Nursing Home Fires (2012-2014)

For each year from 2012 to 2014, an estimated 5,700 medical facility fires were reported to fire departments in the United States. Nearly half of those, 2,700 fires, were in nursing homes. It is estimated that these fires caused fewer than five deaths, 125 injuries and $13 million in property loss per year.[1]

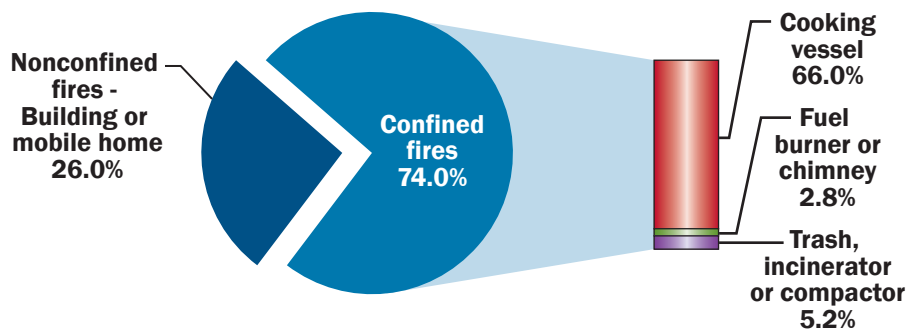## Loss Measures for Nursing Homes and All Other Medical Facility Fires (Three-Year Average, 2012-2014)

Loss Measure	Nursing Home Fires	All Other Medical Facility Fires
Average Loss:		
Fatalities/1,000 fires	0.5	0.6
Injuries/1,000 fires	27.9	11.2
Dollar loss/fire	$6,080	$14,170

Source: National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) 5.0.

The average number of fatalities per 1,000 nursing home fires was only slightly lower than the same measure for all other medical facility fires. The number of injuries, however, was more than double that of other medical facilities.[2]
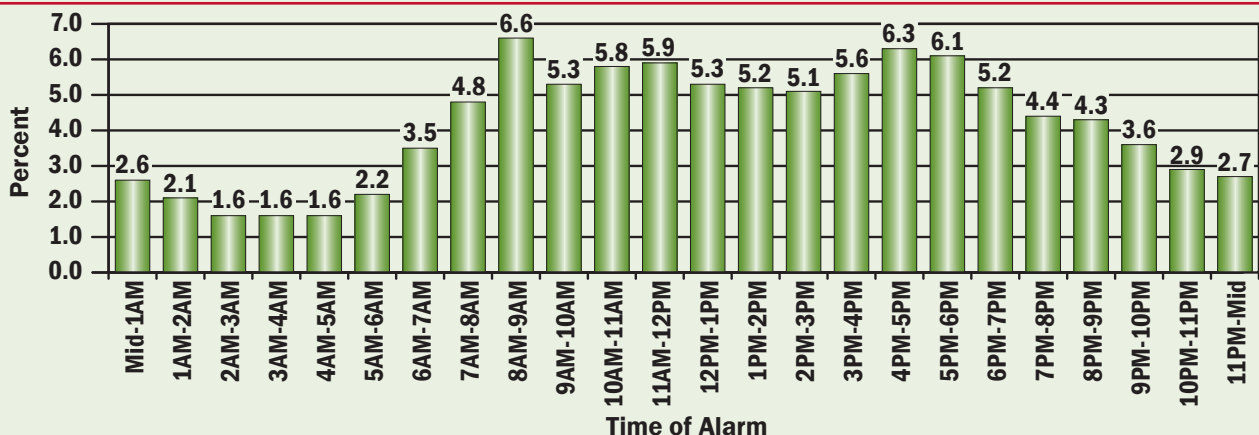
The majority of nursing home fires are fires that are confined to cooking pots (66 percent). Confined fires are smaller fires that rarely result in death, serious injury or large content losses.[3] Fires in trash bins, incinerators or compactors composed 5 percent of confined fires, while fuel burner or chimney fires accounted for 3 percent. Nonconfined fires, generally larger structure fires, made up 26 percent of nursing home fires.

Nursing Home Fires by Incident Type (2012-2014)

Nonconfined fires - Building or mobile home 26.0%

Confined fires 74.0%

Cooking vessel 66.0%

Fuel burner or chimney 2.8%

Trash, incinerator or compactor 5.2%

Source: NFIRS 5.0.

Nursing Home Fires by Time of Alarm (2012-2014)

Time of Alarm	Percent
Mid-1AM	2.6
1AM-2AM	2.1
2AM-3AM	1.6
3AM-4AM	1.6
4AM-5AM	1.6
5AM-6AM	2.2
6AM-7AM	3.5
7AM-8AM	4.8
8AM-9AM	6.6
9AM-10AM	5.3
10AM-11AM	5.8
11AM-12PM	5.9
12PM-1PM	5.3
1PM-2PM	5.2
2PM-3PM	5.1
3PM-4PM	5.6
4PM-5PM	6.3
5PM-6PM	6.1
6PM-7PM	5.2
7PM-8PM	4.4
8PM-9PM	4.3
9PM-10PM	3.6
10PM-11PM	2.9
11PM-Mid	2.7

Source: NFIRS 5.0.
Note: Total percentages do not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Nursing home fires occurred most frequently during the morning as well as the late afternoon and early evening hours. The fires peaked between the hours of 8 and 9 a.m. These periods of high fire incidence coincide with morning and evening meal preparations.

