

Can you guess the most common cause of household fires?

U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated annual average of 373,900 home structure fires from 2005-2009 according to new research from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). According to the report, cooking fires remain the leading cause of home structure fires and home fire injuries, and smoking materials continue to be the leading cause of home fire deaths.

During the five-year period covered by the report, roughly one in every 310 households per year had a reported home fire. Each year, these fires caused an estimated average of 2,650 civilian deaths, 12,890 civilian injuries, and \$7.1 billion in direct property damage. On average, seven people died in U.S. home fires every day.

One-quarter of the home fire deaths resulted from fires that originated in the bedroom, 24 percent from fires in the family room, living room, or den, and 15 percent from fires starting in the kitchen. Though only 20 percent of reported fires occurred between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., half

of the deaths were caused by fires reported during this time.

"These statistics are a sad reminder that fire is still a deadly threat and we must do more to prevent the needless deaths and losses," said Lorraine Carli, NFPA's vice president of communications. "Properly installed and maintained fire protection devices, such as smoke alarms and residential fire sprinklers, can help to prevent most fire deaths."

Almost two-thirds (62%) of home fire deaths resulted from fires in which no smoke alarms were present at all (38%) or smoke alarms were present but did not operate (24%). The report also referenced John Hall's recent report, U.S. Experience with Sprinklers, which found that having wet pipe sprinkler systems in the home reduces chances of dying in a fire by 83 percent.

The report is based on data from the U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Incident Reporting System and the National Fire Protection Association's annual fire department experience survey.

Top ten fire safety tips from

NFPA:

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you must leave, even for a short time, turn off the stove.
- Keep fixed and portable space heaters at least three feet from anything that can burn. Turn off heaters when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Ask smokers to smoke outside. Have sturdy, deep ashtrays for smokers.
- Keep matches and lighters up high, out of the reach of children, preferably in a cabinet with a child lock.
- Replace electric cords that are cracked, damaged, have broken plugs, or have loose connections.
- Keep candles at least one foot from anything that can burn. Blow out candles when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Make a home fire escape plan and practice it at least twice a year.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas. Interconnect smoke alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.

• Test smoke alarms at least once a month and replace conventional batteries once a year or when the alarm "chirps" to tell you the battery is low. Replace any smoke alarm that is more than 10 years old.

• If you are building or remodeling your home, install residential fire sprinklers. Sprinklers can contain and may even extinguish a fire in less time than it would take the fire department to arrive.

NFPA is an international

nonprofit organization, founded in 1896, whose mission is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and

advocating consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education. Visit NFPA's website at <http://www.nfpa.org> for more information.

Health care laws passed July 1

Landmark health care legislation enacted July 1 will improve the health of Oregonians, improve the quality of care and reduce cost. House bill 3650, a centerpiece of Governor Kitzhaber's health care transformation agenda, will begin to shift the focus and financial incentives of Oregon's health care system from after-the-fact acute care to prevention, wellness and community-based management of chronic conditions.

"The legislature's action is critical to ensuring that Oregonians get better health care at a lower cost," said Governor Kitzhaber. "The strong bipartisan support for this landmark legislation demonstrates how effective we can be addressing the real issues facing Oregon

when Democrats and Republicans come together."

House bill 3650 sets the stage for the creation of community-based Coordinated Care Organizations (CCO) that will focus on prevention and patient outcomes by integrating physical health, mental health, and oral health. CCOs will be required to manage costs within a global budget. Over the next six months, workgroups will be putting together a plan for CCOs for the February legislature.

Earlier this month the legislature passed Senate Bill 99, establishing the Oregon Health Insurance Exchange Corporation to develop a plan for Oregon's exchange. Through the Exchange, individuals and

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