

EMBARGOED UNTIL FEBRUARY 25, 2009

**THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS HAVE
JOINED TOGETHER TO URGE EVERYONE TO
PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY EVERY DAY**

AMERICAN FIRE SPRINKLER ASSOCIATION

COMMON VOICES

CONGRESSIONAL FIRE SERVICES

INSTITUTE

FIRE TEAM USA

HOME SAFETY COUNCIL

INSTITUTION OF FIRE ENGINEERS – USA

BRANCH

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK

PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE

CHIEFS

INTERNATIONAL CODE COUNCIL

INTERNATIONAL FIRE MARSHALS

ASSOCIATION

METROPOLITAN FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FIRE

MARSHALS

NATIONAL ELECTRICAL MANUFACTURERS

ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL FIRE SPRINKLER ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL

PEOPLE'S BURN FOUNDATION

PHOENIX SOCIETY FOR BURN SURVIVORS

SOCIETY OF FIRE PROTECTION ENGINEERS

UNDERWRITERS LABORATORIES

UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION

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Fatal fires prompt national warning

January 2009 has been a particularly deadly month

Belchertown, MA – February 25, 2009 Fire deaths during January are at a pace above 2008, according to information provided by state fire marshals across the country. In a snapshot taken of the number of fire deaths in 28 states by the National Association of State Fire Marshals, at least 173 people have been killed during January 2009 as opposed to 131 in January 2008, an increase of almost one-third. In addition, during January 2009, 82 people died in fires where three people or more were killed as opposed to 42 in 2008 and 51 deaths in 2007. Almost two-thirds of those killed in 2009 were children, according to information compiled by writer-tech.com.

Recent tragedies during January include:

- Washington, DC, six killed, four of which were children
- Richland, NY, four adults, four children
- Paris, TX, five adults
- Chicago, IL, three children
- Cowpens, SC, one adult, three children
- Greely, IA, four children
- Stone Mountain, GA, three children
- Lacombe, LA, four children
- Fort Wayne, IN, two separate fires that killed four adults and three children

Fires strike across the country, killing on the average nine people each day (one every 153 minutes) and injuring thousands. In 2007, the latest year for which statistics are available, 3,430 people were killed in fires and 17,675 were injured. Ironically, over 80 percent of the civilian deaths occur in the very place that people feel the safest from fire – their homes. These are tragedies for the families, the communities, the nation.

So often these fires and their fateful outcomes are avoidable through the use of proven fire prevention strategies and education. By making the public more aware of the role that they have in helping to build a fire-safe community we can make tremendous strides, one home at a time, towards reducing the loss of life and property that occurs every single year.

We have joined together to redouble our efforts to reach out to people across the nation to raise the national awareness of fire prevention. We know, without a doubt, that by educating our citizens about fire-safe practices and what to do if a fire should break out we can reduce the losses in our communities and work towards a fire-safe future for today's generation and beyond. Each of the organizations listed is committed to a simple mission – saving lives. Some of the actions are ones that can be done today, others are for the future. However, by starting right now, we can someday point back and say that it started today.

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We have reduced fire deaths nationally during the last 20 years but the problem and sadness continues to exist. We believe that we can further reduce our national life loss in this area by focusing on these key areas:

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside all sleeping areas and on every level of your home. For the best protection interconnect them so when one sounds they all sound.
- Test your smoke alarms monthly to make sure they are working at all times.
- Residential sprinklers save lives. If you are building or remodeling, consider installing residential sprinklers in your home.
- Smoking is one of the leading causes of fatal fires. If you smoke, put it out every time.
- Cooking fires are the leading cause of all fires. Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling or broiling food.
- Know two ways out, no matter where you are – your home, office, restaurant, movie theater.
- Always react to a fire alarm immediately.

QuickStats

The Overall Fire Picture – 2007 (latest year available)

- There were 3,430 civilians that lost their lives as the result of fire.
- Nationwide, there was a civilian fire death every 153 minutes.
- There were 17,675 civilian injuries that occurred as the result of fire.
- Nationwide, there was a civilian fire injury every 30 minutes.
- There were 103 firefighters killed while on duty.
- Fire killed more Americans than all natural disasters combined.
- 84 percent of all civilian fire deaths occurred in homes.
- 1.6 million fires were reported. Many others went unreported, causing additional injuries and property loss.
- Every 20 seconds, a fire department responded to a fire somewhere in the nation.
- Direct property loss due to fires was estimated at \$14.6 billion.
- An estimated 32,500 intentionally set structure fires resulted in 295 civilian deaths.
- Intentionally set structure fires resulted in an estimated \$733 million in property damage.

Source: National Fire Protection Association, Fire Loss in the U.S. During 2006 and Firefighter Fatalities in the U.S. – 2007.

Fire deaths, January 2008 and January 2009, compiled by the National Association of State Fire Marshals

State	2008	2009	State	2008	2009
Alabama	9	14	New Hampshire	2	1
Alaska	3	4	New Jersey	8	7
Arizona	3	3	New York	17	21
Delaware	2	1	Nevada	3	1
Idaho	1	0	North Carolina	11	12
Illinois	13	15	North Dakota	1	2
Iowa	4	12	Oklahoma	4	12
Kansas	2	3	South Carolina	6	15
Maine	2	3	South Dakota	0	0
Maryland	5	6	Utah	1	1
Minnesota	0	2	Washington	4	6
Mississippi	11	8	Wisconsin	5	4
Missouri	13	13	Wyoming	0	0
Montana	1	2			
Nebraska	0	5	Totals	131	173

32% increase 2008 to 2009

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American Fire Sprinkler Association
www.firesprinkler.org



International Association of Fire Chiefs
www.iafc.org



National Volunteer Fire Council
www.nvfc.org



Common Voices
www.fireadvocates.org



International Code Council
www.iccsafe.org



People's Burn Foundation
www.peoplesburnfoundation.org



Congressional Fire Services Institute
www.cfsi.org



International Fire Marshals Association
www.nfpa.org/ifma



Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors
www.phoenix-society.org



Fire Team USA
www.fireteamusa.com



Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association
www.nfpa.org/metro



Society of Fire Protection Engineers
www.sfpe.org



Home Safety Council
www.homesafetycouncil.org



National Association of State Fire Marshals
www.firemarshals.org



Underwriters Laboratories
www.ul.com



Institution of Fire Engineers – USA Branch
www.ife-usa.org



National Electrical Manufacturers Association
www.nema.org



United States Fire Administration
www.usfa.dhs.gov



International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters
www.iabpff.org



The Voice of the Fire Sprinkler Industry
National Fire Sprinkler Association
www.nfsa.org