



# Thanksgiving Day Fires in Residential Buildings (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 2,300 residential building fires were reported to fire departments in the U.S. on Thanksgiving Day. These fires caused an estimated annual average of 5 deaths, 25 injuries and \$26 million in property loss.<sup>1</sup>

## Loss measures for Thanksgiving Day and non-Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings (3-year average, 2017-2019)

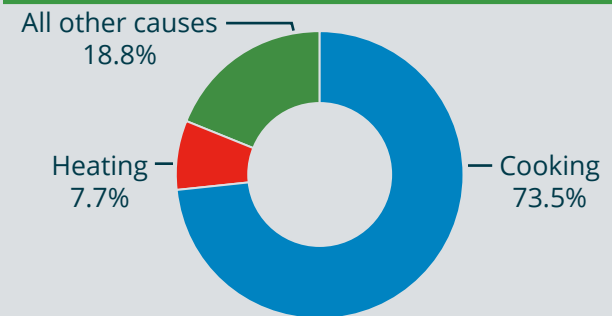
Loss measure	Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings	Non-Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings
<b>Average loss:</b>		
Fatalities/1,000 fires	1.9	6.2
Injuries/1,000 fires	11.1	25.5
Dollar loss/fire	\$9,570	\$18,770

Source: NFIRS 5.0.

The average number of reported residential building fires on Thanksgiving Day was more than double (2.3 times more) the average number of fires in residential buildings on all other days. The average losses for these fires, however, were less than the same measures for non-Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings.<sup>2</sup>

Cooking fires in residential buildings occurred more often on Thanksgiving Day than any other day of the year. Cooking was, by far, the leading cause of all Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings at 74% followed by heating at 8%. By comparison, cooking was the cause of 51% of residential building fires that occurred on all days of the year other than Thanksgiving.

## Causes of Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings (2017-2019)

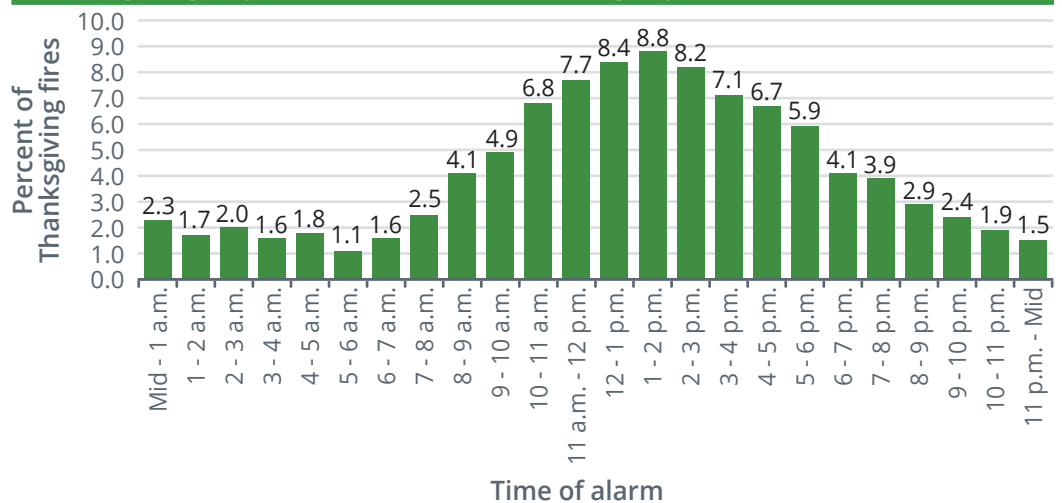


Source: NFIRS 5.0.

Note: Percent of Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings with sufficient data to determine cause.

