

2015 Arson Incident Report (AIR)



UNITED STATES BOMB DATA CENTER (USBDC) ARSON INCIDENT REPORT

2015

The Annual Arson Incident Report (AIR) reviews arson-related incidents from data reported to the United States Bomb Data Center (USBDC) through the Bomb Arson Tracking System (BATS).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OPERATING HIGHLIGHTS

The 2015 Arson Incident Report (AIR) is a statistical product generated by the United States Bomb Data Center (USBDC), using data captured in the Bomb and Arson Tracking System (BATS) through case entry contributions of its 11,478 active users. This report reflects the total number of fire incidents that were categorized as *Incendiary (Arson)*, *Undetermined*, *Accidental* and *Natural* causes that were reported into BATS for calendar year 2015. While it is important to note that BATS is a real-time dynamic incident management system, the data may differ slightly from previous reports due to updates or changes made by the record owner. The reader should also be aware that when compared to the data reflected in the Uniform Crime Report and/or National Fire Incident Reporting System, the number of incidents reflected in BATS captures less than 17 percent of the annual incendiary (arson) fires reported. Due to this limited dataset, the USBDC cautions the use of this report for analytical purposes.

STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

From January 1, 2015, through December 31, 2015, BATS captured a total of 21,502 *fire-related incidents*. Of the 21,502 fires reported in BATS, 7,065 were listed as “Incendiary or Arson,” which accounted for 33 percent of all the fires reported. The total amount of damages for all fire types was estimated at more than \$996 million, with 1,677 injuries and 570 fatalities associated with the 21,502 reported fires. Available combustibles was identified as the most widely utilized incendiary fire subtype, while “Residential” was identified as the most targeted property type.

LOOKING AHEAD

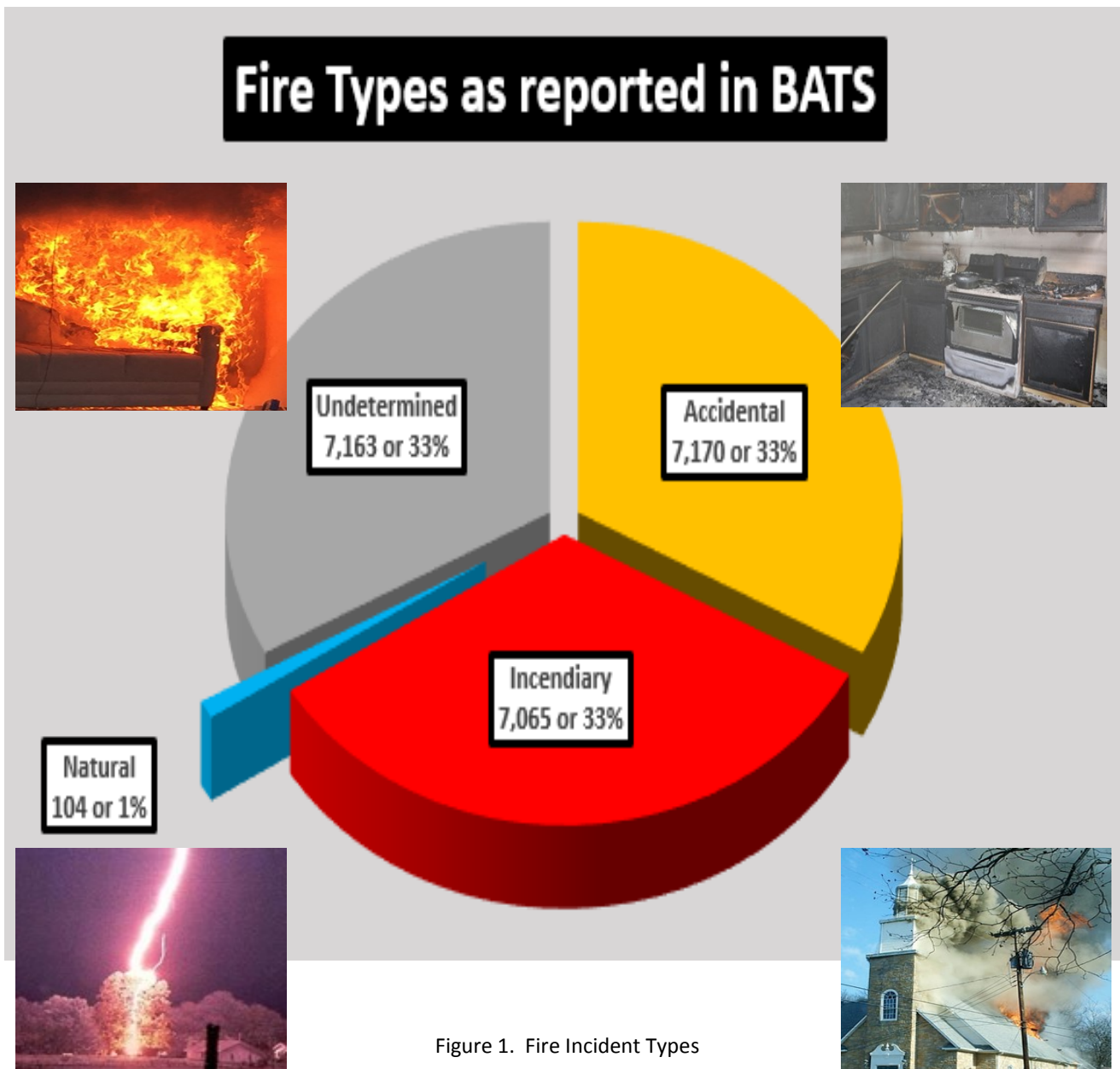
Over the past year, the USBDC has begun to implement changes to our business practices that are focused on improving the ease of use and functionality of the Bomb Arson Tracking System. Our main goal is to increase regional and national situational awareness so that law enforcement and public safety officials can better detect, deter and prevent future criminal and terrorist acts. This past year we released an update to BATS that included Mobile BATS (*mBATS*), which allows users to quickly enter initial incident information in BATS or send notifications to those who need it, directly from any mobile device. This year, we also transitioned our offices from Washington, District of Columbia, to Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. Currently we are working on a BATS Modernization project that is implementing many of the suggestions that we have received from our 2,500+ interagency partners and more than 11,000 BATS users. We look forward to the future as we continue to serve all who are involved in the fight against those who intend to do us harm.

Brandt A. Schenken
Director, USBDC

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FIRE TYPES – 2015

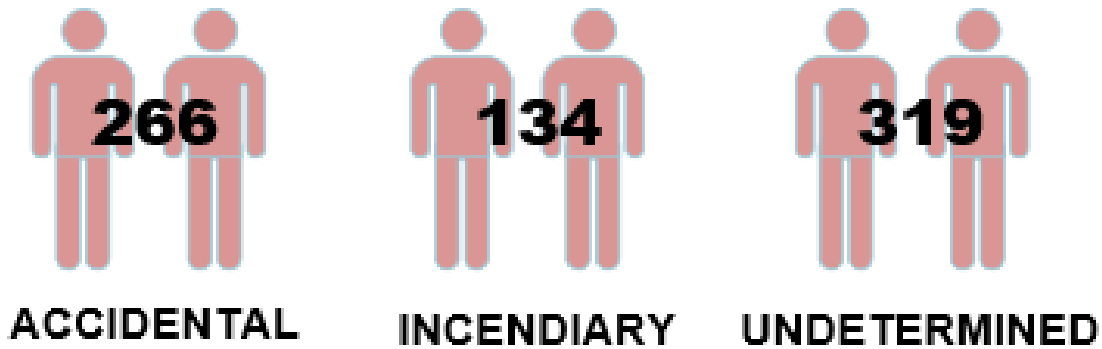
From January 1, 2015, through December 31, 2015, BATS captured a total of 21,502* fire-related incidents. Of those 21,605 fires, 7,065 were listed in BATS as “Incendiary or Arson,” along with 7,170 listed as “Accidental” and 104 listed as “Natural.” There were also 7,163 fires listed as “Undetermined,” which included the final determination/classification of the fire investigation, along with fires pending further investigative activities and/or laboratory examination.



