




HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONS, LICENSES AND PERMITS

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Date: June 9, 2015
To: All Fire Sprinkler Contractors
From: Donald L. Mock, P.E., Plan Review Chief 
Subject: Dry Sidewall Minimum Exposed Barrel Length

Howard County will now require, as of the date of this memo, the minimum exposed barrel length of all dry sidewall sprinkler heads to be 12 inches on all new sprinkler systems and additions to existing systems. This policy covers all residential and commercial structures. This is a minimum length, if you have an unusual circumstance where the wall is thicker than 12 inches, it is expected that the barrel length will penetrate through the wall at least 2 inches to the heated side so cold air does not penetrate making it possible for the pipe to be capable of freezing.

The last two winters have been extremely cold temperatures and have shown that sidewall sprinkler heads are highly susceptible to freezing, especially those installed on residential balconies. This policy is being implemented to protect this from happening in the future. If you have an unusual situation that you would like to prove that a shorter barrel length than 12 inches is sufficient, please submit your request in writing to me showing details on how this pipe will be protected against freezing.

Let me know if you have any questions, about this policy that becomes effective immediately.

Cc: Dan Merson, Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue
Robert J. Frances, P.E., Director
Sean Kelly, Chief of Inspections
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