



Vacant Building Fires Fact Sheet

In 2003-2006, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated average of 31,000 structure fires in vacant buildings. These fires resulted in an average of 50 civilian deaths, 141 civilian injuries, and \$642 million in direct property damage per year.

- 4,500 firefighters were injured annually at these incidents.
- Only 6% of all reported structure fires were at vacant buildings, but they accounted for 13% of the firefighter injuries incurred at structure fires.
- From 1998 to 2007, 15 firefighters were fatally injured at vacant building fires.

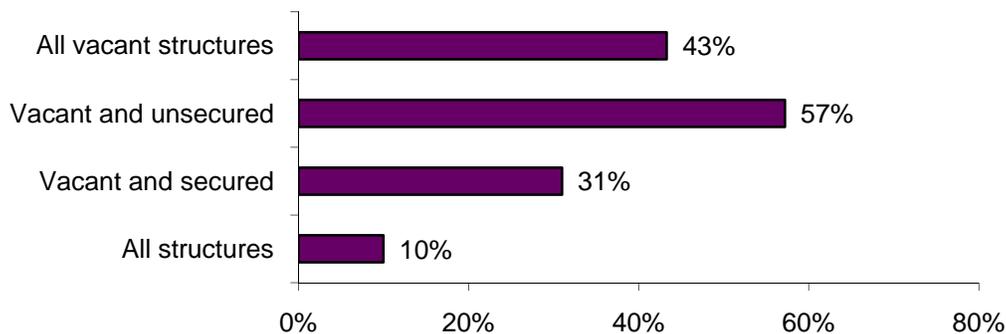
Vacant building fires increased by 2% from 31,900 in 2005 to 32,700 in 2006. The increase was similar to the 3% increase in all structure fires.

Sixty-three percent of vacant building fires in 2003-2006 occurred in homes, with 58% in one-or two-family dwellings and 5% in apartments.

- Vacant home fires increased 11% from 18,900 in 2005 to 21,000 in 2006. Home fires in general increased by only 4%.
- The U.S. Census Bureau's Housing Vacancy Survey found that the number and percent of housing units vacant has been increasing steadily since 2005.

The four peak days for vacant building fires were July 4, July 5, October 31, and January 1.

Intentional Structure Fires by Structure Status: 2003-2006



Forty-three percent of vacant building fires were intentionally set. Vacant buildings accounted for 25% of all intentionally set structure fires.

- In unsecured properties, 57% of the fires were intentional.
- Only 31% of the fires in secured properties were intentional.

Vacant buildings that burned were evenly divided into secured (15,400) and unsecured (15,600).

- Flame damage spread beyond the structure in 9% of the fires in secured and 12% of unsecured properties.
- Flame damage extended beyond the structure of origin in only 3% of structure fires overall.