



## Columbia-Richland Fire Department



## National Fire Facts

### Home Fires

- One home structure fire was reported every 87 seconds in 2009.
- On average, seven people died in home fires every day. Adults 65 and over face the highest risk of fire death.
- In 2009, U.S. fire departments responded to 362,500 home structure fires. These fires caused 12,650 civilian injuries, 2,565 civilian deaths, \$7.6 billion in direct damage.

### Escape Planning

- According to an NFPA survey, less than one-fourth of Americans have both developed and practiced a [home fire escape plan](#) (PDF, 640 KB).
- Almost three-quarters of Americans do have an escape plan; however, less than half actually practiced it.
- One-third of Americans households who made and estimate they thought they would have at least 6 minutes before a fire in their home would become life threatening. The time available is often less. And only 8% said their first thought on hearing a smoke alarm would be to get out!

### Smoke Alarms

- Roughly two-thirds of home fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or no working [smoke alarms](#). About one in five smoke alarm failures was due to dead batteries.
- Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in reported home fires in half.
- In fires considered large enough to activate the smoke alarm, hardwired alarms operated 91% of the time, while battery powered alarms operated only 75% of the time.

### Home Fire Sprinklers

- [Automatic fire sprinkler systems](#) cut the risk of dying in a home fire by about 80%.
- Home fire sprinklers can contain and may even extinguish a fire in less time than it would take the fire department to arrive on the scene.
- Sprinklers are highly effective because they react so quickly in a fire. They reduce the risk of death or injury from a fire because they dramatically reduce the heat, flames and smoke produced, allowing people time to evacuate the home.

## Cooking

- [Cooking equipment](#) is the leading cause of home structure fires and associated injuries, and was tied for the third leading cause of home fire deaths.
- Unattended cooking was by far the leading cause of these fires.
- Households using electric ranges have a higher risk of fires than those using gas ranges.
- Children under five face a higher risk of non-fire burns associated with cooking than being burned in a cooking fire.
- Nearly half (45%) of microwave oven injuries seen at emergency rooms in 2009 were scalds.
- U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 155,400 cooking-related home fires each year between 2005-2009, causing an average of 390 deaths, 4,800 injuries and \$771 million in direct property damage.

## Heating

- Fires involving [heating equipment](#) peak in December, January and February, as do deaths from these fires. Overall, home fires and home fire deaths are also more common in the cooler months of the year.
- Heating equipment was the second leading cause of all reported home fires and home fire deaths.
- The leading factor contributing to heating equipment fires was failure to clean, principally creosote from solid fueled heating equipment, primarily chimneys.
- Half of home heating fire deaths resulted from fires caused by heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattresses or bedding.
- U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 64,100 heating-related home fires each year between 2005-2009, causing an average of 560 deaths, 1,620 injuries and \$904 million in direct property damage.

## Smoking Materials

- The risk of dying in a home structure fire caused by [smoking materials](#) rises with age.
- In recent years, Canada and the United States have required that all cigarettes sold must be "fire safe," that is have reduced ignition strength and less likely to start fires.
- U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 18,900 smoking-related home fires each year between 2005-2009, causing an average of 660 deaths, 1,270 injuries and \$492 million in direct property damage.

## Electrical

- 41% of [home electrical fires](#) involved electrical distribution or lighting equipment.
- 53% of home electrical fires involved other known types of equipment, including ranges, washers/dryers, fans and space heaters.
- During 2005-2009, electrical distribution and lighting equipment was involved in the ignition of 23,400 home structure fires, on average, per year. These fires caused an average of 390 deaths, 970 injuries and \$822 million in direct property damage.

## Candles

- On average, there are 35 home [candle fires](#) reported per day.
- Roughly two-fifths of these fires started in the bedroom.
- More than half of all candle fires start when things that can burn are too close to the candle.
- During 2005-2009, candles caused an average of 12,900 home fires, 140 home fire deaths, 1,040 home fire injuries and \$471 million in direct property damage.