

## The FIRAS Certification Scheme

Warrington Certification Ltd, in association with the FSA, has developed a 3rd party certification scheme for contractors who design and install residential and domestic sprinkler systems. Warrington Certification operates the scheme under their FIRAS banner and it is UKAS accredited.

The scheme assesses both the technical competence and management systems of the contracting organisation. Formal annual inspections of the organisations are carried out and, at any time FIRAS may randomly inspect any installations without prior notice.

A key element of the scheme is a requirement to have appropriately trained personnel. Such training must be carried out by an organisation approved to do so by FIRAS. All FSA training courses are FIRAS approved.

On completion of any installation, the approved contractor will issue a Certificate of Compliance.

The FSA encourages all authorities involved with sprinkler installations, to ensure that systems are designed and installed by competent contractors, who are FIRAS approved, and that Certificates of Compliance are issued.

Details of approved contractors can be found on both the FSA website [www.firesprinklers.info](http://www.firesprinklers.info) and the Warrington website at [www.warringtonfire.net](http://www.warringtonfire.net).



If you would like more information about Residential Sprinkler systems, please log on to our website at [www.firesprinklers.info](http://www.firesprinklers.info) or call us on 0118-971-2322

### The Fire Sprinkler Association

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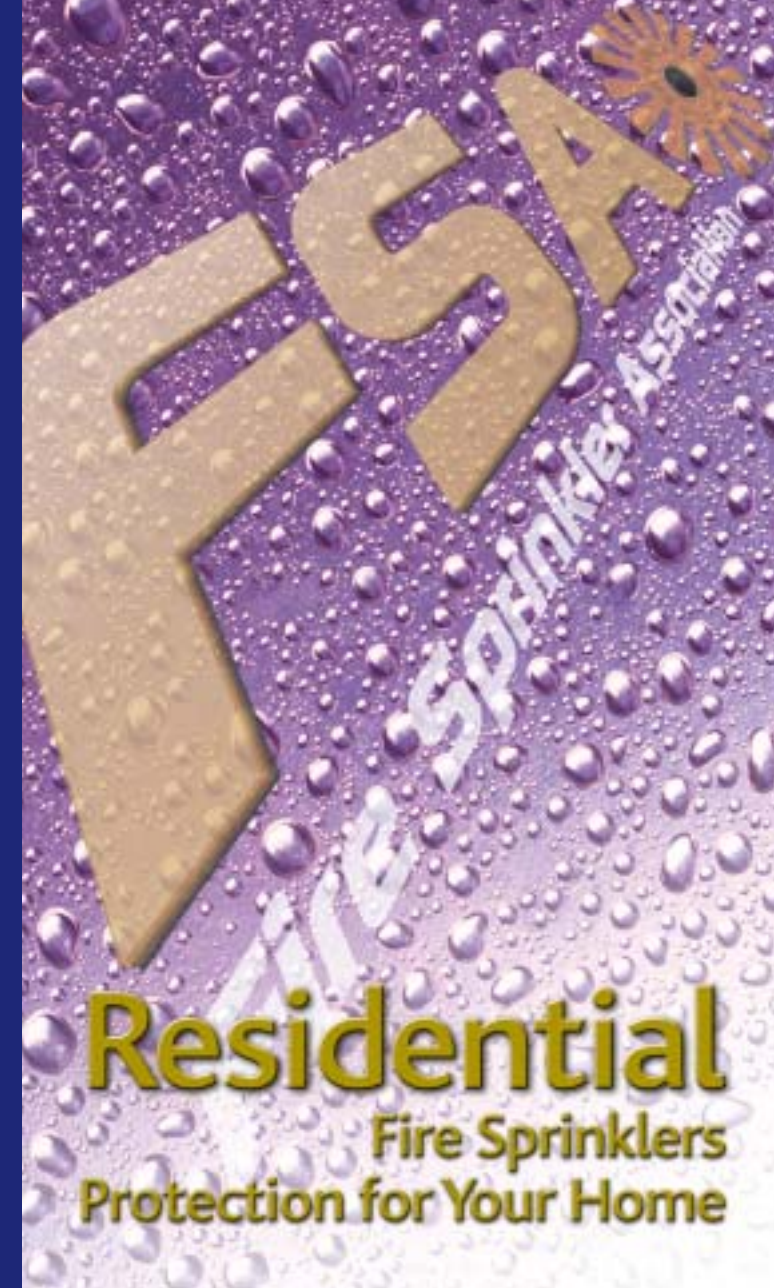
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Protect what you value most.



