

Fire Fatality

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REPORT

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Prepared by the Washington State Patrol -
Office of the State Fire Marshal



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE PATROL

General Administration Building • PO Box 42642 • Olympia, WA 98504-2642 • (360) 596-3900 • www.wsp.wa.gov

April 1, 2015

Dear Partners in Fire Safety:

The annual Fire Fatality Report provides a summary of the fire fatality incidents reported to the State Fire Marshal's Office by fire and law enforcement agencies in our state.

The information contained in this annual report details the following:

- There were 45 fire related fatalities reported in 2014.
- Fire related fatalities were down for the third consecutive year (37% from 2011).
- Sixty percent of all fire related fatalities occurred in single family dwellings.
- Smoke detectors were not present in 33% of incidents.
- Nine percent of those killed by fire were under the age of 10.

I would like to commend the Washington State Fire Service for their efforts toward prevention, training, response, suppression and adoption of fire codes which make Washington safer.

Sincerely,



State Fire Marshal Charles M. Duffy
Fire Protection Bureau



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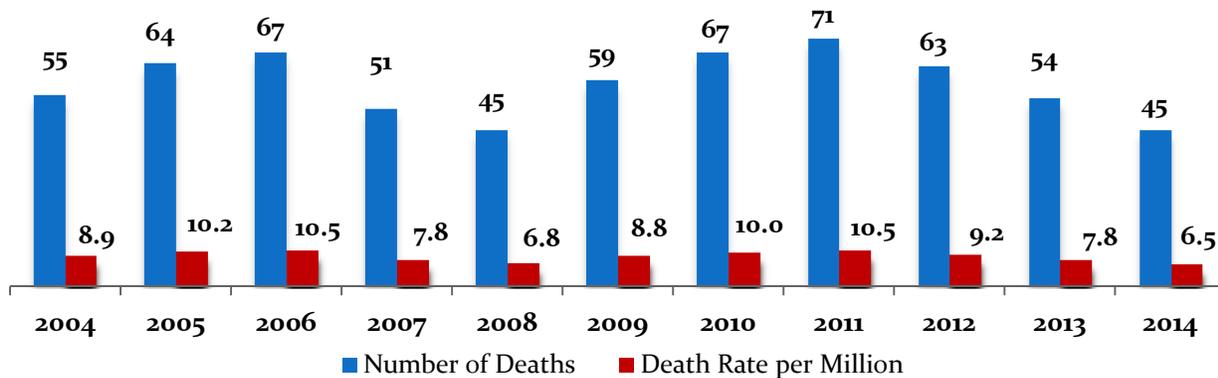
Data Sources

The data used for this report was received from fire and law enforcement agencies throughout Washington State and collected into a centralized database for analysis and report development in accordance with Revised Code of Washington 43.44.060.

Fire Fatalities

In 2014, there were 45 fire fatalities reported to the Office of the State Fire Marshal by fire agencies across the state of Washington. This represents a 17% decrease compared to the previous year, placing Washington's fire fatality rate at 6.5 per million people¹. According to the latest available statistics from the United States Fire Administration, the national fire death rate was 9.4 per million people – Washington ranked 15th lowest in the nation.

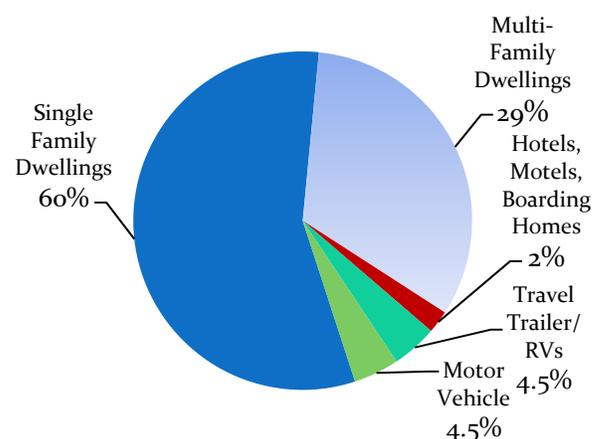
Fire Fatalities in Washington State by Year and Rate per Million



Places Where Fire Fatalities Occurred in 2014

Fire fatalities most often occur in places where people live or sleep. In 2014, 90% of the fire fatalities occurred in residential occupancies. Single-family dwellings alone accounted for 60% of reported fire fatalities, including 2 deaths in mobile homes. Multi-family dwellings accounted for nearly 29% of all fire deaths.

