

The Fire 4-1-1

JANUARY 2019

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Safety this New Year!
- How to Prevent Electrical Fires
- Vehicle Fire Safety
- Keeping Safe and Warm this Winter

Your New Year's Safety Resolution



While many of us know the importance of fire safety, often times our busy lives distract us from taking the time to complete a few simple safety measures around the home. Having working smoke alarms and a family escape plan are a good start but preventing fires before they start is the key. Most issues can be addressed on the spot making your home safer almost instantly. While most fires begin in the kitchen, the most deaths occurs from fires caused by smoking materials. Using a [fire safety checklist](#), you can look for common safety concerns and learn more about what you can do to be fire safe. Make New Year's Resolution to reduce the fire hazards around your home! Have an elderly neighbor or know someone with special needs? Give a

An unattended candle caused this fire which resulted in \$222,600 in damages,

helping hand and be sure they are also protected!

Accidental Fire Data for Fiscal Year 2019

Fire Cause	Total Number of Fires	Total Dollar Loss Q2
Electrical	8	\$636,350.00
Improper disposal of smoking materials	2	\$15,000.00
Combustibles in contact with heat source	3	\$20,000.00
Appliance malfunction	2	\$234,000.00
Mechanical Issue	6	\$547,600.00
Improper disposal of hot materials	2	\$11,000.00
Fireworks related	1	\$100.00
Burn Injury	1	\$0.00
Candles Related	1	\$222,600.00
Dryer Fire	1	\$100,300.00

Total Number of Unintentional Fires

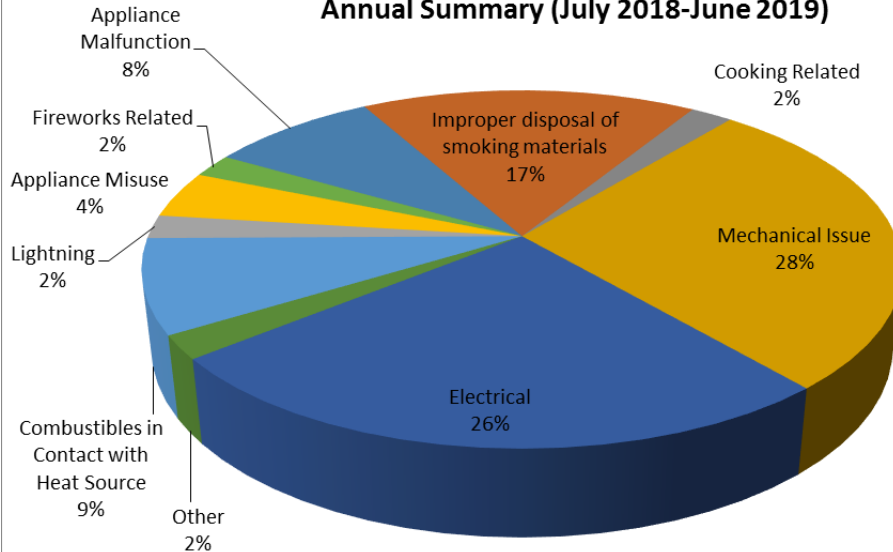
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Total Cost of Damages

\$1,786,950.00

*For more specific descriptions of fire causes visit www.loudoun.gov/firerisk.

Frequency of Accidental Fires by Fire Cause Annual Summary (July 2018-June 2019)



Light Up Your World, Safely!

- *Electrical fires in Loudoun County caused \$897,150 in damages since July 2018.*
- *Peak months for electrical fire deaths is November through March.**
- *From 2011-2015, eighteen percent of fire deaths in the United States occurred in fires that were electrical-related.***

**Source: United States Fire Administration*

***Source: National Fire Protection Association*

Electricity powers...well almost everything we use daily. While electricity provides a great convenience, it also can become a safety hazard. Frayed or broken cords, extension cords used as permanent wiring, and the octopus outlet are just a few of the issues that can cause a fire. Luckily, these and several other electrical hazards are preventable by simply identifying and eliminating these problems. Help prevent a house fire by following these safety tips:

- ✓ Have a qualified electrician complete any electrical work.
- ✓ Plug appliances direct into the wall outlet. Unplug small appliance when not in use.
- ✓ Discard any cords that are damaged. Be sure electrical cords are not pinched between furniture or tucked under rugs where damage can go unnoticed.
- ✓ Use power strips that have internal overload protections. Be sure not to overload the outlet. (Appliances or devices that draw more electricity from an outlet than the circuit can handle can cause an overload.)



- ✓ Extension cords are meant for temporary use only. (Any extension cord used for more than 30 day is considered permanent wiring.)

This fire was caused by an electrical cord pinched between furniture. It caused \$80,000 in damages.

Keeping It Safe and Warm!

Half of all home heating fires occur in the months of December, January, and February. The leading factor contributing to home heating fires was failure to clean, principally from solid-fueled heating equipment, primarily chimneys. The leading factor contributing to ignition for home heating fire deaths was heating equipment too close to things that can burn. Keep your family nice and toasty this winter by following a few safety tips this winter season.

