

**2012**

# **Fire in Minnesota**

## **Fire Reporting System**



June 2013

**MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**



**STATE FIRE MARSHAL DIVISION**  
**Jerry Rosendahl**  
**State Fire Marshal**



## **From the state fire marshal**

Nearly 245,000 reports on 2012 incidents were sent to us by 777 fire departments. That's 99 percent of the state's 785 departments — a record-high reporting rate. With that much data, our analysis of Minnesota's fire problem will yield a complete and realistic picture — the picture on which future fire-code recommendations and public education programs will be based. Minnesota's reporting rate is one of the highest in the country, if not the highest, and our free, online reporting system helped drive this accomplishment.

The long-term, downward trend in fire fatalities continued in 2012. No number of fatalities due to fire is acceptable, but the 50 fire deaths in 2012 represent an 11 percent decrease from 56 deaths in 2011. Careless smoking, once again, was the most common cause of fatal fires. In 2012, 62 percent of fatalities occurred in greater Minnesota compared to 38 percent in the metro area. This statistic has vacillated over the years from equal numbers in both areas to a higher number in one or the other, but the lesson in that is that fire fatalities can occur anywhere; only one county in Minnesota has been free of fatal fires.

Careless human behavior continues to be the primary cause of most fires. We can change that behavior through fire-and-life safety education! It's a personal choice to drink alcohol and smoke cigarettes, or put a skillet on the stove and fall asleep on the couch. It is a personal choice to smoke in bed, or while you're on oxygen. It is a personal choice to store combustible items close to a heat source. Eliminating those three behaviors alone would dramatically reduce the number of fire fatalities. Our fire prevention programs must target these behaviors if we are to keep our statistical trend moving downward.

Our State Fire Marshal Division staff is ready to help in any way we can. Contact us at 651-201-7200 or at [www.fire.state.mn.us](http://www.fire.state.mn.us).

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*These figures represent the collective incidents reported by 777 of Minnesota's 785 fire departments.*

## OVERALL INCIDENTS AND STRUCTURE FIRES BY PROPERTY TYPE

- Total fires in 2012 increased by 12% from 2011
- Total number of incidents increased by 3%
- Structure fires showed a slight decrease in 2012
- Residential structure fires also decreased by 4%

### TWO-YEAR OVERALL INCIDENT COMPARISONS

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>% Increase or Decrease</u>
Structure Fires	6,530	6,436	-1
Vehicle Fires	2,708	2,613	-4
Other Fires	5,576	7,558	36
<b>Total Fires</b>	<b>14,814</b>	<b>16,607</b>	<b>12</b>
Overpressure Ruptures	457	436	-5
Rescue/EMS Calls	138,635	147,100	6
Hazardous Condition Calls	11,653	10,950	-6
Service Calls	15,216	14,426	-5
Good Intent Calls	22,703	22,562	-1
Malicious False Calls	1,385	1,367	-1
Other False Calls	24,614	23,286	-5
<b>Total False Calls</b>	<b>25,999</b>	<b>24,653</b>	<b>-5</b>
Mutual Aid Given	5,204	6,034	16
All Other	2,518	2,115	-16
<b>Total Calls</b>	<b>237,199</b>	<b>244,883</b>	<b>3</b>

