

INTENTIONAL FIRES

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June 2010



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Abstract

In 2007, an estimated 309,200 intentional fires were reported to U.S. fire departments, with associated losses of 480 civilian fire deaths, 1,450 civilian fire injuries, and \$1.3 billion in direct property damage. Also in 2007, three firefighters died on scene or during response to intentional fires, and 6,100 firefighters were injured at the scene of intentional fires. In 2008, 18% of arson offenses were cleared by arrest or exceptional means.

Keywords: Arson, intentional fire, suspicious, firesetting, firesetter, fire statistics.

Acknowledgements

The National Fire Protection Association thanks all the fire departments and state fire authorities who participate in the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) and the annual NFPA fire experience survey. These firefighters are the original sources of the detailed data that make this analysis possible. Their contributions allow us to estimate the size of the fire problem.

We are also grateful to the U.S. Fire Administration for its work in developing, coordinating, and maintaining NFIRS.

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NFPA No. ATP

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Intentional Fires Executive Summary

In 2007, an estimated 309,200 intentional fires were reported to U.S. fire departments per year, with associated annual losses of 480 civilian fire deaths, 1,450 civilian fire injuries, and \$1.3 billion in direct property damage.

Seventy-five percent of intentional fires occur outside and 8% of intentional fires involve vehicles. Total intentional fires have been fairly level since 1999. Of all outside and other fires, 31% are intentional. Ten percent of all structure fires and 9% of all vehicle fires are intentional.

Intentional structure fires account for 17% of intentional fires, but are associated with 87% of civilian deaths, 81% of civilian injuries, and 82% of direct property damage in intentional fires.

Two out of five (41%) structure fires in vacant, unsecured buildings are intentional. Roughly half (49%) of structure fires in buildings that were being demolished were intentional.

Half (54%) of intentional structure fires and more than four out of five associated civilian deaths (86%) and civilian injuries (82%) occur in homes.

In intentional home structure fires, the leading area of origin is the bedroom, and the leading item first ignited is trash. In stores and offices, educational properties, and public assembly properties, the leading area of origin for intentional structure fires is the bathroom, locker room or cloak room.

Rates of intentional structure fires or arson offenses, relative to population, are highest in large cities but are also higher in rural communities (less than 2,500 population) than in small towns (say, 2,500 to 24,999 population).

In 2007, there were three firefighter on-duty deaths at the scene of or during response to or return from an intentional fire. During that same year, there were an estimated 6,100 firefighter on-duty non-fatal injuries at the scene of an intentional fires.

In the U.S., typically 15-20% of arson offenses (18% in 2006) are cleared by arrest or "exceptional means."

Juveniles have accounted for roughly half of all U.S. arson arrestees since 1992 (47% in 2008).

The Northeast has had the highest arson clearance rates since 200. Up to 2000, the highest arson clearance rates were in the South, now the second highest region.

In 2008, 84% of arson arrestees were male and 76% were white.

In 2005-2007, 60% of intentional fires were motivated by reasons other than gain or curiosity.

Arson arrest and clearance information comes from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports

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Intentional Fires

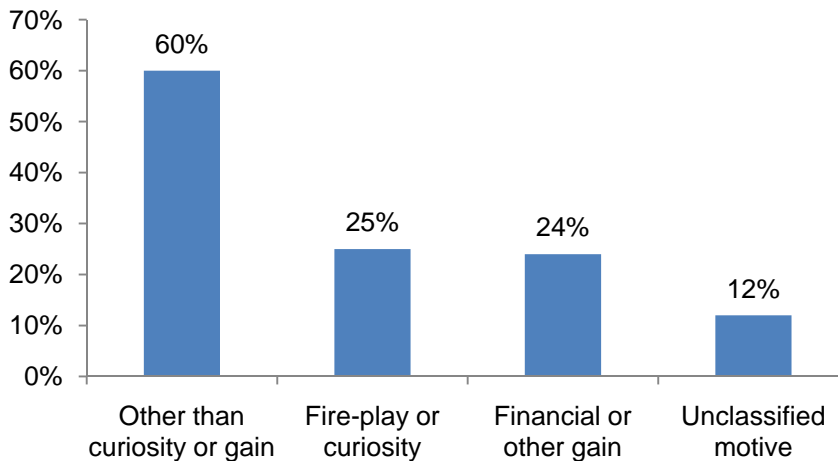
Fact Sheet



Fire departments responded to an estimated **53,600** intentional structure fires annually during 2003-2007. These fires resulted in:

- 387 civilian deaths
- 1,141 civilian injuries
- \$922 million in direct property damage

2005-2007 Intentional Fires by Major Motive Group
 (Multiple motives are possible for a case.)



Although three of every four intentional fires are started outside, most deaths, injuries and property loss in intentional fires resulted from structure fires.

In 2007, three firefighters died and 6,100 firefighters were injured, while on duty, at the scene or responding to intentional fires.

**An "intentional" fire is a fire that threatens harm and includes deliberate misuse of heat source or a fire of an incendiary nature.*

Half (54%) of all intentional structure fires are started in the home. These fires resulted in:

- 86% of the civilian deaths
- 82% of the civilian injuries
- 62% of the direct property damage

from intentional structure fires.

8% of fires in homes were intentionally started in 2003-2007

The bedroom is the leading area of origin for intentional home structure fires.

The bathroom is the leading area of origin for intentional fires in public properties such as stores, offices, and schools.

Small towns have a smaller intentional share of structure fires than large cities and rural areas.

According to FBI Statistics, in 2008:

- 18% of arson offenses were cleared by arrest or exceptional means
- 47% of arrestees were under the age of 18
- 3% of arrestees were under the age of 10