

# The Fire 4-1-1

OCTOBER 2017

**SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:**

- Electrical related fires have continued to cause the most significant dollar loss.
- Fire Prevention Week is October 8th—14th.
- Closing the door can be an important fire prevention method. Read inside for more details.

## Preventing Unintentional Fires

Although fire prevention is a year round effort, in the Fall fire safety is highlighted with Fire Prevention Week in October. It is observed in commemoration of the Great Chicago Fire, which began October 8, 1871, and did most of its damage October 9. The horrific conflagration killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures and burned more than 2,000 acres. The fire changed the way that firefighters and public officials thought about fire safety. On the 40th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire, the Fire Marshals Association of North America decided that the anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire should be observed not with festivities, but in a way that would keep



the public informed about the importance of fire prevention. The first National Fire Prevention Week was proclaimed by President Calvin Coolidge on October 4-10, 1925, beginning a tradition of the President of the United States signing a proclamation recognizing the occasion. Fire is Everyone's Fight!

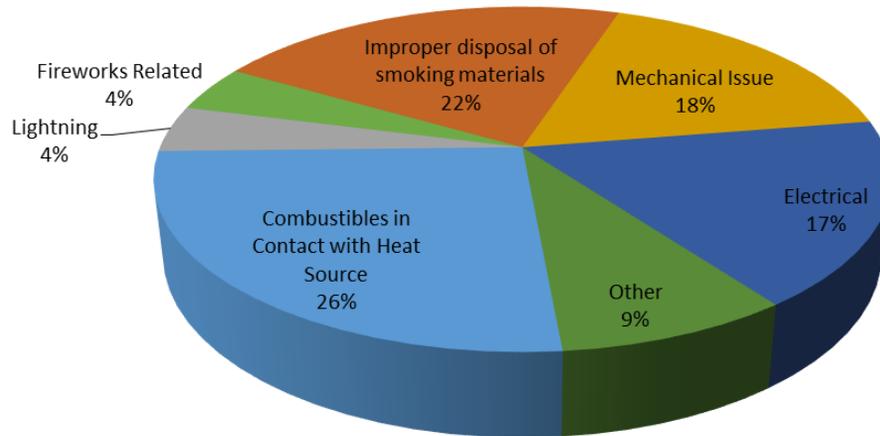
This fire was caused by an improperly discarded cigarette and caused \$525,000 in damages.

### Accidental Fire Data for Fiscal Year 2018 First Quarter

Fire Cause	Total Number of Fires	Total Dollar Loss Q1
Electrical	4	\$310,000.00
Improper disposal of smoking materials	5	\$27,650.00
Combustibles in contact with heat source	6	\$42,200.00
Other	2	\$1,020.00
Mechanical Issue	4	\$62,000.00
Fireworks related	1	\$100.00
Lightning	1	\$25,000.00
<b>Total Number of Unintentional Fires</b>	<b>23</b>	
<b>Total Cost of Damages</b>		<b>\$467,970.00</b>

\*For more specific descriptions of fire causes visit [www.loudoun.gov/finerisk](http://www.loudoun.gov/finerisk).

## Frequency of Accidental Fires by Fire Cause Annual Summary (July 2017-September 2017)



## Give Them Space!

Many fires occur as a result of items that can burn near or in contact with a heat source. Many of these fires can be prevented by individuals identifying and mitigating possible dangers around the home. Home heating equipment, hot ashes, discarded cigarettes, pilot lights, stoves, and toasters can all provide enough heat to ignite nearby items so be diligent and keep anything that can burn away from heat sources. Use the checklist below to assess what dangers may be around your home.