If you have a fireplace or wood/pellet stove:

- ✱ Have a qualified professional install the device and have the chimney inspected and cleaned annually.
- ✱ Make sure your wood stove is 3 feet from anything that can burn and teach children to stay a safe distance from the appliance.

- ✱ Burn only dry, seasoned wood or wood pellets. Never burn paper in your wood stove.
- ✱ Always put the fire out before you go to sleep or leave your home. If you have a fireplace.
- ✱ Keep a screen in front of the fireplace to prevent embers or sparks jumping out. Never burn paper in your fireplace.
- ✱ Let ashes cool completely before putting them in a closed metal container. Soak ashes thoroughly with water and place the container outside, a safe distance away from your home or other structures.

If you have a furnace:

- ✱ Start by having your heating equipment inspected and cleaned every year by a qualified professional.
- ✱ Be sure to keep anything that can burn away from the appliance.

If you use space heaters:

- ✱ Keep anything that can burn, such as bedding, clothing and curtains, at least 3 feet away from the heater.
- ✱ Make sure the heater has an automatic shut-off, so if it tips over, it shuts off.
- ✱ Turn heaters off when you go to bed or leave the room.
- ✱ Plug portable heaters directly into outlets and never into an extension cord or power strip.
- ✱ Only use portable heaters from a recognized testing laboratory.

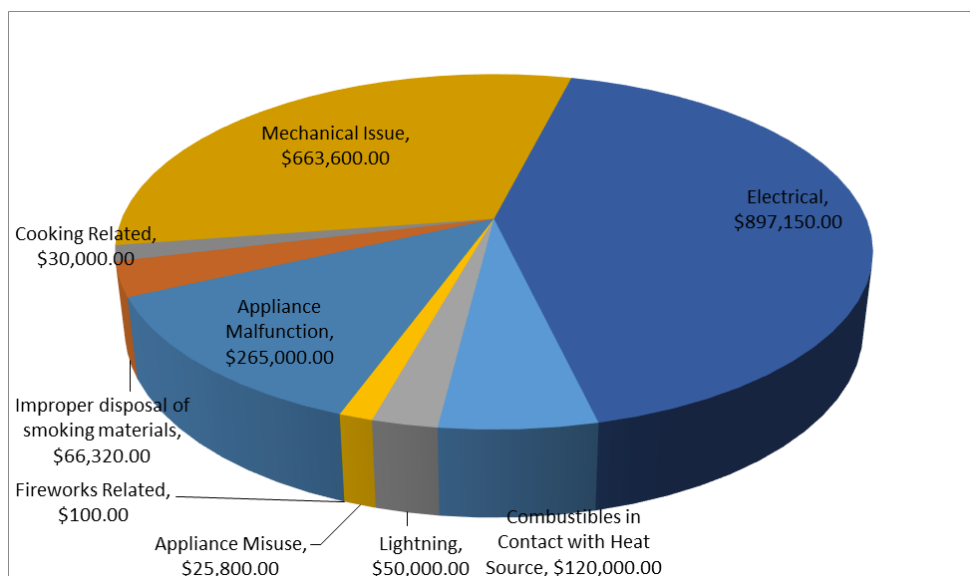
Start Your Engines!

Over a quarter of the accidental fires have occurred in a vehicle. Cars can catch fire for many reasons. Mechanical or electrical issues are the most common cause. A well-maintained car is less likely to have a fire so have your car serviced regularly by a professionally trained mechanic. If you see smoke or flames or smell burning rubber or plastic, respond immediately by pulling over and determining the cause. If you spot leaks, your car is not running properly, get it checked. Here are a few more dangers signs to watch for:

- ✱ Cracked or loose wiring or electrical problems, including a fuse that blows more than once
- ✱ Oil or fluid leaks
- ✱ Oil cap not on securely
- ✱ Rapid changes in fuel or fluid level, or engine temperature

A car can also catch fire as the result of a bad crash or when hot materials are improperly discarded and transported in a vehicle. Always be diligent and engage in fire safe behavior.

Accidental Fire Dollar Loss By Fire Cause Annual Summary (July 2018-June 2019)





**Loudoun County
Fire Marshal's Office**

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The Fire Marshal's Office (FMO) seeks to provide a safe working and living environment for residents, workers, and travelers within Loudoun County. The division investigates the origin of fires, explosive related incidents, as well as investigations into hazardous materials. Further we strive to reduce the risk of fire through abatement of common fire prevention code violations. The public fire and life safety educational programs and juvenile firesetter intervention program are additional resources we deploy to help ensure the fire and life safety of the citizens and visitors of Loudoun County.

There are several special operational programs, such as the Bomb Squad and the Canine Program, however these are collateral responsibilities assigned to regular staff, which transcend section boundaries.

The FMO is comprised of a team of civilians and sworn law enforcement officers to ensure division goals are met.



Smoke alarms are one of the best and easiest safety features you can have to alert you and your family if there is a fire in your home. The Loudoun County Fire and Rescue offers free smoke alarm assessments to Loudoun County residents. During the visit, fire-rescue personnel ensure the home is adequately protected by working smoke alarms. They also provide valuable information on other fire safety topics. To request an assessment visit www.loudoun.gov/smokealarms and complete the online form or contact your local fire-rescue station.