* The number of incidents listed above only accounts for the number of fire/arson incidents reported in BATS, and not the total number of fire/arson related incidents reported in the United States during calendar year 2015.

FIRE FATALITIES – 2015

719 Fire Fatalities in 2015



Of the 719 deaths, 687 individuals were identified as “Victims,” 10 were identified as “Fire Service” and 2 were identified as “Law Enforcement.” There were also 20 individuals killed who were identified as a “Suspect.”

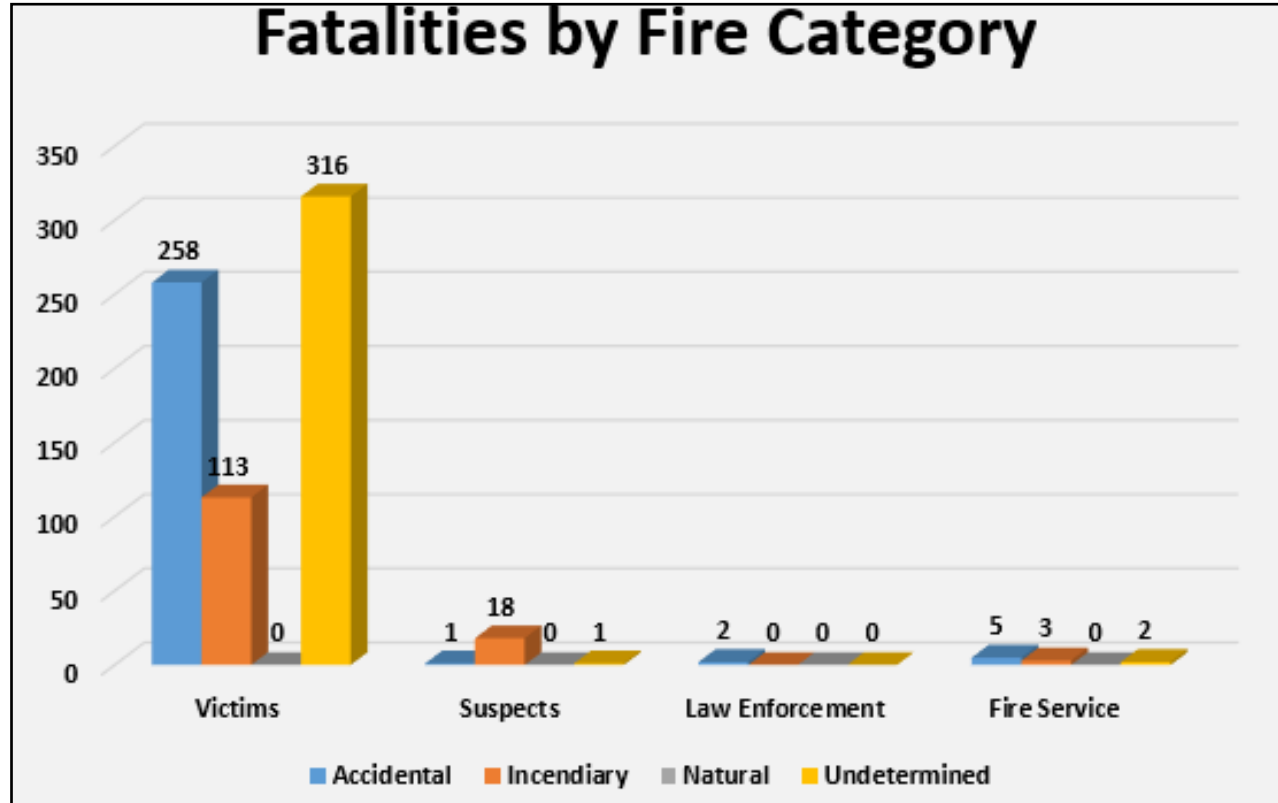
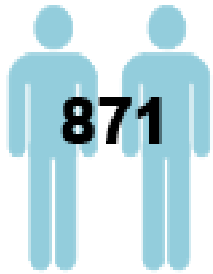


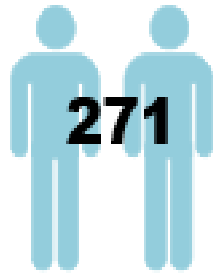
Figure 2. Fatalities by Fire Category

FIRE INJURIES – 2015

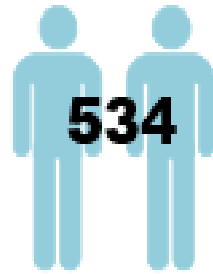
1,677 Fire Injuries in 2015



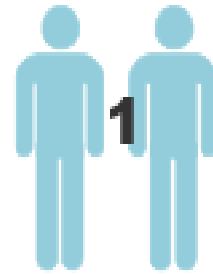
ACCIDENTAL



INCENDIARY



UNDETERMINED



NATURAL

Of the 1,677 injuries, 1,195 individuals were identified as “Victims,” 402 were identified as “Fire Service” and 19 were identified as “Law Enforcement.” There were also 61 individuals injured who were identified as a “Suspect.”

