



FACT SHEET » RESEARCH

Sprinklers in Reported U.S. Home Fires During 2010 to 2014

Some type of sprinkler was present in an estimated total of 24,440 (7%) reported home structure fires during 2010 to 2014. These fires caused an average of 35 (1%) civilian deaths, 616 (5%) civilian injuries, and \$198 million (3%) in direct property damage per year. Homes include one- or two-family homes and apartments or other multi-family homes. Properties under construction were excluded from the analysis.

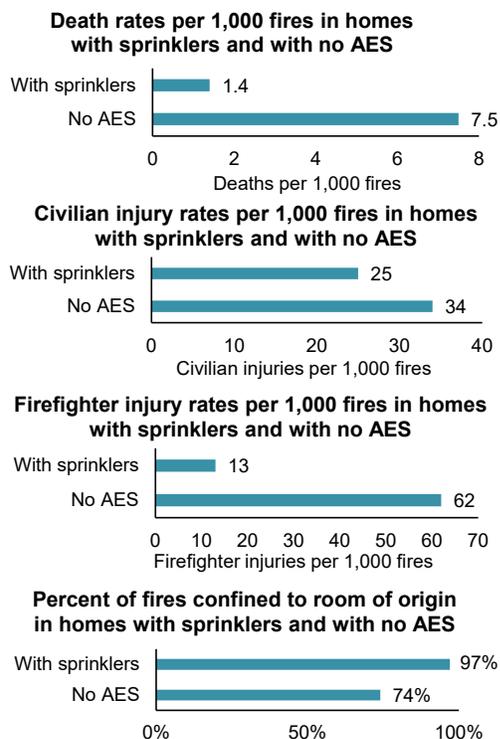
Sprinkler Presence

Automatic extinguishing systems (AES) are designed to control fires until the fire department arrives. Sprinklers are a type of AES that uses water to control fires. Other types of AES use something other than water.

According to the 2011 American Housing Survey, 5% of all occupied housing units had sprinklers. Buildings with more housing units were more likely to have sprinklers. Almost one-third (31%) of units in buildings with 50 or more units were sprinklered.

Wet pipe sprinklers accounted for 89% of the sprinklers in reported home fires, dry pipe systems accounted for 9%, and other types of sprinklers accounted for 2%.

Impact of Sprinklers



The civilian death rate of 1.4 per 1,000 reported fires was 81% lower in homes with sprinklers than in homes with no AES.

The civilian injury rate of 25 per 1,000 reported fires was 31% lower in homes with sprinklers than in homes with no AES. Many of the injuries occurred in fires that were too small to activate the sprinkler or in the first moments of a fire before the sprinkler operated.

The average firefighter injury rate of 13 per 1,000 reported home fires was 79% lower where sprinklers were present than in fires with no AES.

Where sprinklers were present, flame damage was confined to the room of origin in 97% of fires compared to 74% of fires without AES.



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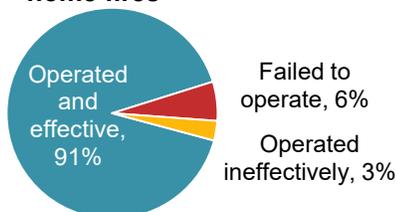
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Sprinkler Operation and Effectiveness

Sprinkler operation and effectiveness in home fires



Sprinklers operated in 94% of home fires in which sprinklers were present and the fire was considered large enough to activate them.

- ▶ They were effective at controlling the fire in 96% of fires in which they operated.
- ▶ Sprinklers operated effectively in 91% of the fires large enough to activate them.

Only one sprinkler head operated in 88% of home fires with operating sprinklers. In 98% of fires with operating sprinklers, five or fewer sprinkler heads operated.

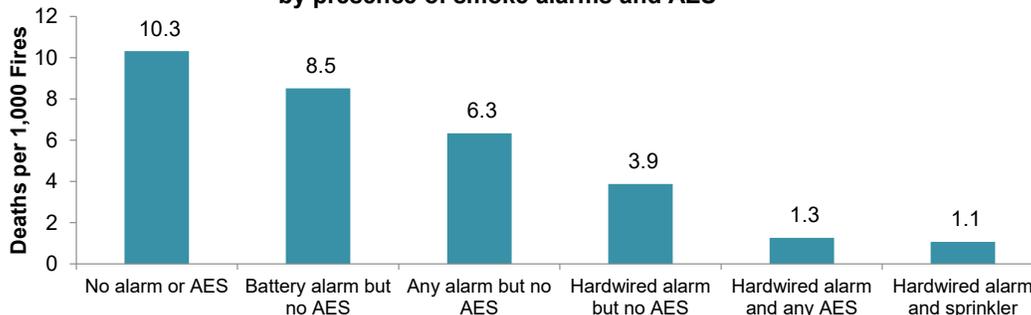
In three out of five (62%) of fires in which sprinklers failed to operate, the system was shut off.

Combined Impact of Smoke Alarms and Sprinklers

The lowest home fire death rate per 1,000 reported fires is found in homes with sprinkler systems and hardwired smoke alarms. Compared to reported home fires with no smoke alarms or AES, the death rate per 1,000 reported fires was as follows:

- ▶ 18% lower where battery-powered smoke alarms were present but AES were not
- ▶ 39% lower where smoke alarms with any power source were present but AES were not
- ▶ 62% lower where hardwired smoke alarms were present but AES were not
- ▶ 88% lower where hardwired smoke alarms and any AES were present
- ▶ 90% lower where sprinklers and hardwired smoke alarms were present

Average fire death rates per 1,000 reported home structure fires by presence of smoke alarms and AES



Source: *U.S. Experience with Sprinklers*, National Fire Protection Association report, 2017.

Source: **NFPA Research:** www.nfpa.org/research
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