

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2290

*As Passed House
February 12, 1992*

Title: An act relating to fire protection sprinkler systems.

Brief Description: Regulating fire protection sprinkler system contractors.

Sponsor(s): Representatives R. Meyers, Ferguson, Schmidt, Zellinsky, Winsley, Wilson, Paris and Sheldon; by request of Department of Community Development.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Judiciary, January 15, 1992, DP;
Passed House, February 12, 1992, 89-0.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
JUDICIARY**

Majority Report: *Do pass.* Signed by 17 members: Representatives Appelwick, Chair; Ludwig, Vice Chair; Padden, Ranking Minority Member; Paris, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Broback; Forner; Hargrove; Inslee; Locke; R. Meyers; Mielke; H. Myers; Riley; Scott; D. Sommers; Tate; and Vance.

Staff: Bill Perry (786-7123).

Background: A 1990 Washington law provides for the licensing of persons who install fire sprinkler systems. To be licensed, a contractor must employ a holder of a certificate of competency issued by the state director of fire protection, must meet minimum insurance requirements, and must pay a license fee.

In 1991, the Legislature passed SHB 1821, which was vetoed by the governor. That bill would have provided for the following:

A person would have been guilty of a class C felony if he or she had willfully and maliciously constructed, installed, or maintained a fire sprinkler system and known that the system was inoperable. It would also have been a class C felony to willfully and knowingly impair the operation of a sprinkler system.

A person without a license who constructed, installed, or maintained a fire protection sprinkler system in a building other than a single-family, owner-occupied home would have been guilty of a gross misdemeanor.

The governor's veto message indicated concern that the bill would have adversely affected "in-house maintenance employees" of companies that construct, install, or maintain their own fire sprinkler systems.

Summary of Bill: It is a class C felony for a licensed sprinkler system contractor to maliciously construct, install, or maintain a fire sprinkler system in a way that threatens the safety of someone in a fire.

It is a gross misdemeanor for an unlicensed fire sprinkler system contractor to construct, install, or maintain a system in any dwelling other than an owner-occupied, single-family dwelling.

The state attorney general and county prosecutors are given authority to enforce the fire sprinkler system licensing law through civil proceedings.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: The bill addresses the concerns expressed in the governor's veto message and provides needed protection to the public.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Gordon Walgren, Fire Sprinkler Advisory Board of Puget Sound (in favor); and Dick Small, Department of Community Development (in favor).