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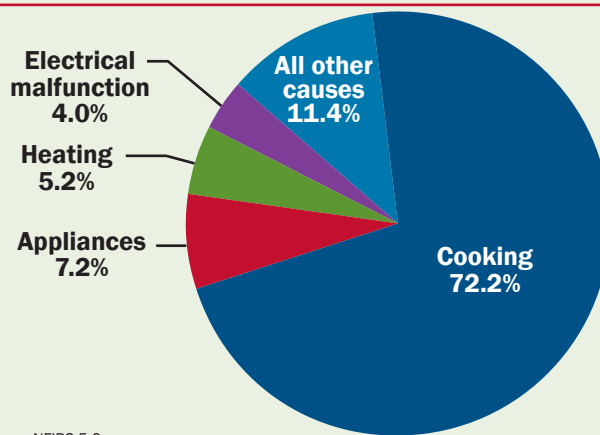The leading causes of all nursing home fires were:

- Cooking (72 percent).
- Appliances (7 percent).
- Heating (5 percent).
- Electrical malfunction (4 percent).

While cooking was the leading reported cause of nursing home fires overall, it only accounted for 9 percent of all nonconfined nursing home fires. Nonconfined fires are larger, more serious fires. The leading causes of nonconfined fires were:

- Appliances (28 percent).
- Electrical malfunction (16 percent).
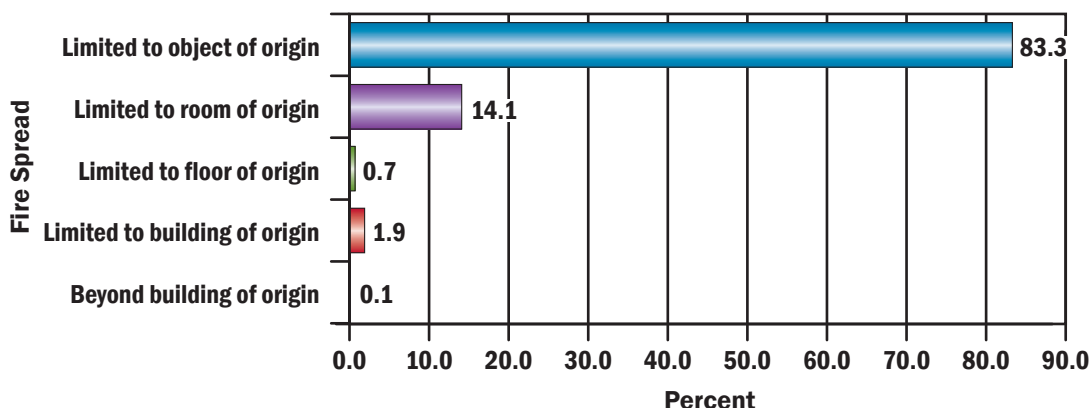- Heating (9 percent).
- Cooking (9 percent).

Causes of Nursing Home Fires (2012–2014)

Electrical malfunction 4.0%
Heating 5.2%
Appliances 7.2%
All other causes 11.4%
Cooking 72.2%

Source: NFIRS 5.0.
Note: Unknown causes are apportioned.

Eighty-three percent of all nursing home fires were limited to the object of origin. Only 3 percent extended beyond the room of origin.

Extent of Fire Spread in Nursing Home Fires (2012–2014)

Fire Spread	Percent
Limited to object of origin	83.3
Limited to room of origin	14.1
Limited to floor of origin	0.7
Limited to building of origin	1.9
Beyond building of origin	0.1

Source: NFIRS 5.0.
Note: Total percentages do not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

For more information on nursing homes, including fire safety inspections and quality of care data, please visit: https://www.medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare/About/What-Is-NHC.html.

For additional fire statistics, please visit http://www.usfa.fema.gov/data/statistics/.

Sources: NFIRS 5.0 and the National Fire Protection Association.
Notes: 1. Medical facilities are defined by Property Use codes 311-343. Nursing homes are defined by Property Use code 311. Fires are defined as a subset of nonresidential building fires in NFIRS by using Incident Types 111-123 (excluding Incident Type 112). For Incident Types 113-118, the structure type is 1, 2 or null, and for Incident Types 111 and 120-123, the structure type is 1 or 2. Aid Types 3 (mutual aid given) and 4 (automatic aid given) were excluded to avoid double counting of incidents. Estimates of fires are rounded to the nearest 100, deaths to the nearest five, injuries to the nearest 25, and dollar loss to the nearest million dollars.
          2. The average loss measures computed from the NFIRS data alone in the table differ from the average loss measures computed from national estimates. Average loss for fatalities and injuries is computed per 1,000 fires. Average dollar loss is computed per fire and rounded to the nearest $10. The 2012 and 2013 dollar-loss values were adjusted to 2014 dollars.
          3. In NFIRS, confined fires are defined by Incident Types 113 to 118.

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