Occupancy Categories	Total	% of Total
Single Family Dwellings	27	60%
Multi-Family Dwellings	13	29%
Hotels, Motel, Boarding Homes	1	2%
Travel Trailer/Recreational Vehicle	2	4.5%
Motor Vehicle	2	4.5%
Total	45	100%



¹ Annual population figures are determined by the Washington State Office of Financial Management for all cities and towns in the state on April 1 of each year.

2014 Fire Fatality Causes

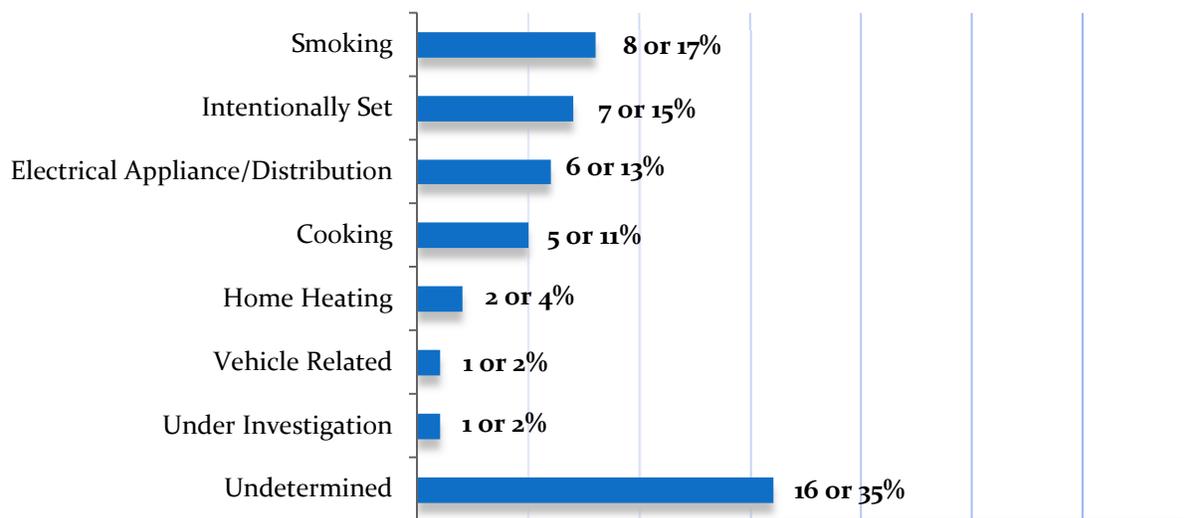
The leading cause of fire fatalities is attributed to smoking-related fires, resulting in approximately 17% of the total fire fatalities in 2014. High risk behaviors, such as smoking in sleeping or lounging areas; smoking while using medical oxygen; and smoking while under the influence of mind altering drugs or alcohol should be avoided.

Intentionally set fires were the secondary leading cause of fire fatalities. These fires were either caused by suicide (5) or intentional act by another person (2). In some cases, psychological disturbances and impairments from drugs and/or alcohol were contributing risk factors.

The third leading cause of fire fatalities in 2014 resulted from electrical-related fires. Electrical-related fires are caused by misuse or poor maintenance of electrical equipment, improperly installed wiring, overloaded circuits, or the use of extension cords in place of permanent wiring.

In the cases of undetermined fires, the exact fire causes could not be clearly identified by the fire investigator.

2014 Fire Fatalities by Category



Risk by Age and Gender

Age and gender are factors that impact an individual's ability to escape a fire. As people age, they may become unable to react quickly in emergency situations, they may take medications that slow their ability to make rapid decisions, they may not be able to hear smoke alarms sounding, or they may be home alone at the time a fire starts.

Overall, approximately 72% of people that died in 2014 were age 40 or older. Like age, gender also plays a role in the risk of death. Over the past 10 years, state fire fatality figures

indicate that more men die in fires than women. In 2014, fire fatality reports indicated that approximately 59% of fire victims were male.

