



Lightning Fires and Lightning Strikes

During 2002-2005, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated annual average of 31,400 fires started by lightning. These fires caused annual averages of

- 12 civilian deaths;
- 57 civilian injuries; and
- \$213 million in direct property damage.

The January 2006 West Virginia coal mine explosion that claimed 12 lives was the deadliest U.S. fire started by lightning in recent years.

Fires started by lightning peak in the summer months and in the late afternoon and early evening.

Outside and other fires accounted for 78% of the lightning fires reported to local fire departments.

In 2002-2005, only 16% of reported lightning fires occurred in homes, but these accounted for

- nearly all the associated civilian deaths,
- 90% of the associated injuries, and
- 58% of the direct property damage.

National Interagency Fire Center statistics show that in 2002-2006, an average of 12,000 (16%) of the wildland fires were started by lightning per year. These fires burned an average of 5.2 million acres per year.

Lightning also causes non-fire deaths and injuries. According to the National Weather Service reports, in 2006, lightning caused 47 deaths and 242 injuries.

Lightning Fatalities by Location: 2002-2006

