

2021 -- H 5479

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- NEW HOME BUYERS FIRE PROTECTION ACT

Introduced By: Representative Samuel A. Azzinaro

Date Introduced: February 10, 2021

Referred To: House Municipal Government & Housing

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 23 of the General Laws entitled "HEALTH AND SAFETY" is hereby
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 28.40

4 NEW HOME BUYERS FIRE PROTECTION ACT

5 **23-28.40-1. Short title.**

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the "New Home Buyers Fire Protection Act".

7 **23-28.40-2. Definitions.**

8 As used in this chapter:

9 (1) "Builder" means any individual, trustee, partnership, corporation, or other legal entity
10 contracting with an owner for the construction of a new dwelling.

11 (2) "Buyer" means any individual, trustee, partnership, corporation, or other legal entity
12 purchasing any estate or interest in a new dwelling.

13 (3) "New dwelling" means a new one or two (2) family residential dwelling, not previously
14 occupied, and constructed for residential use.

15 **23-28.40-3. Disclosure of automatic fire sprinkler system information.**

16 At the time of or prior to agreeing to final pricing for construction of a new dwelling with
17 a buyer, a builder shall provide the buyer with a copy of written materials prepared and promulgated
18 by the office of the state fire marshal which detail the benefits of an automatic fire sprinkler system.

19 At the same time, a builder shall provide written materials including the costs associated with the

1 installation and maintenance of an automatic fire sprinkler system or other fire suppression system.
2 The buyer shall acknowledge receipt of the written materials in writing. Upon request of the buyer,
3 the builder shall, at the buyer's expense, install an automatic fire sprinkler system or other requested
4 fire suppression system.

5 **23-28.40-4. Remedies and penalties.**

6 (a) In addition to any remedies the buyer may have at law or in equity, whenever it appears
7 to the attorney general or the state fire marshal that a person has engaged in, is engaging in or is
8 about to engage in any act or omission in violation of this chapter, the attorney general or state fire
9 marshal may institute a court proceeding or administrative proceeding. Upon a finding that any
10 person has willfully violated this chapter, the person shall pay for the first offense a civil penalty
11 not less than seventy-five dollars (\$75.00) nor more than one hundred fifty dollars (\$150), and for
12 each subsequent offense, a civil penalty not less than one hundred dollars (\$100) nor more than two
13 hundred fifty dollars (\$250). For purposes of this chapter, a willful violation occurs when the person
14 committing the violation knew or should have known that the conduct was of the nature prohibited
15 by this chapter.

16 (b) The remedies and penalties provided for in this section are not exclusive, and shall be
17 in addition to any other procedures, rights, or remedies which exist with respect to any other
18 provision of law including, but not limited to, criminal prosecutions and actions brought by private
19 parties under common or statutory law, or both; provided, there shall be no liability or cause of
20 action against a licensed real estate agent or real estate brokerage arising out of or related to a
21 builder failing to provide the information required by this chapter, or for the content of the
22 information. Additionally, there shall be no liability or cause of action against any nonprofit builder
23 using zero percent (0%) financing to the buyer.

24 **23-28.40-5. New construction form.**

25 The office of the state fire marshal shall develop a standard form or forms to be used for
26 new construction that shall include the following:

27 "An automatic fire sprinkler system or other fire suppression systems may be available.
28 For further information, visit www.statefiremarshal.RI.gov."

29 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage, and shall apply to any contract for the
30 construction of a new dwelling entered into on or after January 1, 2022.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- NEW HOME BUYERS FIRE PROTECTION ACT

1 This act would mandate that builders of new one or two (2) family residential dwellings
2 provide the home buyer with written information regarding the installation of an automatic fire
3 sprinkler system subject to civil penalties for violations enforced by the attorney general or state
4 fire marshal.

5 This act would take effect upon passage and would apply to any contract for the
6 construction of a new dwelling entered into on or after January 1, 2022.

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