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130

# to the editor

#### Nursing home fires

Your article correctly brought out the differing views on fire safety as held by the nursing home associations and the NFPA (SN: 1/15/72, p. 39). I would like to make a couple of comments on this problem.

It is my belief that the opposition of the nursing home industry to the sprinkler system is rooted in the fact that sprinklers have been an impractical solution. The cost of sprinklers often has been totally unrealistic for small nursing homes. Thus, there is a long history of opposition to sprinklers.

While the cost of the sprinkler system as defined by the present standard, NFPA-13, is exorbitant, we believe that the sprinkler system (Life Safety System) now being developed under the auspices of three of the four Model Building Code authorities in the United States will price out to be less costly for a nursing home than a "product of combustion" fire detection system. When the nursing home industry finally realizes that it can actually save money through sprinklers it will reverse its position.

When the sprinkler system becomes economically feasible for small properties we also believe that some of the old wives' tales about the deficiencies of the suppression system will die out.

We are proposing more than the development of a new and economically practical fire suppression system. We believe that the main cause of nursing home fires is an obsolete fire technology based on the concept of the fireproof building. Until the fire protection community reverses its position a full 180 degrees we believe that additional nursing home disasters are inevitable.

I will go further and state that the existing standard fire protection solutions that are routinely applied to nursing homes guarantee that there will be more nursing home disasters.

Richard M. Patton, President Patton Fire Protection and Research, Inc. Freehold, N.J.

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bulletin board with a quality fiberglass fume hood.
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