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A PERSPECTIVE ON BUILDING FIRE SAFETY

By Richard Schulte

The following are excerpts from a column titled "*Common Sense Versus Nonsense*" written by Dr. Walter Williams, a noted commentator and member of the Department of Economics faculty at the George Mason University in Virginia. While Dr. Williams' column addresses the topic of airline safety, his comments also have application to the field of building fire safety.

"Whether we acknowledge it or not, there is such a thing as being too safe, as well as being not safe enough. Typically, it's only the effects of not being safe enough that are visible. There are the crashes, injuries and fatalities."

"The effects of being over-safe are less visible."

"Speaking of safety, too many of us buy into the notions like "You can never be too safe" and "If it will save one life, it's worth it." "

"How about the frequently heard claim "If it will save just one life, it's worth it"? As a generality, it, too, is nonsense."

Is there such a thing as too much building fire safety? How much building fire safety is enough? Those are two questions which need to be continually asked in the process of the development of fire safety provisions contained in our building codes and standards.

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