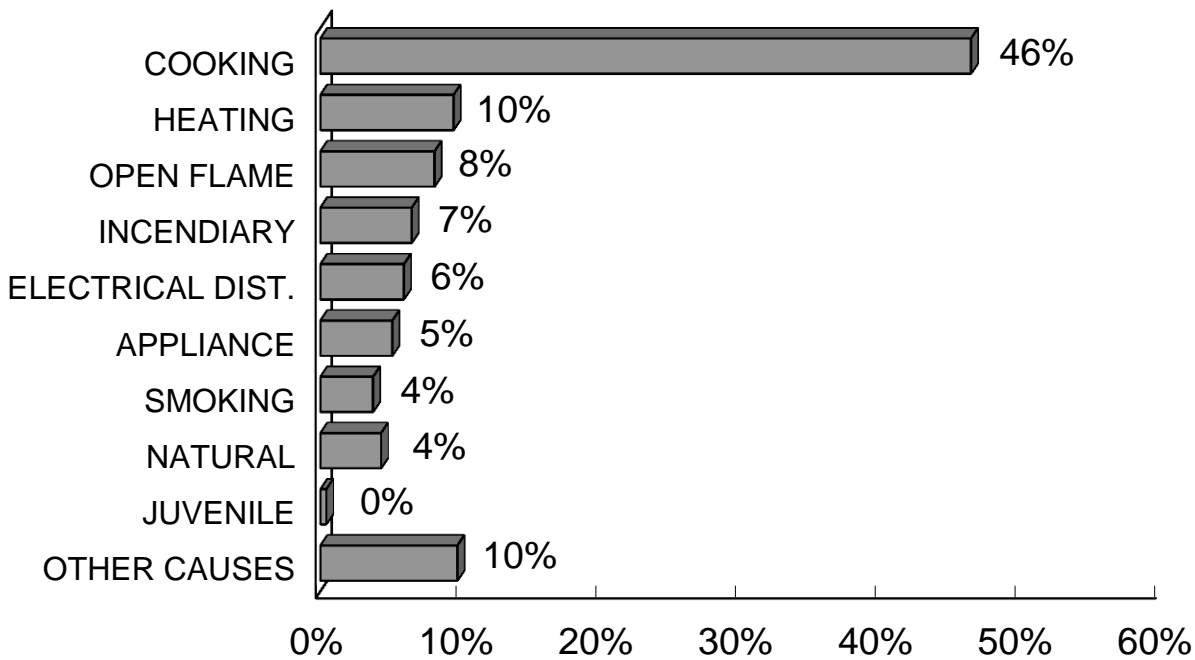
### STRUCTURE FIRES BY PROPERTY TYPE

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>% Increase or Decrease</u>
Residential	5,039	4,863	-3
Educational/Institutional	185	147	-21
Public Assembly/Commercial	301	350	16
Industrial/Manufacturing	220	230	5
Storage	553	556	-1
Special/Other	173	228	32
Unclassified	59	62	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,530</b>	<b>6,436</b>	<b>-1</b>

