Halloween Fires (2017-2019)

Although voluntary, the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) is the world's largest national, annual database of fire incident information. By contributing to the NFIRS, the fire service is helping in making data-based decisions from local budget development to the identification of national preparedness initiatives. It is important that fire departments participate in the NFIRS and critical that the data they report is complete and accurate so that sound decisions can be made.

For each year from 2017 to 2019, an estimated average of 9,200 fires were reported to fire departments in the United States over a 3-day period around Halloween. These fires caused an estimated annual average of 25 deaths, 100 injuries and $117 million in property loss.[1]

Loss measures for Halloween and non-Halloween fires (3-year average, 2017-2019)

Loss measure	Halloween fires (Oct. 30-Nov. 1)	Non-Halloween fires
Average loss:		
Fatalities/1,000 fires	2.6	2.4
Injuries/1,000 Fires	9.0	9.7
Dollar loss/fire	$13,690	$11,860

Source: NFIRS 5.0.

The average number of fatalities per 1,000 Halloween fires was slightly higher than the same loss measures for all other fires, while the average number of injuries per 1,000 Halloween fires was lower than for all other fires. The average dollar loss per Halloween fire was also higher than per non-Halloween fire.[2]
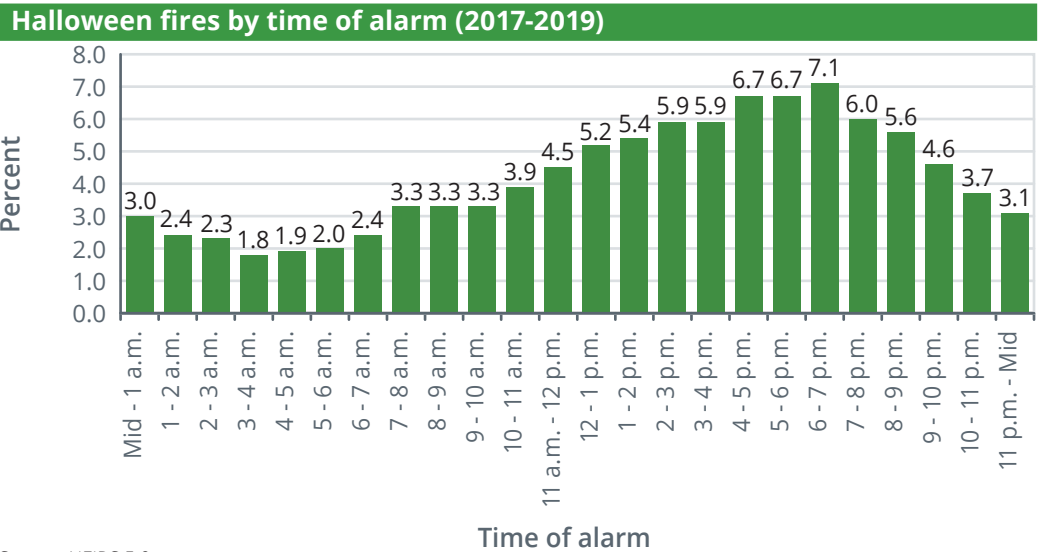
Halloween fires by general property type (2017-2019)

Other 6.0%
Outside 34.0%
Residential 33.4%
Vehicle 16.4%
Nonresidential 10.2%
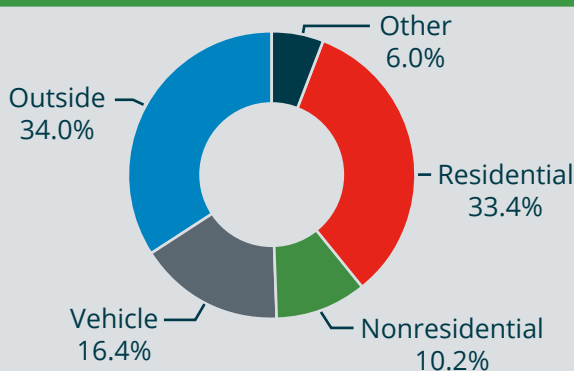
Source: NFIRS 5.0.

In terms of numbers of Halloween fires, the largest general property type category was outside fires (34%) followed closely by residential fires (33%). Residential Halloween fires, however, resulted in the most deaths (45%), injuries (83%) and dollar loss (42%) when compared to the other property type categories.

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Halloween fires occurred most frequently in the afternoon and early evening hours, peaking from 6 to 7 p.m. Fires then declined, reaching the lowest point during the early morning from 3 to 6 a.m.

Halloween fires by time of alarm (2017-2019)

Percent (y-axis)

Time of alarm	Percent
Mid - 1 a.m.	3.0
1 - 2 a.m.	2.4
2 - 3 a.m.	2.3
3 - 4 a.m.	1.8
4 - 5 a.m.	1.9
5 - 6 a.m.	2.0
6 - 7 a.m.	2.4
7 - 8 a.m.	3.3
8 - 9 a.m.	3.3
9 - 10 a.m.	3.3
10 - 11 a.m.	3.9
11 a.m. - 12 p.m.	4.5
12 - 1 p.m.	5.2
1 - 2 p.m.	5.4
2 - 3 p.m.	5.9
3 - 4 p.m.	5.9
4 - 5 p.m.	6.7
5 - 6 p.m.	6.7
6 - 7 p.m.	7.1
7 - 8 p.m.	6.0
8 - 9 p.m.	5.6
9 - 10 p.m.	4.6
10 - 11 p.m.	3.7
11 p.m. - Mid	3.1

Time of alarm

Source: NFIRS 5.0.

The leading causes of residential Halloween fires were cooking (49%); heating (12%); other unintentional, careless actions (8%); and electrical malfunctions (8%).

For additional fire statistics, please visit https://www.usfa.fema.gov/data/statistics/.

For Halloween fire safety tips, please visit: https://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/for-consumers/holidays/halloween-safety/halloween-safety-tips and https://www.safekids.org/halloween.