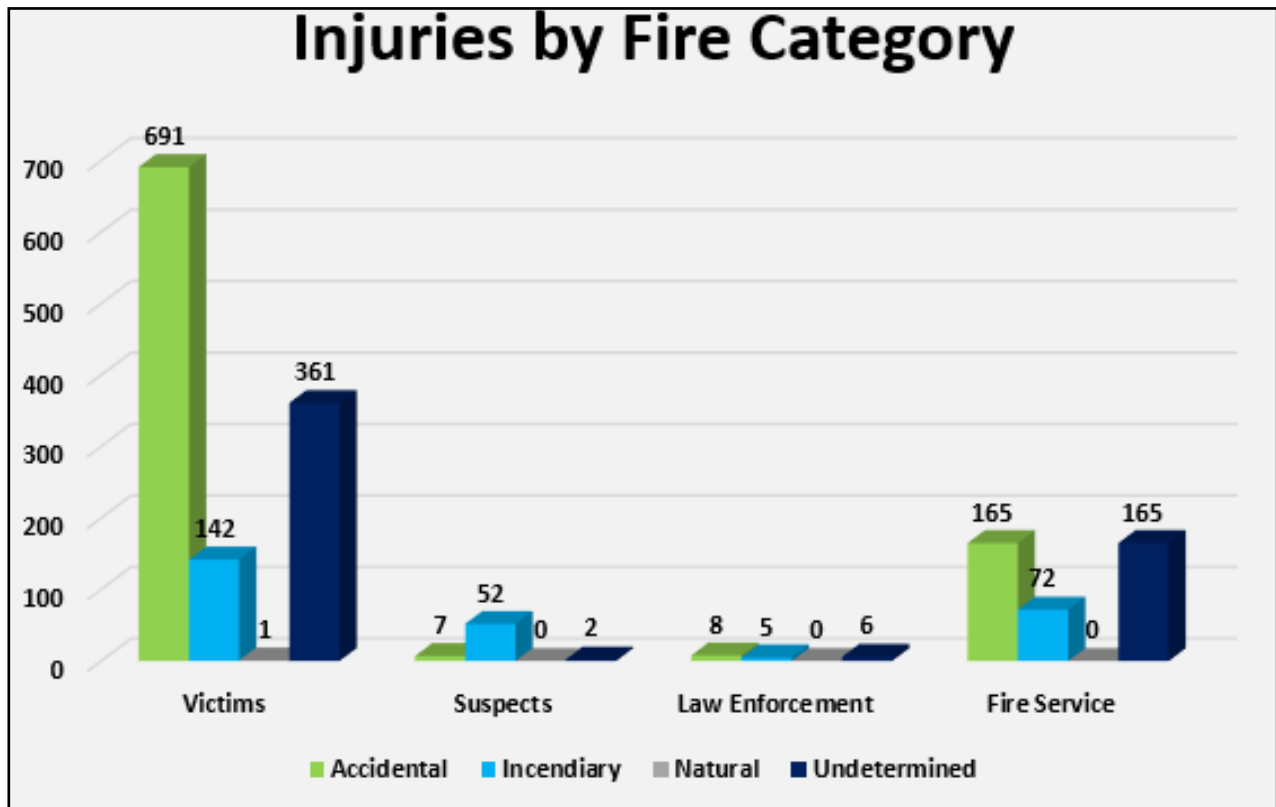


Figure 3. Injuries by Fire Category

FIRE DAMAGES – 2015



Damage Amount (\$) for Fire Types

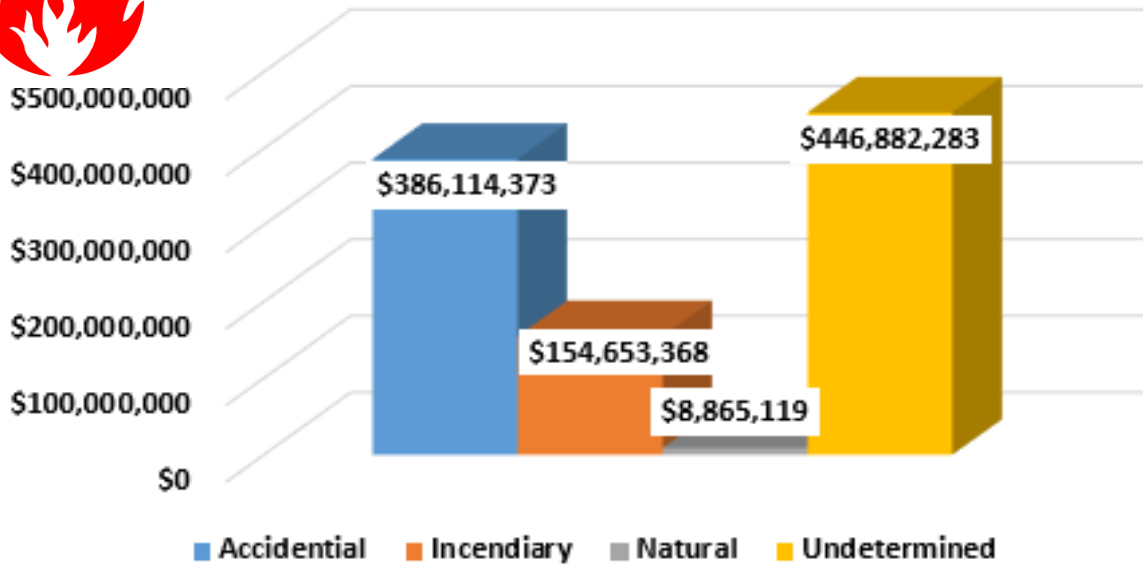


Figure 4. Injuries by Fire Category

Damages associated with the 21,605 fire incidents reported in BATS totaled more than \$996,515,143 for calendar year (CY) 2015. Fires listed as “Undetermined” led the fire type category with \$446,882,283 in damages, while “Residential” properties was the leading category of property types associated with Incendiary (Arson) fires, with damages at \$75,332,287.

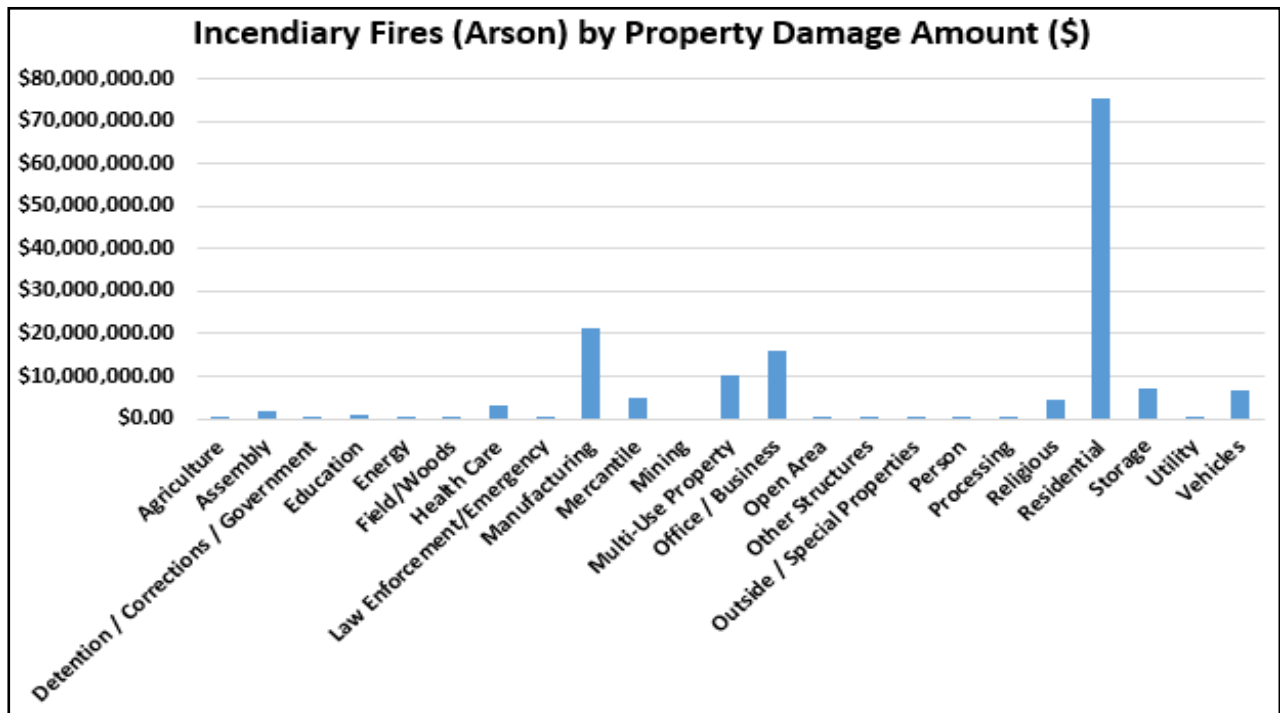


Figure 4. Injuries by Fire Category

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INCENDIARY FIRE SUBTYPES – 2015

Of the 7,065* Incendiary (Arson) fire-related incidents reflected in BATS, there were 1,512 Incendiary fires listed as involving an “Accelerant,” along with 3,885 fires involving “Available Combustibles,” 424 fires involving an “Incendiary Device” and 1,227 fires listed as “Pending Laboratory Analysis.” There were also 17 Incendiary fires listed as “Unknown.”

