

## **USFA Releases School Fires Report**

WASHINGTON D.C. - The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) has issued a special report that explores the causes and characteristics of school fires. The report, *School Fires*, developed by the National Fire Data Center under the Federal Emergency Management Agency's USFA, is part of the Topical Fire Research Series and is based on 2003-2005 National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) data. The report looks at all school fires, including those occurring outdoors on school property and compares such characteristics with those of school structure fires.

“This week marks the return of many students to schools across this nation as well as the start of National Preparedness Month,” according to U.S. Fire Administrator Greg Cade. “Fires in buildings as special as our nation’s schools are unacceptable. I ask all first responders to encourage students, families, and school faculty members to take the time to know exactly what they will do in the event of any type of school emergency, including fire.”

Between the years 2003 and 2005, an estimated, annual average of 14,700 fires occurred on school properties. These fires were responsible for \$85 million in annual property loss and an estimated 100 civilian injuries. No fatalities on school properties were reported to NFIRS during this period. Forty percent of school-related fires occurred outdoors on school property. Forty-three percent of fires on school properties were structure fires, and an additional 6% were vehicle fires.

The leading cause of school structure fires is incendiary or suspicious activity (32%), followed by cooking (29%), and heating (9%). Fires in preschool and day cares are predominantly due to cooking, whereas incendiary or suspicious activity is the leading cause of middle and high school structure fires. The three leading areas of fire origin in school structure fires include restrooms, kitchens, and general assembly areas.

A copy of the full report can be downloaded from the USFA Web site at

<http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/tfrs/v8i1.pdf> (PDF, 657 Kb)



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