

What You Should Know About Home Fires



According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), in 2006 in the U.S., there were an estimated 396,000 reported home structure fires resulting in 2,580 civilian deaths, 12,500 civilian injuries and \$6.8 billion in direct damage. Home fires caused 80% of civilian deaths and 76% of injuries. In this issue of Safety Lines, we'll take a look at some interesting facts regarding the leading causes of home fires. As you read this, use the information to help you fire-proof your home and keep your family safe.

Who, What, When, Where?

Children under 5 and older adults face the highest risk of home fire death, but young adults face a higher risk of home fire injury.

- Heating equipment and smoking are the leading causes of civilian home fire deaths.
- More than half of all home fire deaths were reported between 11:00 p.m and 7:00 a.m.
- January and December were the peak months for home fires and home fire deaths.



Smoking Materials

Roughly one of every four fire deaths per year in 2002-2005 was attributed to smoking materials (cigarettes, pipes, cigars, etc.).

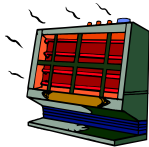
- During those years, there were an estimated 82,400 smoking material fires in the U.S., causing 800 deaths and 1660 injuries.
- The most common materials first ignited in home smoking material fire deaths were mattresses, bedding and upholstered furniture.



Heating Equipment

In 2005, heating equipment was involved in 62,200 U.S. home fires, with 670 deaths, 1550 injuries, and \$909 million in direct property damage.

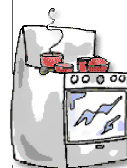
- Almost half of these fires occurred in December, January and February.
- Space heaters were involved in one-third of the home heating fires, but three-fourths of the deaths.
- Heating equipment too close to things that can burn was the leading factor contributing to these fires.



Cooking

Cooking fires are the number 1 cause of home fires and home fire injuries.

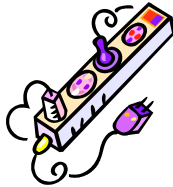
- In 2005, cooking equipment was involved in 146,400 reported home structure fires, resulting in 480 deaths, 4,690 injuries and \$876 million in property damage.
- 40% of home fires start in the kitchen, with 67% starting with the range or stove.
- **Unattended cooking** is the leading factor accounting for 1/3 of such fires.



Electrical

Electrical distribution and lighting equipment were involved in an estimated 20,900 reported home fires in 2005, resulting in 500 deaths, 1,100 injuries and \$862 million in property damage.

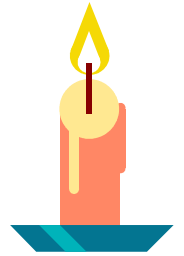
- Lamps, light fixtures and light bulbs accounted for the most home structure fires involving electricity.
- Cords and plugs accounted for the largest share of fire deaths.
- Extension cord fires outnumbered fires beginning with regular attached power cords by more than two to one.



Candles

During 2005, 15,600 housing structure fires started by candles resulted in an estimated 150 civilian deaths, 1,270 injuries and \$539 million in property damage.

- More than twice as many fires from candles were reported in 2005 than in 1990.
- The top five days for home candle fires were Christmas, Christmas Eve, New Year's Day, New Year's Eve and Halloween.
- Candles left unattended or placed too close to something that can burn were the major causes of candle fires.
- In the case of a power outage, flashlights are safer to use for light than lit candles.



Protect Yourself and Your Family

You can obtain fire safety and prevention tips on the topics mentioned in this Safety Lines by logging onto www.burnprevention.org. There you will find downloadable brochures, along with fact sheets relating to each topic. In the meantime, remember these life-saving tips:

- Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in a home fire in half.
- Develop and practice a home escape plan with your family.
- When home fire sprinklers are present, the chances of dying in a fire are reduced by more than one-half, and the average property loss per fire is cut by one to two-thirds, compared to fires where sprinklers are not present, according to statistics from NFPA.

Parent/Child Activity: "Safe Ways I Can Help"

Explain to your child that "good fires" are fires started safely by grown-ups for good reasons. Only grown-ups should use matches and lighters to light good fires. There are things that children can do to help, though. Let your child finish each story by telling you at least three ways that he or she can help to keep everybody in your family safe.



"We sometimes use candles for decoration and on holidays. When we use candles, only grown-ups light them. But, I can help by..."

We like to bake cookies in our house. It is fun to taste different kinds. Only grown-ups put the cookies in the oven to bake and take them out when they are done. But I can help by..."