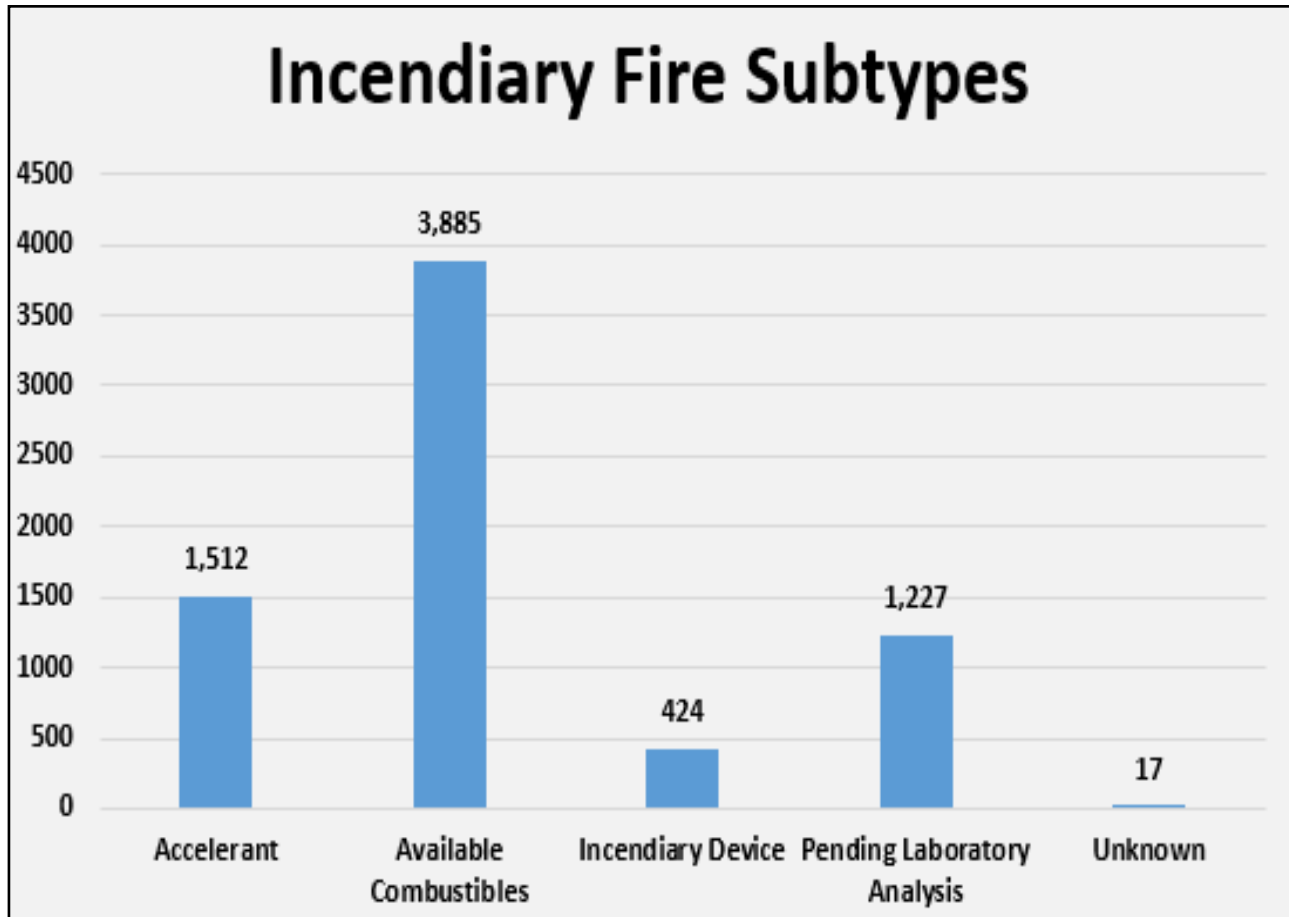


Figure 5. Incendiary Fire Subtypes

* The number of incidents listed above only accounts for the number of fire/arson incidents reported in BATS, and not the total number of fire/arson related incidents reported in the United States during calendar year 2015.



INCENDIARY FIRES (STATE) – 2015

A review of the 7,065* fires listed in BATS as “Incendiary or Arson” by location (State) revealed the highest number of incidents were reported in Florida (859), followed by Texas (805) and then California (689). These three States accounted for more than 33 percent of the total “Incendiary” fires reported in BATS during calendar year 2015.

Incendiary Fires by State

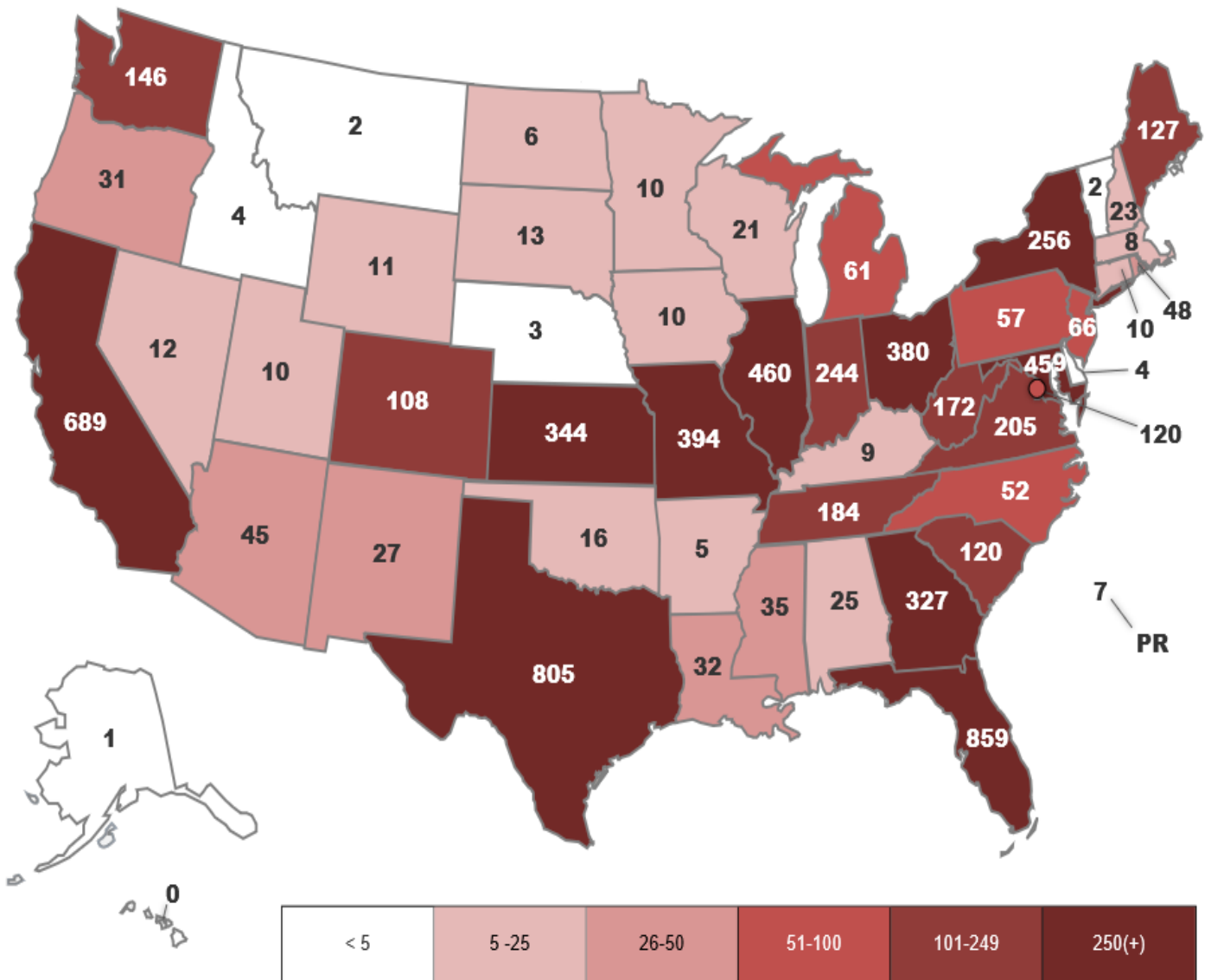


Figure 6. Incendiary Fires by State

* The number of incidents listed above only accounts for the number of fire/arson incidents reported in BATS, and not the total number of fire/arson related incidents reported in the United States during calendar year 2015.

