Topical Fire Report Series

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At a Glance

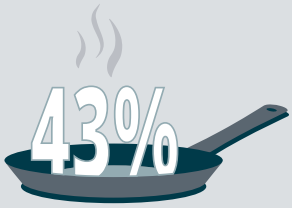
Winter Residential Building Fires (2014-2016)

Each year, from 2014 to 2016, an estimated

108,200
winter residential building fires

were reported to fire departments within the United States. These fires caused an estimated 980 deaths, 3,575 injuries, and $1.9 billion in property loss.

Winter residential building fires accounted for only 8 percent of the total number of fires in the U.S., but they resulted in 30 percent of all fire deaths and 23 percent of all fire injuries.

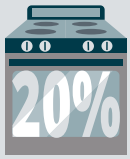


At 43 percent, cooking was the leading cause of winter residential building fires. Small, confined fires accounted for 90 percent of these cooking fires.

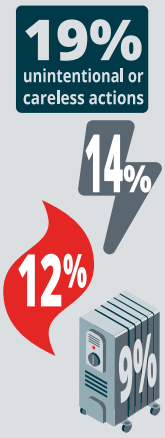
January
February
March

Residential building fire incidence was collectively higher in the winter months of January, February and March, peaking in January at 11 percent.

Winter residential building fires occurred most frequently in the early evening, peaking during the dinner hours from 5 to 8 p.m., when cooking fire incidence is high.



Nonconfined winter residential building fires most often started in cooking areas and kitchens (20 percent).



In 51 percent of nonconfined winter residential building fires, the fire extended beyond the room of origin. The leading causes of these larger fires were unintentional or careless actions (19 percent), electrical malfunctions (14 percent), open flames (12 percent), and heating (9 percent).

The leading specific factor contributing to ignition in nonconfined winter residential building fires was a heat source too close to combustibles (16 percent).

Smoke alarms were not present in 22 percent of nonconfined winter fires in occupied residential buildings. Additionally, automatic extinguishing systems (AESs) were present in only 4 percent of nonconfined winter fires in occupied residential buildings.

These topical reports are designed to explore facets of the U.S. fire problem as depicted through data collected in the U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Incident Reporting System. Each topical report briefly addresses the nature of the specific fire or fire-related topic, highlights important findings from the data, and may suggest other resources to consider for further information.

To read the full report, visit: www.usfa.fema.gov/data/statistics/reports.html.

FEMA

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National Fire Data Center
16825 S. Seton Ave.
Emmitsburg, MD 21727
https://www.usfa.fema.gov/data/statistics/