

## **Philadelphia Fire Fatalities Lowest in City History**

### ***Down 23%***

Fire Commissioner Lloyd Ayers reports that during 2009, the Philadelphia Fire Department (PFD) responded to 268,996 emergency incidents. Of these incidents, 221,133 were emergency medical incidents, and 47,863 were for fire and other 911 emergency public safety service requests.

In 2009, the Department experienced a (1.1%) increase in the total number of emergency incidents, while also recording a (1.9 %) increase in total emergency medical incidents. As in previous years, the number of responses to fire and other 911 emergency public safety service requests continue to decline. In 2009, this decline stands at a little more than two percent (2.5%).

This year, the Department recorded a twenty-three percent (23%) reduction in fire fatalities, the lowest loss of life by fire in Philadelphia history. Further, seventy percent of all fire fatalities in 2009 occurred in structures with no smoke alarms, or dead or missing batteries.

“Smoke alarms still remain the best protection for the early warning of a fire, and we continue to strive for our goal of Zero Fire Fatalities,” said Commissioner Ayers.

The Department’s Freedom From Fire campaign, an aggressive fire safety and education program, has certainly contributed to the reduction in fire fatalities in our City. The great work done by our Fire Safety Representatives and the willingness of Philadelphia residents to make fire safety and education a priority have resulted in this historic year of low fire fatalities. The strong partnership with our corporate partners, community organizations, and the Faith community continues to play a major role in reducing fatalities and injuries caused by fire.

“Home fire escape planning and practice gives individuals and families the best chance to survive a fire. Our Home Fire Safety Check List, with ALL ITEMS CHECKED YES, provides the highest probability for the prevention of a fire in your home,” said Ayers.

“I am also pleased to announce that the Home Fire Safety Check List is now available in a host of languages”, he said. Commissioner Ayers urges citizens who do not have smoke alarms and can not afford them to call the Smoke Alarm Hotline at 215-686-1176, and the PFD will provide one. The Home Fire Safety Check List and other Fire Safety and Education information are available on the City’s web site [www.phila.gov/fire](http://www.phila.gov/fire) or at local fire stations.

On January 1, 2009, the City of Philadelphia Carbon Monoxide Alarm Law became mandatory. The law requires owners of all one-and-two family dwellings and small residential care/assisted living facilities (also known as board and care facilities) to install

carbon monoxide detection and alarm devices (carbon monoxide alarms) in their buildings.

In the City of Philadelphia, the Fire Department has responded to an average of 131 carbon monoxide incidents annually over the past 5 years. During this same period, an average of 55 patients were transported to hospitals for treatment of carbon monoxide poisoning. There has been an average of 19 carbon monoxide incidents resulting in transports per year over the past five years.

This year to date, the Department has responded to 406 carbon monoxide incidents resulting in 72 patients being transported to hospitals for carbon monoxide poisoning. These incident statistics were the catalyst for the Philadelphia Fire Department's drive to initiate the ordinance requiring the mandatory installation of Carbon Monoxide Alarms. The fact that Carbon Monoxide incidents have increased in 2009 is testament to the need for the new law.

"I would like to thank the men and women of the Philadelphia Fire Department for their diligence and commitment to the citizens of Philadelphia within their fire safety and education districts." said Commissioner Ayers.

**Following are Fire Statistics by Category:**

- Smoking was the cause of nine (09) fatalities.
- Electrical wiring (non-permanent) resulted in eight (08) fatalities.
- Cooking equipment resulted in five (05) fatalities.
- Open flame was the cause of four (04) fatalities.
  - (combustibles too close to heater)
  - (open flame from a candle)
  - (open flame from stove top)
  - (open flame from lit cigarette)
- Electric appliance resulted in two (02) fatalities.
- Incendiary was the cause of one (01) fatality.
- Portable electric heater caused one (01) fatality

Seventeen (17) fatalities occurred between 11:00 P.M. and 7:00 A.M. in thirteen (13) separate fires. These seventeen (17) fatalities included thirteen (13) adults and four (04) children.