INCENDIARY FIRES (FEMA REGIONS) – 2015

A breakdown of the 7,065* fires listed in BATS as “Incendiary” by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Regions revealed the highest number of incidents occurred in the following three regions: Region IV (1,611), Region V (1,176) and Region III (1,017). These three regions accounted for more than 54 percent of the total “Incendiary” fires reported in BATS during calendar year 2015.

Incendiary Fires by FEMA Regions

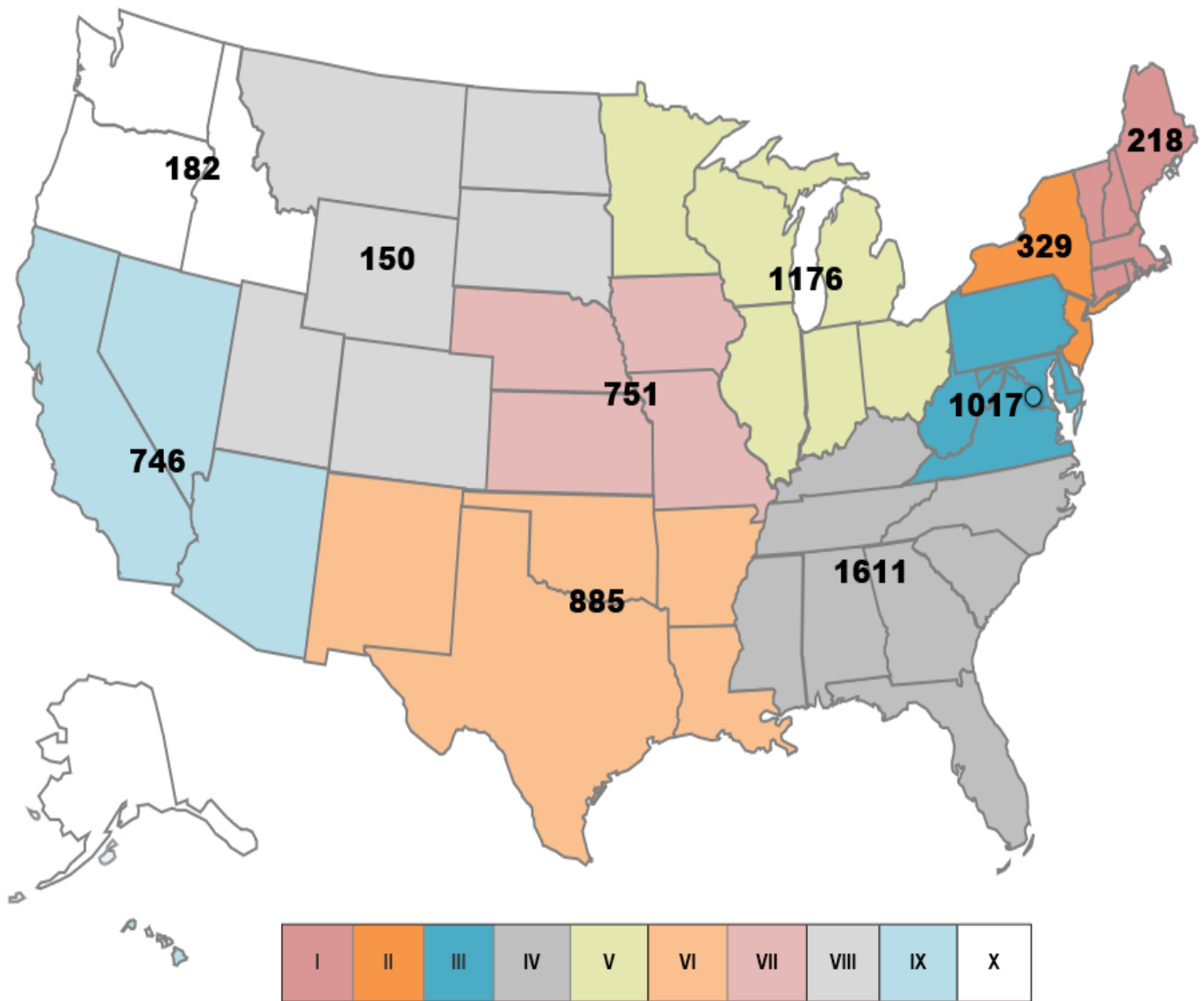


Figure 7. Incendiary Fires by FEMA Regions

* The number of incidents listed above only accounts for the number of fire/arson incidents reported in BATS, and not the total number of fire/arson related incidents reported in the United States during calendar year 2015.

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PROPERTY TYPES – 2015

There were 23 different “Property” types selected within BATS that involved “Incendiary” fires for 2015. Residential fires accounted for more than 48 percent of all “Incendiary” incidents reported for 2015, followed by vehicles (20%) and other structures (6%).