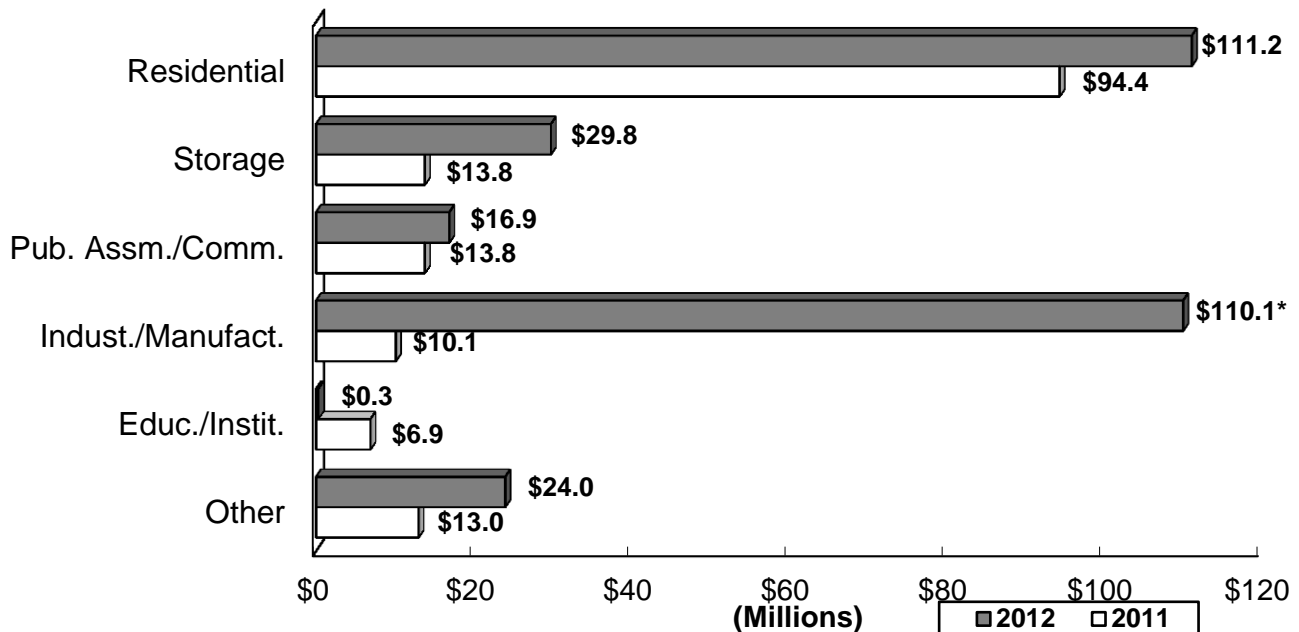
## STRUCTURE FIRE CAUSES AND DOLLAR LOSSES BY PROPERTY TYPE

- Cooking continues to be the leading cause of structure fires with known causes
- The second is heating, and open flame is the third-leading cause. "Open flame" includes matches, candles, cigarette lighters, charcoal lighters and flares.
- Total dollar loss in 2012 was over \$292 million — a significant increase from 2011, due in part to the Sartell Paper Mill fire in May.
- Dollar loss in 2012 residential property fires increased 18 percent from 2011.

### STRUCTURE FIRE CAUSES



### DOLLAR LOSS BY PROPERTY TYPE

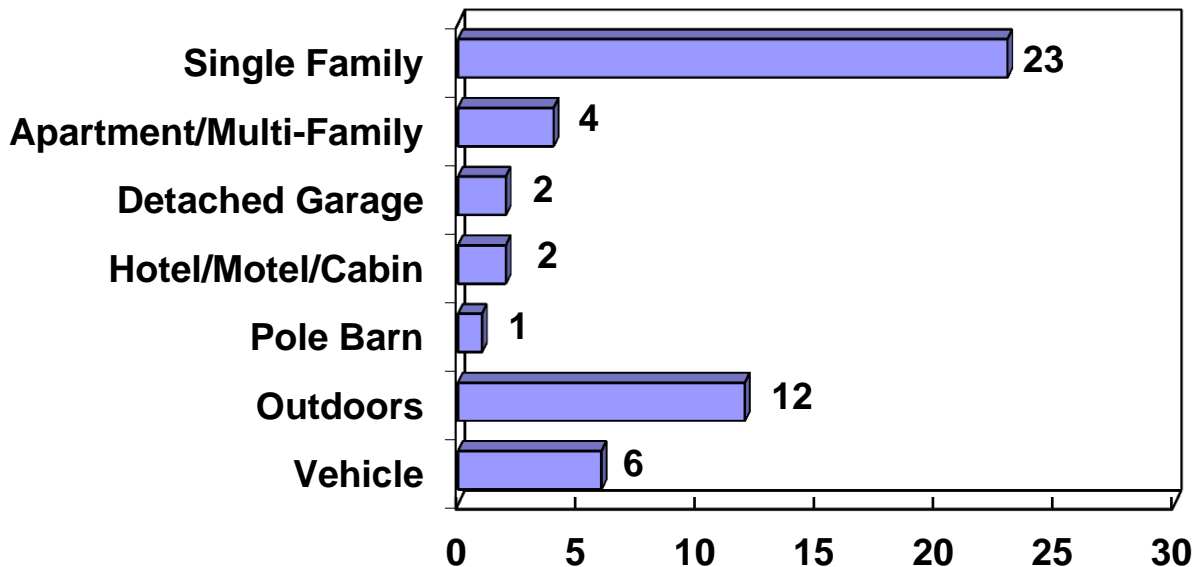


\*Over \$100M loss to Sartell Paper Mill fire.

## CIVILIAN FIRE DEATHS

- 58% of 2012 civilian fire deaths occurred where people generally feel safest — at home
- 19 civilian fire deaths occurred in the metro area (38%)
- 31 civilian fire deaths occurred in greater Minnesota (62%)
- Careless smoking, historically the most common cause of fatal fires, was the leading cause again in 2012

### CIVILIAN FIRE DEATHS BY LOCATION



### CIVILIAN FIRE DEATHS BY CAUSE

