



RESEARCH

Physical Disability as a Factor in Home Fire Deaths

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Physical Disability as a Factor in Home Fire Deaths

NFPA estimates that physical disability was a factor in an average of 460, or 18%, of home fire deaths per year in 2015-2019. These victims most often died in fires that originated in a common room, such as a living or family room, or a bedroom. Smoking materials were the heat source in just over one-third (35%) of these fires. The majority of victims were in older age groups. Additional information on home fire deaths in which physical disability was a factor is found in the following tables.

These estimates are based on data from the U.S. Fire Administration's (USFA's) National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) and the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA's) annual fire department experience survey. The phrase "victims with physical disabilities" describes victims of fires in which a physical disability contributed to the fatal injury. If a victim's disability was not a factor contributing to the fatal injury, the death is not included in these statistics.

Note that this data is comprised of deaths in home fires and does not indicate the number of home fires in which the deaths occurred. An unknown number of these deaths may have occurred in the same fire.

Please refer to [How NFPA's National Estimates Are Calculated for Home Structure Fires](#) for explanatory details about the methods used.

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Table 1. Physical Disability as a Factor in Home Fire Deaths by Property Use, 2015-2019

Property Use	Civilian Deaths	
One-Family Home, Year-Round	360	(78%)
Two-Family Home, Year-Round	20	(4%)
Unclassified One- or Two-Family Home	20	(4%)
Multifamily Home, 1 to 2 Living Units	10	(3%)
Multifamily Home, 3 to 6 Living Units	10	(3%)
Multifamily Home, 7 to 20 Living Units	20	(5%)
Multifamily Home, More Than 20 Living Units	10	(3%)
Total	460	(100%)

Source: NFIRS 5.0 and NFPA’s fire experience survey.

Table 2. Physical Disability as a Factor in Home Fire Deaths by Age, 2015-2019

Age of Victim	Civilian Deaths	
Under 5 years	0	(0%)
5 to 14	0	(0%)
15 to 19	0	(1%)
20 to 34	0	(1%)
35 to 49	20	(5%)
50 to 64	140	(30%)
65 to 74	140	(29%)
75 to 84	100	(22%)
85 and older	60	(13%)
Total	460	(100%)

Source: NFIRS 5.0 and NFPA’s fire experience survey.

**Table 3. Physical Disability as a Factor in Home Fire Deaths
by Time of Day, 2015-2019**

Time of Day	Civilian Deaths	
Midnight–12:59 a.m.	30	(6%)
1:00–1:59 a.m.	20	(4%)
2:00–2:59 a.m.	20	(5%)
3:00–3:59 a.m.	20	(4%)
4:00–4:59 a.m.	20	(4%)
5:00–5:59 a.m.	20	(3%)
6:00–6:59 a.m.	20	(4%)
7:00–7:59 a.m.	20	(5%)
8:00–8:59 a.m.	20	(4%)
9:00–9:59 a.m.	20	(4%)
10:00–10:59 a.m.	10	(3%)
11:00–11:59 a.m.	20	(4%)
12:00–12:59 p.m.	20	(4%)
1:00–1:59 p.m.	20	(5%)
2:00–2:59 p.m.	20	(4%)
3:00–3:59 p.m.	20	(4%)
4:00–4:59 p.m.	20	(4%)
5:00–5:59 p.m.	20	(4%)
6:00–6:59 p.m.	10	(3%)
7:00–7:59 p.m.	20	(5%)
8:00–8:59 p.m.	20	(3%)
9:00–9:59 p.m.	20	(4%)
10:00–10:59 p.m.	30	(6%)
11:00–11:59 p.m.	20	(5%)
	0	
Total	460	(100%)

Source: NFIRS 5.0 and NFPA’s fire experience survey.

Table 4. Physical Disability as a Factor in Home Fire Deaths by Area of Origin, 2015-2019

Area of Origin	Civilian Deaths	
Common room, living room, family room	140	(31%)
Bedroom or sleeping area	130	(29%)
Kitchen or cooking area	60	(12%)
Unclassified function area	40	(9%)
Other area of origin	90	(20%)

Source: NFIRS 5.0 and NFPA’s fire experience survey.

Table 5. Physical Disability as a Factor in Home Fire Deaths by Item First Ignited, 2015-2019

Item First Ignited	Civilian Deaths	
Upholstered furniture or vehicle seat	70	(16%)
Mattress or bedding material	70	(16%)
Clothing	30	(7%)
Flammable and combustible liquids and gases, piping and filter	30	(6%)
Multiple items first ignited	20	(5%)
Cooking materials, including food	20	(5%)
Electrical wire or cable insulation	20	(4%)
Unclassified furniture, utensils	20	(4%)
Rubbish, trash, or waste	20	(4%)
Interior wall covering, excluding drapes	20	(4%)
Floor covering rug, carpet, or mat	10	(3%)
Cabinetry, (including built-in	10	(2%)
Appliance housing or casing	10	(2%)
Other item first ignited	110	(23%)
Total	460	(100%)

Source: NFIRS 5.0 and NFPA’s fire experience survey.

Table 6. Physical Disability as a Factor in Home Fire Deaths by Heat Source, 2015-2019

Heat Source	Civilian Deaths	
Smoking materials	180	(35%)
Radiated, conducted heat from operating equipment	80	(17%)
Arcing	50	(11%)
Cigarette lighter	20	(4%)
Hot ember or ash	20	(4%)
Unclassified hot or smoldering object	20	(3%)
Spark, ember or flame from operating equipment	10	(3%)
Heat from direct flame or convection currents	10	(3%)
Other heat source	80	(17%)

Source: NFIRS 5.0 and NFPA’s fire experience survey.

Table 7. Physical Disability as a Factor in Home Fire Deaths by Activity when Injured, 2015-2019

Activity	Civilian Deaths	
Escaping	190	(42%)
Unable to act	150	(31%)
Sleeping	80	(17%)
Fire control	10	(2%)
Returning to vicinity of fire before control	10	(2%)
Irrational act	10	(2%)
Other act	20	(5%)
Total	460	(100%)

Source: NFIRS 5.0 and NFPA’s fire experience survey.