Incendiary Fires by Property Types

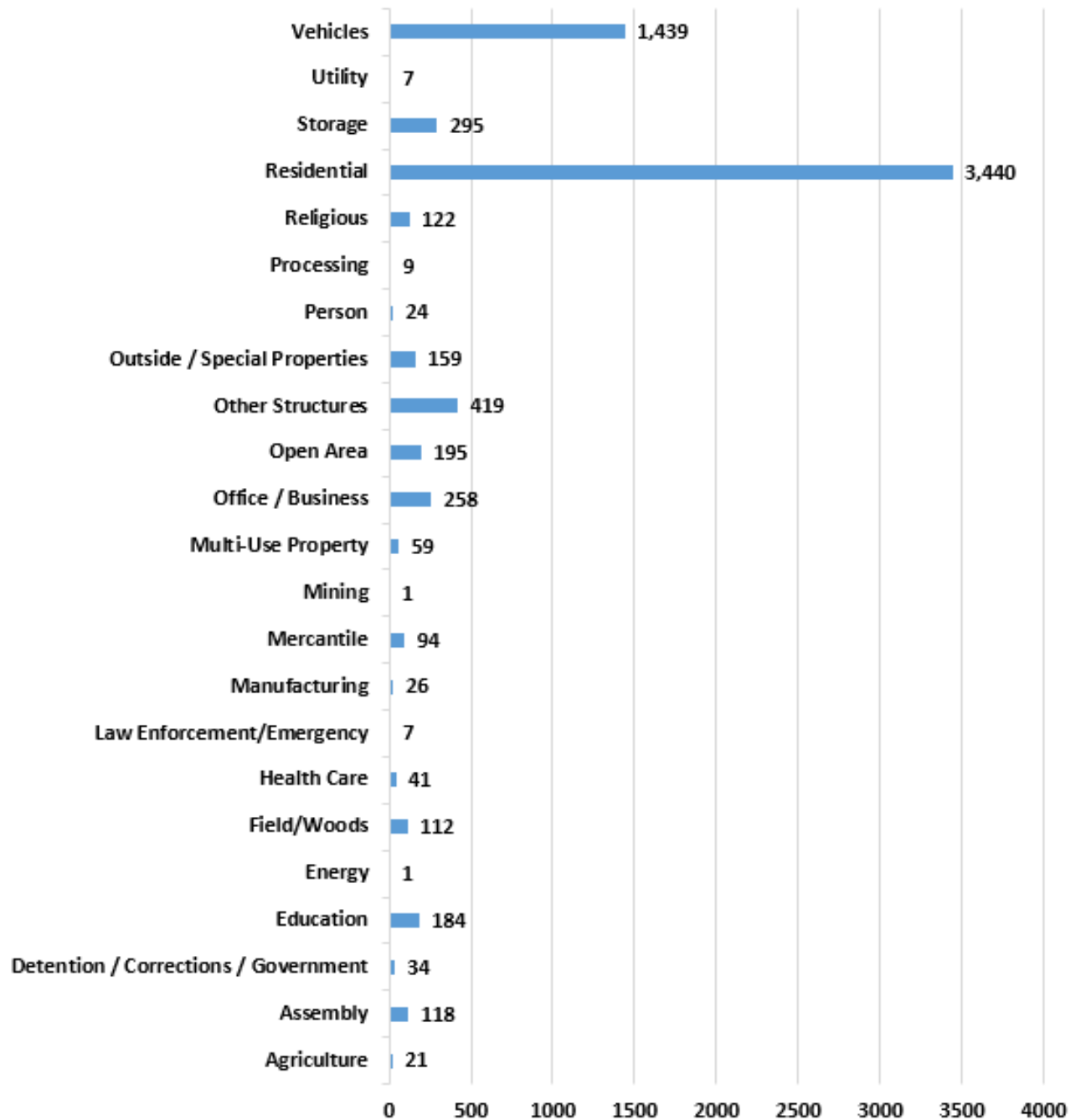


Figure 8. Incendiary Fires by Property Types

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TIME/DAY/MONTH OF OCCURRENCE – 2015

A review of the time of day that “Incendiary” fires occurred showed a noticeable difference between the hours of daylight and darkness. Incidents of “Incendiary” fires occurring during the predominant hours of darkness (21:01 until 03:00) identified 2,653 incidents and accounted for 37 percent of the incidents. The time period of 06:01 until 09:00 (daylight morning hours) had the lowest number of incidents at 609 or 9 percent of incendiary fires reported in BATS during 2015.

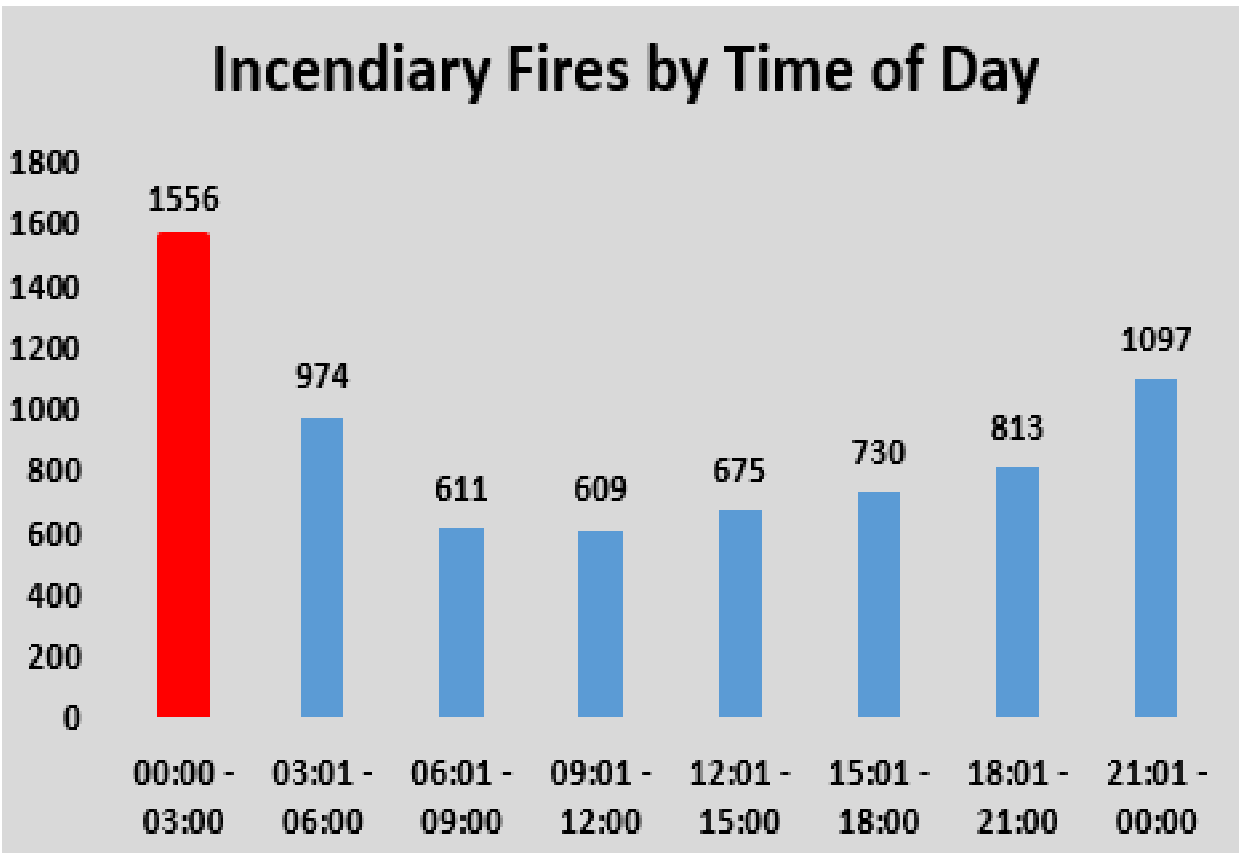


Figure 9. Incendiary Fires by Time of Day

A review of the day of the week that “Incendiary” fires occurred did not show any significant variation between the 7 days of the week. Incidents reported on Sunday were identified as the having the highest rate of occurrence, with 1,138 (or 15%) of all reported incidents. Friday was identified as having the lowest rate of occurrence of “Incendiary” fires, with 912 (or 13%) of all reported incidents.

A review of the month that “Incendiary” fires occurred did not show any significant variation between the 12 months of calendar year 2015. Incidents occurring in March were identified as the most frequent month of the year in which an “Incendiary” fire may occur, with 662 (or 9%) incidents. February was identified as having the lowest frequency of “Incendiary” fires occurring, with 479 (or 7%) incidents.

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INCENDIARY FIRES (VEHICLES) – 2015

During calendar year 2015, there were 1,408 incidents of incendiary fires associated with vehicles. Of those vehicle fires, 1,032 were associated with an “Automobile/Car,” 162 were associated with a “Truck (Pickup)” and 107 were associated with a “Sport Utility Vehicle (SUV).” There were also 13 fires associated with a “Boat” and 4 fires associated with “Police/Emergency” vehicles.

