Home Structure Fires that Began with Decorations

U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated average of 1,170 home\(^1\) structure fires per year that began with decorations, excluding Christmas trees, in 2004-2008. These fires caused an annual average of:

- Eight civilian fire deaths
- 54 civilian fire injuries
- $19.1 million in direct property damage.

Candles started 45% of home decoration structure fires.

The decoration was too close to heat source in half (48%) of the fires.

One-quarter of the home decoration fires occurred in December.

One-quarter (23%) started in the living room, family room or den. One in five (21%) started in the kitchen.

In December, one-third (34%) of the home decoration structure fires started in the living room, family room or den, compared to one in five (19%) the rest of the year.

Fifty-six percent of the December home decoration fires were started by candles, compared to 42% in January to November.

Roughly 5,800 people per year were treated at hospital emergency rooms for falls associated with holiday decorations.\(^2\)

---

\(^1\)Homes are dwellings, duplexes, manufactured homes, apartments, townhouses, and rowhouses.

\(^2\)J.A. Stevens and M Vajami. "Fall-Related Injuries During the Holiday Season -- United States, 2000--2003, MMWR Weekly, December 10, 2004, 53(48); 1127-1129, online at [http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5348a1.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5348a1.htm).

Source: Home Structure Fires That Began with Decorations, Marty Ahrens, NFPA Fire Analysis and Research, Quincy, MA, November 2010