No smoke alarms were present or had dead or missing batteries in twelve (12) of the seventeen (17) fatalities.

Thirteen (13) fire fatalities occurred between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 11:00 P.M. in eleven (11) separate fires. These thirteen (13) fatalities included twelve (12) adults and one (1) child. No smoke alarms were present or had dead or missing batteries in nine (9) of the thirteen (13) fatalities.

There were four (4) fires that resulted in multiple fatalities. A total of ten (10) fatalities occurred from these four (4) fires. Twenty-four (24) fire incidents claimed a total of thirty (30) lives in 2009.

Smoke alarms still remain the best protection for early warning of a fire. Of the thirty (30) fatalities, twenty-one (21) fatalities occurred in fourteen (14) properties that did not have smoke alarms, or had alarms with dead or missing batteries.

**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

In one instance, (a woman on nasal canula) the fire was very minor and alarms did not activate. In another instance, a smoke alarm was located on the first floor but was not mounted and not known if activated; fire was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. In another incident, the fire occurred on the exterior of the property which was occupied as an assistant living facility.

<b>FIRE DEATHS BY AGE</b>	
0 - 5 years old	0
6 - 9 years old	3
10 - 19 years old	2
20 - 29 years old	2
30 - 49 years old	5
50 - 64 years old	6
65 - 74 years old	7
75 - 84 years old	2
85 and over	3

**TEN YEAR FIRE DEATH RECORD**

<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
51	45	32	44	45	52	52	47	39	30

Fires resulted in injuries to 315 citizens. Of these injuries, (296) occurred in accidental fires and (19) injuries occurred as a result of incendiary/arson fires.

Individuals ranging in age from 30-to-49 years old received the most injuries from fires again this year. A breakdown of injuries by age group is:

INJURIES BY AGE	
0 - 5 years old	41
6 - 9 years old	17
10 - 19 years old	31
20 - 29 years old	49
30 - 49 years old	74
50 - 64 years old	58
65 - 74 years old	22
75 - 84 years old	14
85 and over	09

CAUSES OF FIRE RESULTING IN INJURIES	
Chemical/Flammable	04
Open flame	67
Incendiary	19
Cooking	42
Matches	09
Smoking	40
Electrical Wiring	21
Electrical Appliances	06
Heater – Portable Electrical	03
Heater – Portable Wood	01
Heater – Fixed	08
Heater – Portable Kerosene.	01
Investigation	14
Explosion	01
Fumes	73
Sparks	03
Undetermined	03

<b><u>TEN YEAR INJURY RECORD</u></b>									
<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
251	212	242	247	193	239	159	165	271	315

During 2009, there were 16 fires that were multiple alarm incidents.

**MULTIPLE ALARM FIRES**

- 10 Two Alarm Fires
- 02 Three Alarm Fire
- 02 Four Alarm Fire
- 01 Five Alarm Fire
- 00 Six Alarm Fire
- 01 Seven Alarm Fire

**CAUSES FOR 16 MULTI-ALARM FIRES**

- 03 Electrical Wiring/Equipment
- 00 Electrical Appliances/Motors
- 03 Open Flame
- 06 Incendiary
- 00 Smoking
- 00 Heater (Fixed)
- 00 Sparks
- 00 Children With Matches
- 00 Portable Kerosene Heater
- 02 Undetermined
- 01 Cooking
- 01 Under Investigation by FMO

**CARBON MONOXIDE INCIDENTS**

The Philadelphia Fire Department responded to:

38 CO incidents in 2005  
 14 incidents resulted in transportation to hospitals  
 69 patients were transported

13 CO incidents in 2006  
6 incidents resulted in transportation to hospitals  
9 patients were transported  
1 DOA

68 CO incidents in 2007  
21 incidents resulted in transportation to hospitals  
57 patients were transported

130 CO incidents in 2008  
26 incidents resulted in transportation to hospitals  
69 patients were transported  
1 DOA

**406 CO incidents in 2009**  
**27 incidents resulted in transportation to hospitals**  
**72 patients were transported**

###