2012

Fire in Minnesota
Fire Reporting System

June 2013

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

STATE FIRE MARSHAL DIVISION
Jerry Rosendahl
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.

Jerry Rosendahl
State Fire Marshal
651-201-7201
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MINNESOTA FIRE CLOCK
FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES
AS REPORTED
2012

One Fire Department Response
Every 2 Minutes

One fire reported in Minnesota
every 32 minutes

One structure fire reported in Minnesota
every 1.4 hours

One EMS/Rescue run reported in Minnesota
every 4 minutes

One arson fire reported in Minnesota
every 6.6 hours

Fire dollar loss in Minnesota is
$800,769 dollars per day
$33,365 dollars per hour
$556 dollars per minute

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

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

STRUCTURE FIRES BY PROPERTY TYPE

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

![Chart showing percentage distribution of fire causes]

**DOLLAR LOSS BY PROPERTY TYPE**

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

- Single Family: 23
- Apartment/Multi-Family: 4
- Detached Garage: 2
- Hotel/Motel/Cabin: 2
- Pole Barn: 1
- Outdoors: 12
- Vehicle: 6

CIVILIAN FIRE DEATHS BY CAUSE

- Careless Smoking: 10
- Vehicle Collision/Malf.: 6
- Combust. Too Close: 5
- Careless Open Burning: 4
- LP Gas Leak/Explos./Malf.: 3
- Suicide: 3
- Spark Cutting/Welding: 2
- Other: 5
- Undetermined: 12