- *The leading factor contributing to home heating fires (30%) was lack of maintenance and failure to clean, principally from solid-fueled heating equipment, primarily chimneys.*
- *The leading factor contributing to ignition for home heating fire deaths (56%) was heating equipment too close to things that can burn, such as upholstered furniture, clothing, mattress, or bedding.*

*\*\*Source: National Fire Protection Association*

- Keep combustibles at least three feet away from all heating equipment, stoves and fireplaces.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional. Creosote buildup can ignite and start a fire and cracks in chimneys can allow fire to reach combustible material.
- Soak fireplace ashes thoroughly with water and always let them cool completely before putting them in a closed metal container. Keep the container outside, a safe distance away from your home.
- Dispose of smoking materials in a metal or ceramic container filled with sand.
- If you use an electric heater, plug the appliance directly into the wall outlet and be sure not to overload the circuit.
- Always remember to turn off portable heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.

This fire was caused by combustible material too close to the water heater and caused \$5,000 in damages.



# Every Second Counts: Plan 2 Ways Out

## October is Fire Prevention Month

It's 2 o'clock in the morning. You and your family are fast asleep when you awaken to the smoke alarm sounding and the smell of smoke. What do you do? If you and your family don't have a plan in place, it could jeopardize your safety, or even prove deadly.

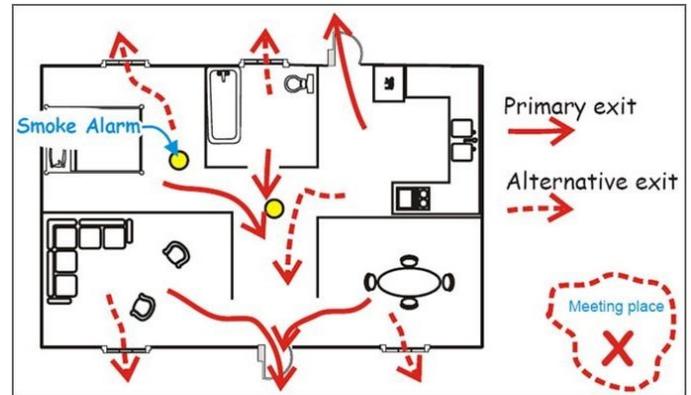
In a typical home fire, you may have as little as one to two minutes to escape safely from the time the smoke alarm sounds. That's why home escape planning is so critical in a fire situation. It ensures that everyone in the household knows what to do to exit the home quickly and safely.

"Developing and practicing a home escape plan is like building muscle memory," said Linda Hale, Chief Fire Marshal. "That pre-planning is what everyone will draw upon to snap into action and escape as quickly as possible in the event of a fire."

This year's Fire Prevention Week theme, "Every Second Counts: Plan 2 Ways Out!" works to better educate the public about the critical importance of developing a home escape plan and practicing it. Loudoun County Fire and Rescue encourages all residents to develop a plan together and practice it. A home escape plan includes working smoke alarms on every level of the home, in every bedroom, and near all sleeping areas. It also includes two ways out of every room, usually a door and a window, with a clear path to an outside meeting place (like a tree, light pole, or mailbox) that's a safe distance from the home.

Here are some additional tips and recommendations for developing and practicing a home escape plan:

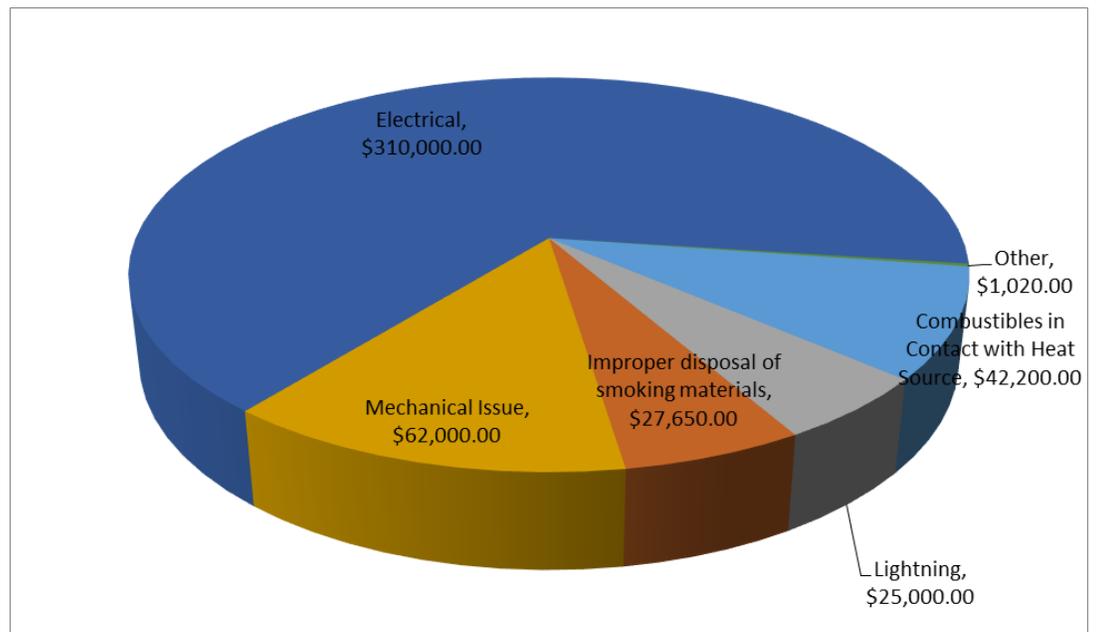
⇒ Draw a map of your home with all members of your household, marking two exits from each room



and a path to the outside from each exit.

- ⇒ Select an outside meeting place that is a safe distance from the home.
- ⇒ Practice your home fire drill twice a year. Conduct one at night and one during the day with everyone in your home, and practice using different ways out.
- ⇒ Teach children how to escape on their own in case you can't help them.
- ⇒ Make sure the number of your home is clearly marked and easy for the fire department to find.
- ⇒ Once you get outside, stay outside. Never go back inside a burning building.

## Accidental Fire Dollar Loss By Fire Cause (July 2017-September 2017)



**Did you know?** During a fire, closed doors can reduce fire growth, limit damage to your home, keep temperatures down, and can even save your life if you become trapped.

**MAKE A 900 DEGREE DIFFERENCE** - A closed door can mean reducing 1,000 degrees down to 100 degrees.

**TAKE IT DOWN A NOTCH** - During a fire, a closed door can keep carbon monoxide levels at 1,000 PPM versus 10,000 PPM if the door is left open.

**TAKE A BREATH** - A fire needs oxygen to burn. A closed door keeps more oxygen in the room and away from the fire. When you exit a fire, make sure to close your door behind you to slow down its growth.

**DOZE SAFELY** - 50% of house fires happen between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. Closing your doors before you hit the hay helps keep you safe.

\*Information from [closeyourdoor.org](http://closeyourdoor.org).



**Loudoun County  
Fire Marshal's Office**

23675 Belmont Ridge Road #150  
Ashburn, VA 20148

Phone: 703-737-8600

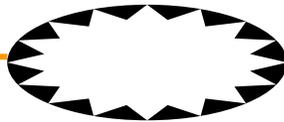
Fax: 703-737-8595

[www.loudoun.gov/firemarshal](http://www.loudoun.gov/firemarshal)

The Fire Marshal's Office seeks to provide a safe working and living environment for residents, workers, and travelers within Loudoun County. Key aspects of the mission include:

- Investigation into the origin and cause of fire- and explosive-related incidents in the county as well as offenses related to threats to burn and/or bomb
- Investigation into the release of hazardous materials
- Juvenile firesetter intervention
- Proactive public fire and life safety education programs
- Rapid and professional emergency response
- Reduction of fire risk through abatement of common fire prevention code violations

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.



**PUT A FINGER ON IT!**  
WORKING SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES.

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](http://www.loudoun.gov/smokealarms) and complete the online form or contact your local fire-rescue station.