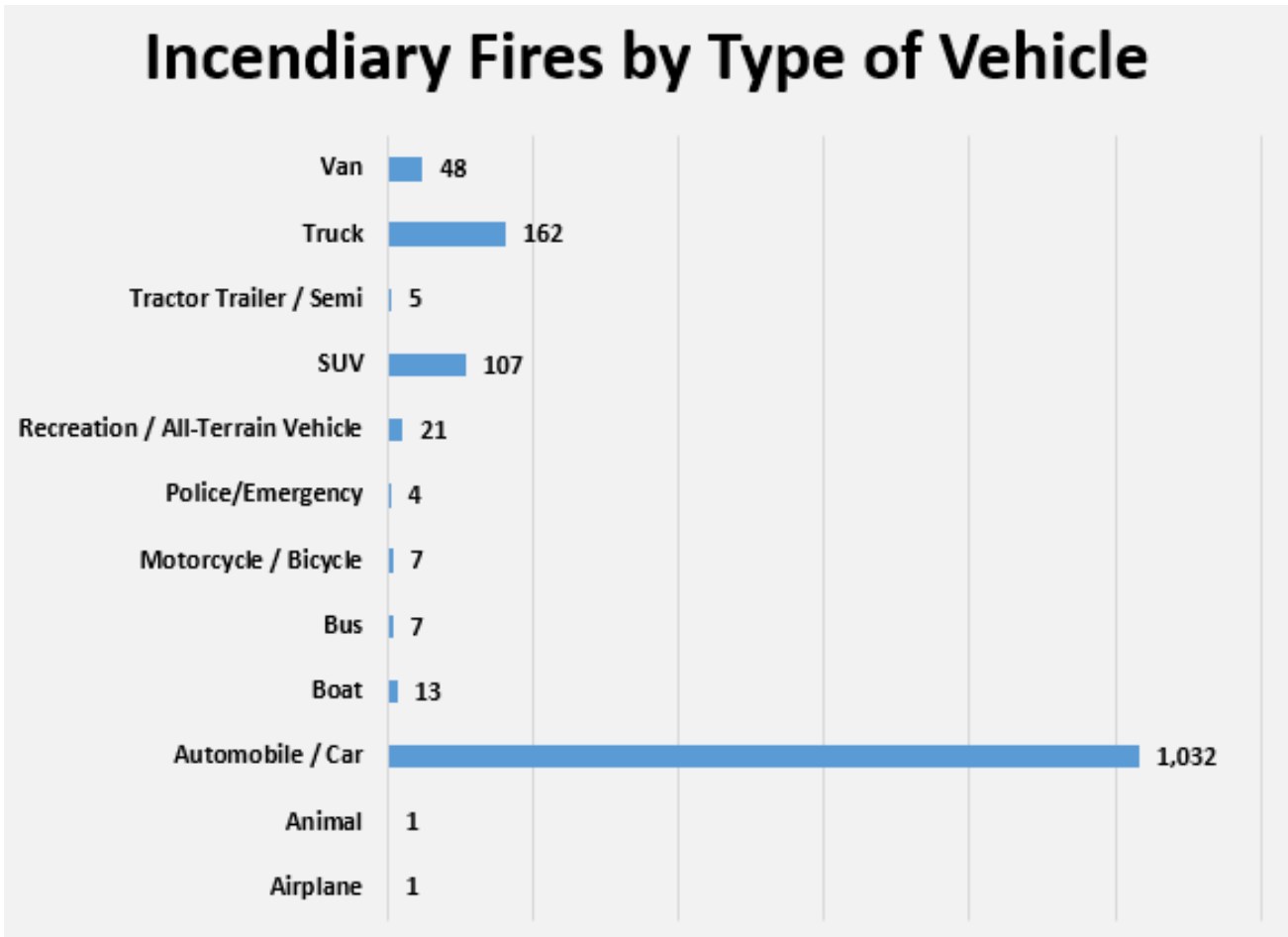
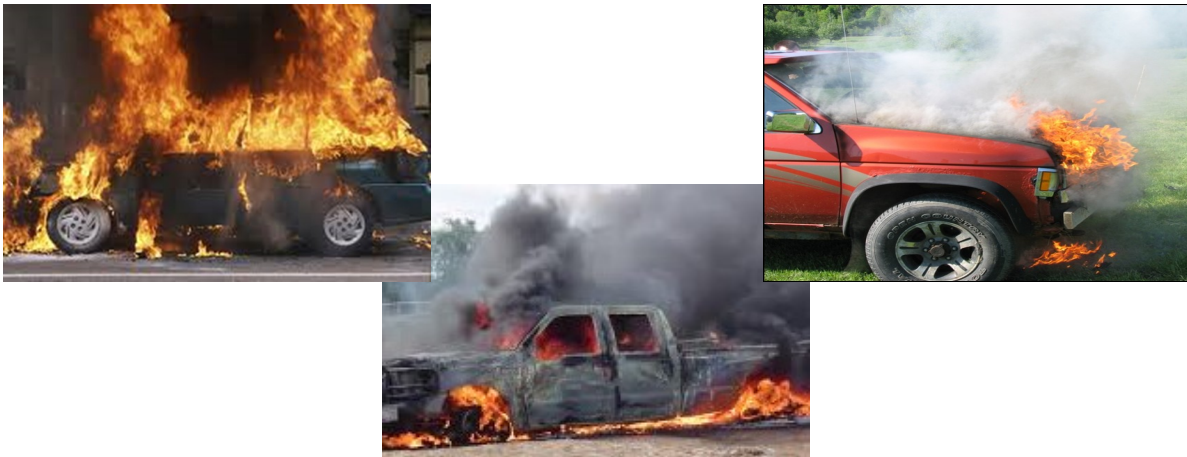


Figure 10. Incendiary Fires by Type of Vehicle



INCENDIARY FIRE DESCRIPTORS – 2015



The top three “Fire Descriptors” identified for the 7,065 Incendiary fires reported in 2015 were Ordinary Combustibles, Ignitable Liquid and Lighter.

