

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 2290

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*As Reported By House Committee on:  
Judiciary*

**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.

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**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).