

FIRE PROTECTION THROUGH THE AGES

- The first fire pump was invented around the second century B.C.
- The fire pump was reinvented in Europe during the 1500's.
- Colonial laws in America required each house to have a bucket of water on the front stoop. These buckets were intended for use by the "bucket brigade" that would throw the water at fires.
- Benjamin Franklin organized the first fire company in 1737.
- The first American steam-powered fire engine was built in New York in 1840.
- Until the mid-19th century, most fire engines were maneuvered by men.
- Horse-drawn fire engines appeared in the middle of the 19th century, considerably improving response time to incidents.
- Motorized fire engines did not become commonplace until the early 20th century.
- The world's first sprinkler system was installed in the United Kingdom in 1812. The system consisted of a reservoir fed by a 10" water main. The distribution pipe fed a series of smaller pipes pierced with a series of $\frac{1}{2}$ " holes which poured water in the event of a fire. This system, however, was not automatic.
- These perforated pipe systems were used in textile mills through New England from 1852 to 1885 as a means of fire protection.
- Henry Parmelee invented the first automatic sprinkler head in 1864 to protect his piano factory.
- The first automatic sprinkler system was patented in 1872 by Philip W. Pratt of Abington, MA.
- Parmelee improved on the Pratt patent and installed his first automatic fire sprinkler system in 1874. By 1883 only about 10 factories in England were protected by the Parmelee sprinkler.
- In 1881 Frederick Grinnell reinvented and patented the automatic sprinkler that bears his name. He continued to improve the device and in 1890 invented the glass disc sprinkler, essentially the same as that in use today.
- Until the 1940s, sprinklers were installed almost exclusively for the protection of commercial buildings. Over the years, fire sprinklers have become mandatory in most new public-building construction, subject to the local building codes and enforcement.
- In the 1980's sprinklers were developed with the intent to protect homes and also to suppress high-challenge warehouse fires.