there's a robust demand for housing." Take into consideration these figures highlighted in the story: the

Sacramento region has approved more than 280,000 housing units; Shafter, California, is planning to build 3,000 homes; Newport Beach more than 1,300; Coachella may build 7,800 new homes.

For a state that's expected to swell to 50 million people by 2050, protecting its growing population with this level of home protection aims to have a positive impact on reducing home fire deaths.

A more immediate benefit is a fire sprinkler's ability to reduce the amount of water needed to fight fires, something seen as a necessity in drought-stricken California. Research by FM Global and the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition (HFSC) prove sprinklers reduce water use needed to fight a home fire by upwards of 90%.

For more information visit: <http://sprinkler.blog.nfpa.org>.

Connecticut

New Sprinkler Law

An article by Renee Chmiel posted October 1, 2015, on wtnh.com, New Haven, Connecticut, said a new law is in effect that aims to keep tenants safe. Landlords now need to let residents know if there is a working sprinkler system in the building. It can be put in the

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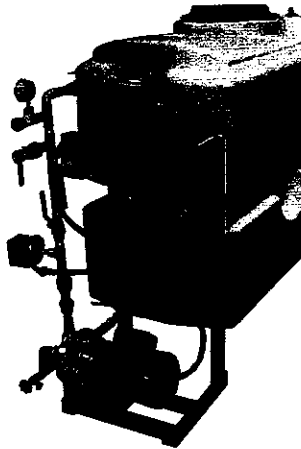
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lease and it needs to be in 12-point font. If the building has a working sprinkler, system landlords will now have to let tenants know when it was last inspected.

A Watertown man has been pushing for the legislation. Jeff Block still gets choked up when he talks about his daughter, who died in 2012.

"Three students at Marist College were killed in an off-campus housing fire," said Block. "My daughter Eva was one of those kids."

The house didn't have a sprinkler system. Block wants parents to ask questions and be better able to keep their kids safe.

"I wasn't aware at that point in time, and I don't want another parent to go through what I'm going through," he said.

Fire Science professors at the University of New Haven say the law is a good start. They hope it starts a conversation, since a lot of people don't understand how sprinklers work.

"We don't expect sprinklers to put the fire out. That's the fire department's job," said Wayne Sandford, a professor in UNH's Fire Science program. "What sprinklers will do is buy time."

The hope is the new law will make parents and tenants more aware of what safety measures are in the building.

"Maybe a parent of a student will say is this really the off-campus place that I want my child to be?" said Sandford.

Block hopes this law will prevent more tragedies and make it easier for parents and tenants to make smart decisions when it comes to fire safety.

"Anything that you can do to raise your kid's awareness and your awareness, so you don't feel guilty if, God forbid, something happens," said Block.

Kerry Fitzsimmons also died in the fire that killed Eva Block. Her family helped get a similar law passed in New York last year.

An Example of Fire Sprinkler Promotion

New Jersey

Fire Sprinklers Key to Protection

An October 4, 2015, article in the *Vineland Daily Journal* and posted on www.thedailyjournal.com, said this week, October 4-10, is the 93rd annual

Fire Prevention Week. The theme this year, which is changed every year, is "Hear the Beep When You Sleep." It is intended to raise awareness of the fact that nearly half of all home fire deaths occur overnight, when residents are asleep. The call to action is to have a smoke detector in every bedroom.

This is a noble mission and one that every fire safety advocate fully supports. The issue I would like to draw attention to, however, is the lack of changes to the fire code regarding **fire sprinkler** coverage since the Edgewater fire in January.

The state recently adopted the **2015 International Residential Code** and specifically left out the portion of including fire sprinklers in all new residential construction, which was established as a *Minimum Life Safety Code* since 2009. The Department of Community Affairs chose to do this despite loud and clear calls from the fire safety and service community that new construction methods leave residents and first responders vulnerable to the quick spread of fire and the reduced time to structural failure of modern building materials.

The DCA is also currently examining the cost vs. benefit of **fire sprinklers** in newly constructed townhomes, which would protect a significant amount of the new construction in this state. This stems from Gov. Chris Christie's conditional veto of Bill A1698, which was passed by the Senate and Assembly in consecutive sessions following years of research and testimony.

If the DCA fails to recognize the need for these systems in townhomes, it will be the second time in a matter of months that it has put the residents of this state at risk.

This Fire Prevention Week, please consider the life-saving benefits of smoke alarms in each bedroom, but also remember that **fire sprinklers** are the only proactive form of fire protection.

— David Kurasz, Executive Director
New Jersey Fire Sprinkler Advisory

Texas

Old High-Rises Could Be Retrofitted

An article by Joey Palacios posted October 7, 2015, on tpr.org, San Antonio, Texas, said Fire Chief Charles Hood is recommending San Antonio high-rise