



# Critical News

Development Issues in the Critical Area

## LINKS: ANNE ARUNDEL SPRINKLER LAW BILL #85-08

County Web

City Web

Health Dept.

County Compliance Database

County Council

Engineering Maps

As many of you have heard, Anne Arundel County passed a new residential sprinkler law, Bill #85-08, effective February 22, 2009. Any building permits **issued, not applied for**, after this date will require sprinklers if the project does not meet the exceptions.\*

Briefly, the law states that sprinkler systems shall be installed and maintained in all new one- or two-family dwellings, townhomes, and first-occupancy manufactured homes and will be required to be installed in any substantially improved existing structure.

“Substantially Improved” as defined by AA County Code Section 16-1-101: “Substantial improvement” means a repair, reconstruction, modification, or improvement of a structure, the cost of which **equals or exceeds 50% of the market value of the structure**, either before the improvement is started or, if the structure has been damaged and is being restored, before the damage occurred...Substantial improvement does not include any alteration of an historic structure.”

**\*Exceptions** to the provisions of the law apply to:

(a) construction, alteration, enlargement, replacement or repair to a building, **unless the building is demolished or destroyed and replaced or the construction constitutes “substantial improvement”**, as defined in the County Code.

(b) Non-Habitable Structures;

(c) building permit applications received on or before July 1, 2009 for **dwellings to be served by a private well**.

(d) new buildings constructed on lots where the water and sewer plans received approval from the County prior to January 1, 2009.

The City of Annapolis has always had a residential sprinkler law. What has changed in the City is the square footage requirement. The City does not use the “market value” caveat. Their definition of substantial improvement is when a structure is expanded by 50% or more of its size. The City is working on legislation that would give homeowners a tax break for installing sprinklers in their modified home. When this legislation is introduced, the City Council will also seek to change the 50% expansion number to 25%.

The cost to install a sprinkler system ranges from \$1/sf to \$2.50/sf. A typical 2,000 sf home would cost upwards of \$5,000.00. You should keep this in mind when marketing a property where substantial renovations or additions are desired by the potential buyer. You can view the bill on Anne Arundel County’s website under the County Council link.

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