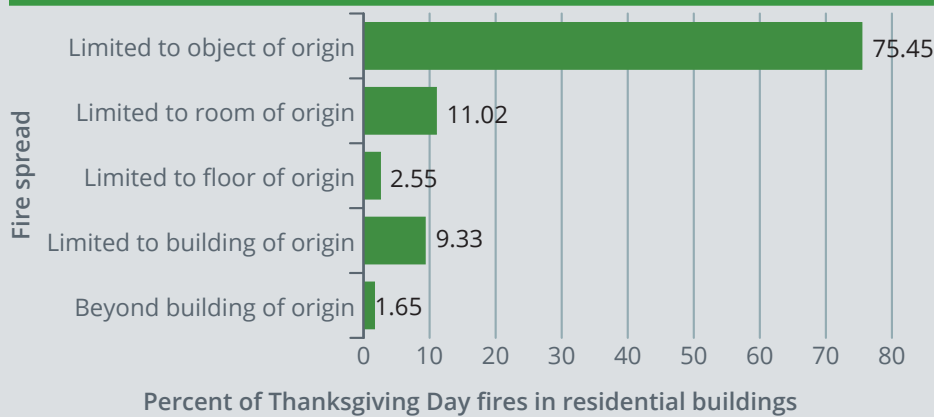
Over half (54%) of Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings occurred from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., when many people are preparing Thanksgiving dinner. Fires then declined throughout the evening. This stands in contrast to the rest of the year, when residential building fires peaked during “normal” dinnertime hours of 5 to 8 p.m.

### Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings by time of alarm (2017-2019)



Source: NFIRS 5.0.  
Note: Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

### Extent of fire spread in Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings (2017-2019)

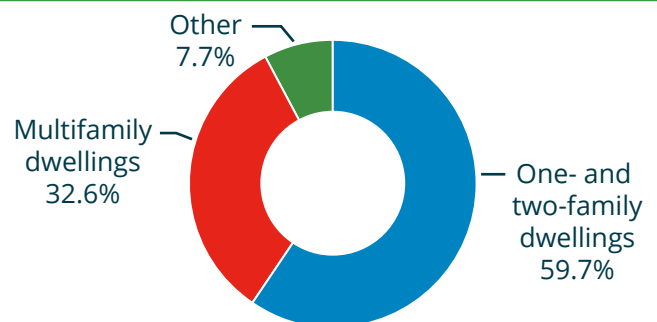


Source: NFIRS 5.0.

In 75% of Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings, the fire was limited to the object of origin. An additional 11% of these fires were limited to the room of origin. The remaining 14% of Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings extended beyond the room of origin. Annually among all other residential building fires, 56% were limited to the object of origin, an additional 19% were limited to the room of origin, and the remaining 25% extended beyond the room of origin.

Most Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings took place in one- and two-family dwellings (60%) followed by multifamily dwellings (33%). This is fairly comparable to non-Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings, with one- and two-family dwellings at 63%, multifamily dwellings at 29%, and other dwellings at 9%.<sup>3</sup>

### Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings by general property type (2017-2019)



Source: NFIRS 5.0.

For additional information on fire prevention and public education, visit <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/>. For additional fire statistics, please visit <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/data/statistics/>.

Notes: <sup>1</sup>Thanksgiving Day fires are defined as fires that occurred on Nov. 23, 2017, Nov. 22, 2018, and Nov. 28, 2019. Estimates of fires are rounded to the nearest 100, deaths to the nearest 5, injuries to the nearest 25, and losses to the nearest million. Sources: NFIRS and the National Fire Protection Association.  
<sup>2</sup>The average loss measures computed from the raw NFIRS data in the loss measures table will differ from the average loss measures computed from national estimates. The fire death rate computed from national estimates is  $(1,000 \times (5/2,300)) = 2.2$  deaths per 1,000 Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings, and the fire injury rate is  $(1,000 \times (25/2,300)) = 10.9$  injuries per 1,000 Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings. Average loss for fatalities and injuries is computed per 1,000 fires. Average dollar loss is computed per fire and rounded to the nearest \$10. The 2017 and 2018 dollar-loss values were adjusted to 2019 dollars.  
<sup>3</sup>Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.