

Preventable Home Fires 5 Causes

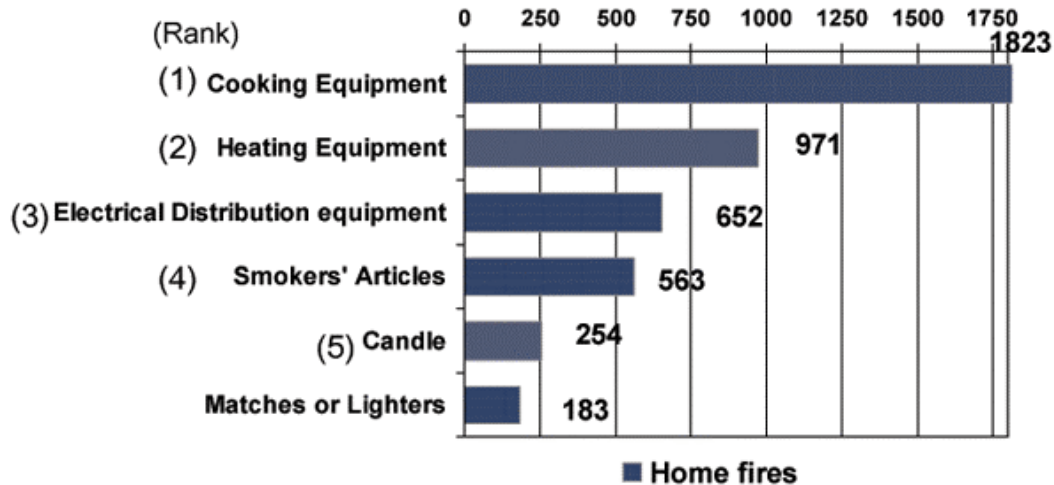
The Office of the Fire Marshal, Ontario, collects data on every fire and cause in the province. The following four graphs present information on the top five causes in preventable fires started in the home. Preventable fires are those which have not been deliberately started, but were started by human error of some form - for example, using an ignition source too close to combustibles, failure in the installation or maintenance of igniting equipment.

The following graph shows the total preventable fires in homes in Ontario between 1995 and 2001.

- C Cooking equipment is the number one ignition source with an average of 1,823 fires per year.
- C Heating equipment is the second most frequent cause with an average of 971 fires per year.
- C Electrical distribution equipment is third with an average of 652 fires.
- C Smokers' articles, excluding matches and lighters is number 4 with an average of 563 fires per year.
- C Candle fires, which have been increasing is the number 5 preventable cause of fire with 254 home fires per year.
- C Matches and lighters are a common ignition source for fires, but when arson fires are excluded, they are not in the top five ignition sources

Preventable Home Fires Ontario 1995-2001 (average # of fires per year) by Ignition source

Home Fires 5 causes 1995 - 2001



Office of the Fire Marshal

Statistical Reviews of Ontario Firelosses

The following graph shows the average injuries and fatalities in home fires by ignition source between 1995 and 2001.

The number one ignition source in home fire injuries is cooking equipment with an average of 237 injuries per year.

The number two ignition source causing injury in preventable home fires is lit smokers' articles with an average of 108 injuries. This does not include matches or lighters.

Electrical distribution equipment is the number three source of fires causing injuries with an average of 48 injuries per year.

Heating equipment is fourth, with an average of 47 injuries in fires per year.

Candles are number five with an average of 43 injuries per year.

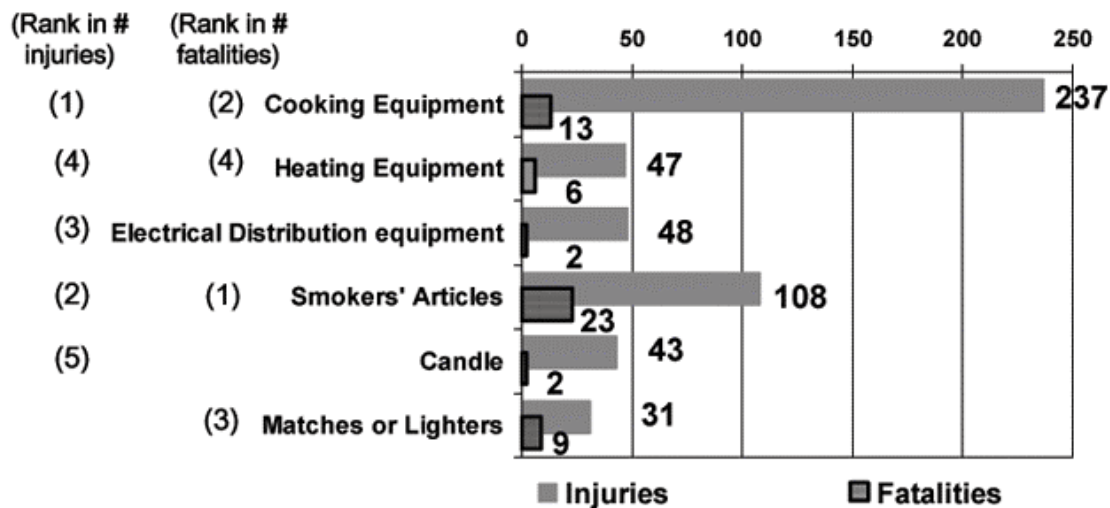
Matches or lighters average of 31 injuries. This does not include arson fires which were started deliberately.

