



C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER – Governor
RICHARD M. ARMSTRONG – Director

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

LESLIE M. CLEMENT - Administrator
DIVISION OF MEDICAID
Post Office Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720-0036
PHONE: (208) 334-5747
FAX: (208) 364-1811

INFORMATIONAL LETTER #2010-1

DATE: July 21, 2010

TO: Residential Care Assisted Living Facilities (RALFs)

FROM: Jamie Simpson, MBA, QMRP
Program Supervisor
Residential Community Care Program
Medicaid Licensing and Certification

SUBJECT: **Safety Alert for Residential Sprinkler Systems**

Based upon information provided by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), we are notifying you of a potential problem involving a small number of residential fire sprinkler systems.

If your facility has a residential sprinkler system (13D or 13R) **and** the system contains an antifreeze product, action is needed. If your system does not contain antifreeze you may disregard this announcement. These systems are commonly seen in assisted living facilities which are 16 beds or less.

NFPA received a report of a kitchen fire not being suppressed as designed; the incident involved a grease fire in a kitchen. The fire resulted in a single fatality and serious injury to another person.

NFPA issued a safety alert and is recommending that residential fire sprinkler systems containing antifreeze be drained and the antifreeze replaced with water. NFPA has initiated an investigation and hopes to provide long term solutions before winter freezing temperatures are expected.

NFPA offers the following interim guidance on residential sprinklers;

- Fire sprinklers are extremely effective fire protection devices, significantly reducing deaths, injuries and property loss from fire.

July 21, 2010

Page 2 of 2

- These systems should not be disconnected.
- If you have, or are responsible for, a residential occupancy with a fire sprinkler system, contact a sprinkler contractor to check and see if there is antifreeze in the system.
- If there is antifreeze in the system, as an interim measure, drain the system and replace it with water only. Problems associated with freezing of sprinkler pipes can be mitigated by alternative measures such as insulation. NFPA hopes to provide further guidance based on additional testing before the winter freezing months.
- If you are putting in a new residential sprinkler system, design and install a system that does not require antifreeze.

“We are providing this safety alert as interim guidance based on the information we have right now,” said James M. Shannon, President of NFPA. “As soon as more information is available, we will update the public.”

The NFPA Safety Alert Regarding Antifreeze in Residential Sprinklers and more information on this topic can be found at www.nfpa.org/antifreeze.

If your facility has a 13D or 13R system that contains antifreeze, please notify Mark Grimes, Supervisor, Facility Fire Safety and Construction Program at (208) 334-6626 or by email at fsb@dhw.idaho.gov further information will be provided directly to you as more details become available.



JAMIE SIMPSON, MBA, QMRP, Supervisor
Residential Community Care Program

JS/lj
Enclosure

c: Idaho Health Care Association
Idaho State Fire Marshal
Local City & County Fire Marshals