

BURNS AND TOXIC GASES IN NON-FIRE SITUATIONS

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Abstract

In 2003, 690 people died of unintentional non-fire exposure to gases, in the U.S. Anoxia, which is injury involving oxygen deprivation, accounted for roughly 35,000 hospital emergency room injuries in four of the five most recent years. More people are killed by deadly gas in fires than in all other unintentional exposure.

During 2000-2003, the U.S. averaged an estimated 318,000 burn injuries per year that were medically attended. Total burns reported to hospital emergency rooms have fallen in the range of 225,000 to 260,000 every year of the past decade. Electrical current led to 376 unintentional-injury deaths in 2003, the lowest number in the 24 years studied.

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Executive Summary

In 2003, 690 people died of unintentional non-fire exposure to gases. Most of these poisonings by gas historically involve carbon monoxide, which in turn involves inadequately vented equipment, principally motor vehicles or heating or cooking equipment.

The risk of death from carbon monoxide poisoning is much greater in a temporary shelter than in any kind of home.

Anoxia, which is injury involving oxygen deprivation, accounts for roughly 35,000 hospital emergency room injuries per year.

More people are killed by deadly gases in fires than in all other unintentional exposures.

During 2000-2003, the U.S. averaged an estimated 318,000 burn injuries per year that were medically attended. Some, possibly most, of the decline in burns may reflect the change to a longer recall period in recent surveys.

In 2003, 88 people received unintentional fatal injuries from contact with a hot object or substance. Hot tap water accounted for roughly three in ten of these fatal injuries.

Burn injuries result in hundreds of thousands of emergency room visits a year. Thermal burns outnumber scalds by nearly two-to-one, but for children ages five and under, scalds outnumber thermal burns by roughly two-to-one.

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