The rank order in fire fatalities in preventable home fires is:

- C Number 1 Smokers' articles averaging 23 fatalities per year excluding matches or lighters.
- C Number 2 Cooking equipment averaging 13 fatalities per year.
- C Number 3 Matches or lighters averaging 9 fatalities per year.
- C Number 4 Heating equipment averaging 6 fatalities per year.
- C Number 5 Electrical distribution equipment or Candles each averaging 2 fatalities per year.

Preventable Home Fires Ontario 1995-2001 (average # of injuries and fatalities per year)

Home Fires 5 causes 1995 - 2001



Reviewing the total preventable fatal fires in the home, the graph shows the TOTAL number of fatal fires and the TOTAL number of fatalities from 1995 to 2001 by ignition source.

The top ignition source in preventable fatal fires is lit smokers' articles with a total of 145 fatal fires in homes resulting in 160 deaths per year from 1995 to 2001. This does not include matches or lighters.

The number two ignition source in fatal fires is cooking equipment, 85 fatal fires resulting in 90 fire fatalities.

Matches or lighters is third with an average of 53 fatal fires resulting in 62 fatalities. This does not include arson fires that were deliberately set.

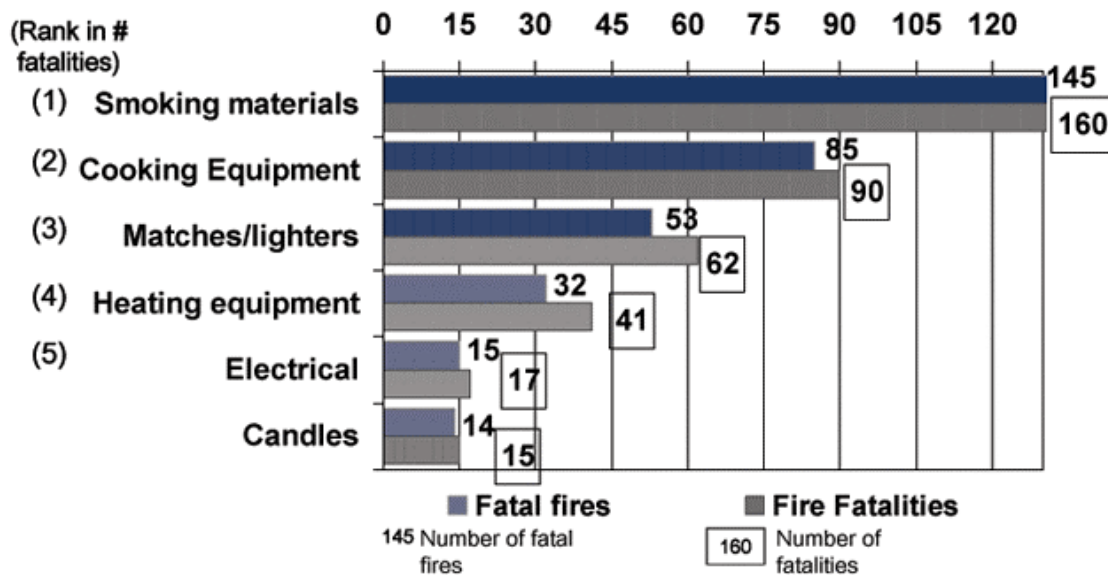
Heating equipment is fourth, 32 fires resulting in 41 fatalities.

Electrical distribution equipment is fifth, with 15 fatal fires and 17 fatalities.

Candles is close to electrical with 14 fatal fires and 15 fatalities.

Preventable Fatal Home Fires Ontario 1995-2001 (totals) Ignition source

Home Fires 5 causes 1995 - 2001



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Looking at trends in preventable fatal fires in homes between 1995 and 2001 the graph shows: Fatalities in fires started by lit smokers materials has gone down dramatically from a peak in 1997 of 34 deaths to 7 in 2001.

Over the past four years the overall trend in cigarette fire fatalities is down. Matches or lighters shows a jump going from 4 preventable fire deaths in 1995 to a high of 11, then varying between 11 and 23 for the following years to 2001, so no trend is evident. Heating equipment shows a trend similar to smokers articles starting at 17 fatalities in 1995 and consistently declining to 4 in 2001. Cooking equipment fatalities shows variation only in a single year and no downward trend. Over the years 1995 to 2001 it varies only slightly between 10 and 13, but spikes at 27 in 1997.

Electrical ignition sources show now trends and are consistently low from year to year varying between 1 and 4 fatalities, peaking at 5, typically 2.

The data on fatal fires and fatalities is provided by OFM Fire Investigators. OFM investigates all fatal fires and reports on all fire fatalities. As a result, this picture represents the whole fire fatality situation in Ontario. However, due to the fact that there are small numbers when fatal fires are broken down into detail, there may be wide variation from year to year for such factors as fire ignition source. This can be seen when the number one ignition source drops to number 3 in 2001. This is why it can be important to look at trends over time.

Ontario 1995 to 2001: Fatalities by fire ignition source

Fire Loss in Ontario 1995 – 2001
Causes, Trends and Issues