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## Did you Know?

- Did you know that you are 3 times more likely to die in a fire at home than anywhere else?
- Each year 600 people die in fires and another 18,000 are injured in the UK.
- 75% of all fire casualties occur in people's own homes
- In the UK we severely underestimate the danger of fire and do little to protect ourselves from it.
- It is a fact that there are as many fires each year as there are burglaries
- Most people spend hundreds, if not thousands, of pounds on locks and security measures to protect our homes from break-ins, but are reluctant to spend even a few pounds on fire safety.
- Very few people are hurt in break-ins, however the same is not true for fires -

## Understanding the dangers

Virtually all fires start small but grow rapidly. If a fire can be detected soon enough, and fought immediately, it will take surprisingly little water to put it out. But if it is allowed to grow unhindered it can make a room untenable within as little as 2 minutes.

Current fire safety strategy is based on a combination of fire safety education and early warning devices, like smoke alarms.

This strategy assumes that if occupants are given early warning of a fire, they will be able to rapidly make their own way to safety. This assumption makes 2 basic mistakes, which leads directly to much higher fire casualties than is necessary.

Firstly, there is a significant section of the community that is unable to escape quickly, if at all. This is reflected in the fact that around 60% of fire casualties are disabled, mentally or physically, are young or old, or are under the influence of drink or drugs.

Secondly, because of the enormous increase in flammable materials in modern homes, fires grow much more quickly, thus reducing the time available for escape. Modern construction has also improved insulation, resulting in internal temperatures becoming life threatening more quickly. The result is that many occupants simply cannot move quickly enough and are trapped by the fire.

## Simple solution

### Residential sprinklers

Around 25 years ago a special type of fire sprinkler system was developed for use in homes. These systems are now well proven with millions in use around the world. You probably have not heard of them before because the UK has been slow to adopt this technology.

Residential sprinklers continuously monitor your home for fires, and should one start, the sprinkler nearest the fire will operate and put it out before the fire can do any serious damage.

Because the sprinklers catch the fire at an early stage they use very little water to control the fire. This is in contrast to the hundreds, if not thousands, of gallons the Fire Brigade would have to use to control the same fire when they arrive. This is because the fire will have grown considerably between the time the alarm is raised and Fire Brigade can respond.

Residential sprinklers are not prone to false alarms, so you should have no worries about them operating accidentally. Indeed quality control is so high that just 1 sprinkler in 16million has any kind of defect, ranging from cosmetic to mechanical.

A room protected by sprinklers can often be back in use within a couple of hours, with the rest of the house unaffected. Conversely many houses which sustain major fires are never occupied again and may need to be demolished.

### Installation & maintaining a sprinkler system

A residential fire sprinkler system is designed specifically for the residential environment. All the pipework is concealed in the floors and walls, and the sprinklers themselves are small, neat and blend in with the decor. They are available in a range of colours and finishes and even concealed models can now be obtained.

The heads are connected through a system of pipes to the water mains or an alternative secure source of water. Most rooms require 1 or 2 sprinkler heads to afford complete protection.

### Minimal disruption

The process of installation is similar to putting in central heating, but with much less pipework, and thus less disruption.



### The Cost of Installation

The cost of installation can vary depending on the type of property and water supply. However the following benchmarks may be useful

- in new houses is normally in the region of 1–2% for the cost of construction.
- in existing properties it should be no more than 50% more than for a similar new property.
- 1/2 to 2/3rds cost of a central heating system.
- similar to the cost of good carpeting

But the sprinkler system will last the life of the property (50+ years) unlike the carpets, which will need several replacement in that time.

However, whatever the cost, it is nothing compared to the value of a life.

### Choosing a qualified installer

For peace of mind we recommend that you choose a properly trained and qualified installer. The FSA runs training courses and lists successful candidates on its web site at [www.firesprinklers.info](http://www.firesprinklers.info) (click on "Find an Installer").

We also recommend that installations are designed in accordance BS 9251:2005 and that all the components used are suitably tested and approved.

The FSA is also a strong supporter of independent 3rd party certification.