



Home Fires that Began with Mattresses and Bedding

In 2002-2005, U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 11,520 home structure fires per year in which a mattress or bedding was the first item ignited. These fires caused an annual average of 378 civilian fire deaths, 1,386 civilian fire injuries, and \$357 million in direct property damage.

On average, one of every 31 mattress or bedding fires resulted in death.

Overall, fires beginning with mattresses or bedding accounted for 3% of reported home fires but 13% of home fire deaths.

Major Causes of Mattress and Bedding Fires

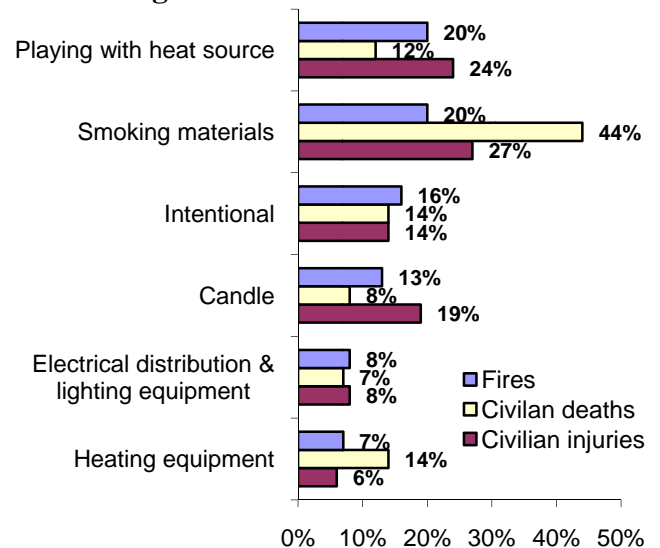
Smoking materials and playing with heat sources are the leading causes of fires starting with mattresses and bedding.

- One of every 14 mattress or bedding fires started by smoking materials resulted in death.

Together, lighters, candles, and matches were involved in 37% of the fires and 24% of the deaths.

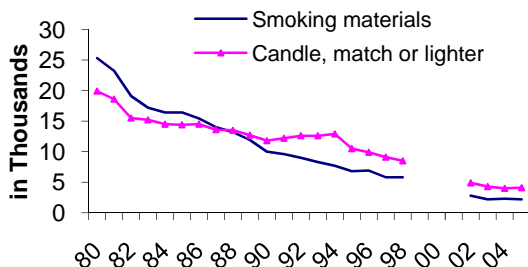
- One of every 47 such fires resulted in death.

Portable or fixed space heaters were involved in 5% of the mattress and bedding fires and 14% of the associated deaths.

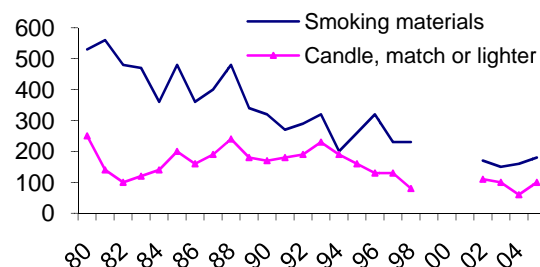


While fires and deaths started by both smoking materials and open flames (lighters, candles, and matches), have fallen from 1980 to 2005, the drop was sharper for fires started by smoking materials. From 1980-1987, more mattress and bedding fires were started by smoking materials than by lighters, candles, and matches. The reverse has been true since 1988.

Home Mattress and Bedding Fires Started by Smoking Materials vs. Lighters, Candles, and Matches, by Year



Civilian Deaths from Home Mattress and Bedding Fires Started by Smoking Materials vs. Lighters, Candles, and Matches, by Year





One-Stop Data Shop
Fire Analysis and Research Division
1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169
Email: osds@nfpa.org
www.nfpa.org



Safety Tips

- Never smoke in bed as you can easily fall asleep with a burning cigarette, igniting the mattress or bedding.
- Teach your children at the earliest possible age that matches and lighters are tools for adults only, not toys. Store matches and lighters up high, out of the reach of children, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Do not place portable heaters too close to the bed or the bed too close to a fixed space heater. Leave enough room between the appliance and the bed, at least three feet (1 meter), so that the heat will not ignite the bedding.
- Turn off portable heaters when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Do not run electrical cords over or under the bed and do not trap cords between the bed and the wall, where they could become damaged. Avoid placing any other operating, heat-producing appliances (such as electric curlers) on a bed.
- Use only electric blankets listed and labeled by a testing laboratory. Discontinue the use of electric blankets or heating pads when the cords become frayed or the wires are exposed.
- NFPA discourages the use of candles in bedrooms and sleeping areas.