Age Group	Female		Male		Grand Total	% of Total
	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total		
Undetermined	1	2.2%	0	0.0%	1	2.2%
10 & Under	1	2.2%	3	6.7%	4	8.9%
11 - 19	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
20 - 29	3	6.7%	1	2.2%	4	8.9%
30 - 39	1	2.2%	3	6.7%	4	8.9%
40 - 49	1	2.2%	2	4.4%	3	6.7%
50 - 59	5	11.1%	7	15.6%	12	26.7%
60 - 69	1	2.2%	4	8.9%	5	11.1%
70 - 79	4	8.9%	4	8.9%	8	17.8%
80 & Older	1	2.2%	3	6.7%	4	8.9%
Total	18	40.0%	27	60.0%	45	100.0%

In 2014, nearly 9% of fire fatality victims were children ages 10 and under; the majority of these fires were related to unsafe home heating behaviors during the colder winter months. Children are at significant risk in fire situations as well. Young children may not be capable of escaping or knowing the dangers of fire exposure. Their ability to escape may be dependent upon other occupants.

2014 Multiple Death Incidents

December – A father and his two young children were found dead in their Goldendale home. The fire ignited from an electrical failure in the branch circuit wiring.

Fire Protection Devices

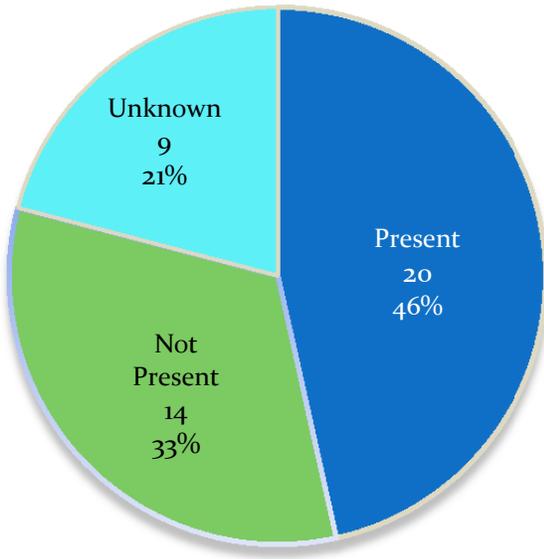
Fire protection devices – such as smoke alarms and fire sprinklers – play a key role in reducing the loss of life in fires. Smoke alarms are designed to detect smoke and provide early notification to building occupants. Fire sprinklers provide critical fire suppression and occupant protection, reducing the risk of dying in a home fire by 80%.

The charts and information below illustrate the features of fire protection reported for 43 of the 45 fire fatalities that occurred in structure fires during 2014.

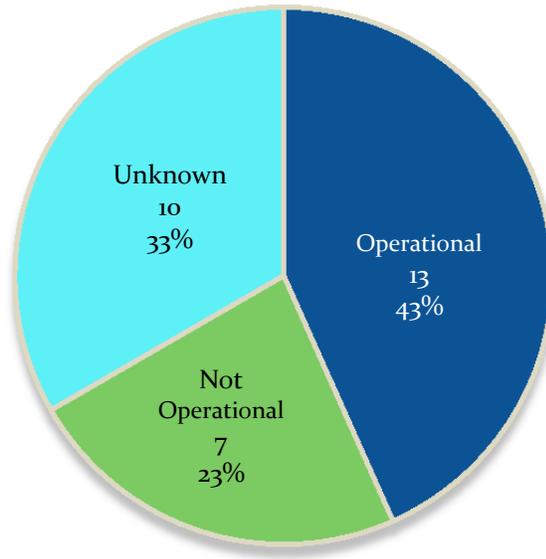
Findings for smoke alarms or detectors:

- 12 fire fatalities occurred in areas where smoke alarms or detectors were present and operational. Human factors – such as the person being asleep, under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or having physical or mental impairment – may have contributed to the individual not escaping the fire.
- 7 fire fatalities occurred where the smoke alarms or detectors were reported to be inoperable.

Presence of Detector/Alarm



Operation of Detector/Alarm



* Car fire incidents are not included in figures above.

Findings for fire sprinklers:

No fire fatalities occurred in areas equipped with a fire sprinkler system.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Publication and Design

Charles M. Duffy, State Fire Marshal
Charles P. LeBlanc, Assistant State Fire Marshal
Dan Johnson, Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal
Lysandra Davis, Deputy State Fire Marshal
Cathy Nicholson, Administrative Assistant

Data Collection

Special thanks to the hospitals, and fire and law enforcement agencies for submitting data.

PREVENT FIRES
IT'S YOUR JOB!