10 Most Common Fire Descriptors for Incendiary Fires

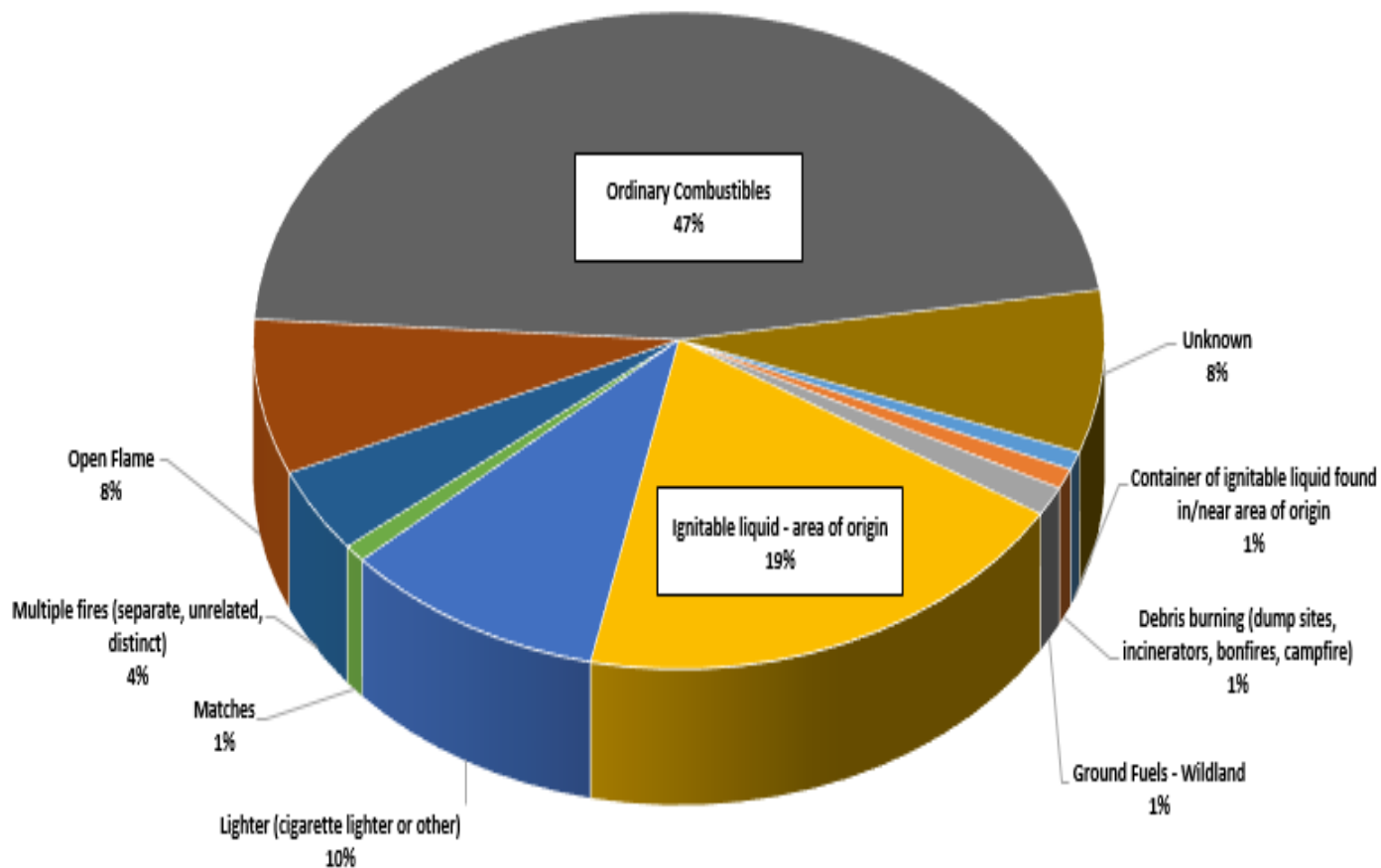


Figure 11. Common Fire Descriptors of Incendiary Fires

MOTIVES FOR INCENDIARY FIRES – 2015

There are currently nine types of motivation available for selection within BATS for an “Incendiary” fire. The top 3 types of known motivation selected for the 7,065 Incendiary fires reported in 2015 were “Revenge,” “Vandalism” and “Other.”

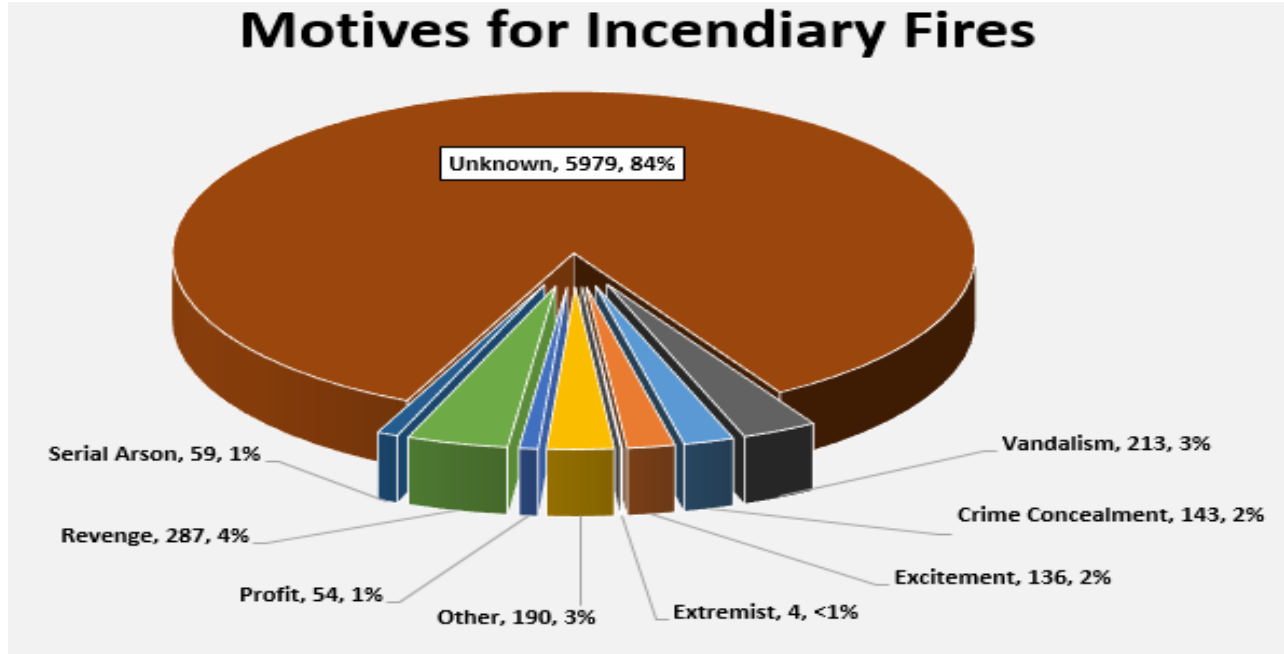


Figure 12. Motives for Incendiary Fires

There were eight types of motivation selected within BATS for an “Incendiary” fire involving a juvenile offender. The top three types of known motivation selected for the 526 Incendiary fires reported in 2015 were “Excitement,” “Vandalism” and “Other.”

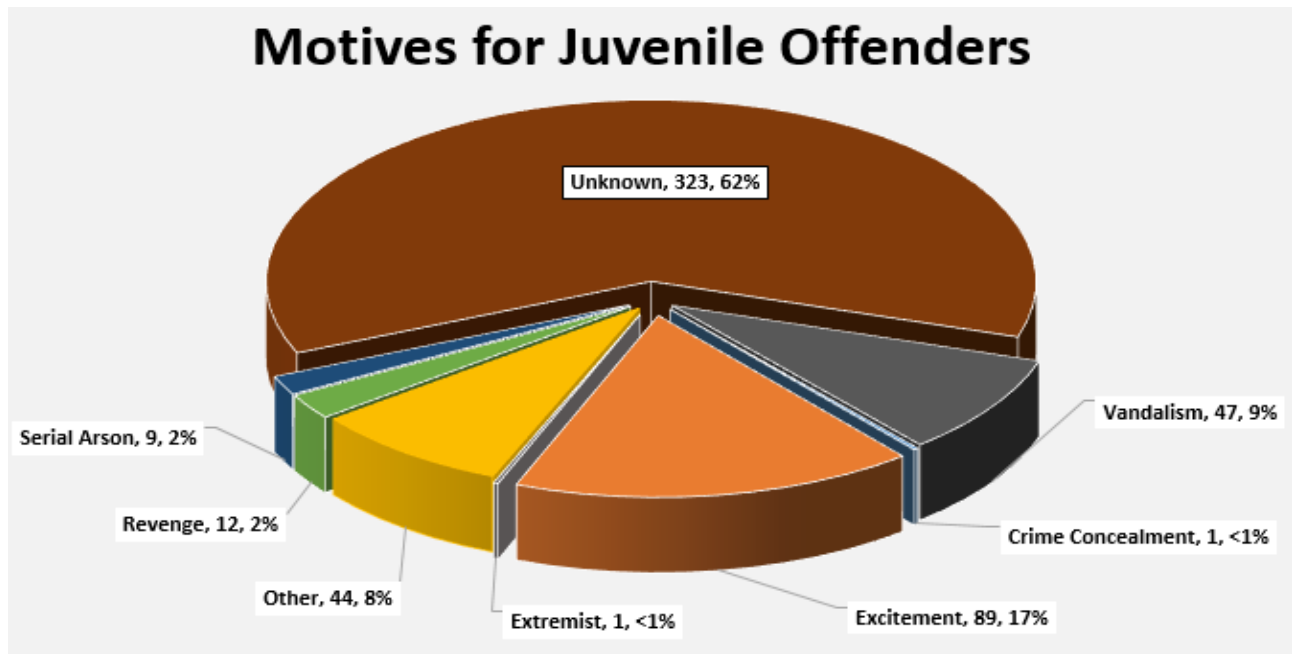


Figure 13. Motives for Juvenile Offenders

JUVENILE OFFENDER FIRES – 2015

There were 526 Incendiary fires recorded in BATS during 2015 where the suspect was listed as a “Juvenile Offender.” A review of the property type involved in those 526 incidents revealed the primary property target of juvenile offenders was “Residential” followed by “Education” and “Open Area.” These 3 property types accounted for 360 incidents or 68 percent of the property types targeted by juvenile offenders during 2015.



Property Types of Juvenile Offender Fires

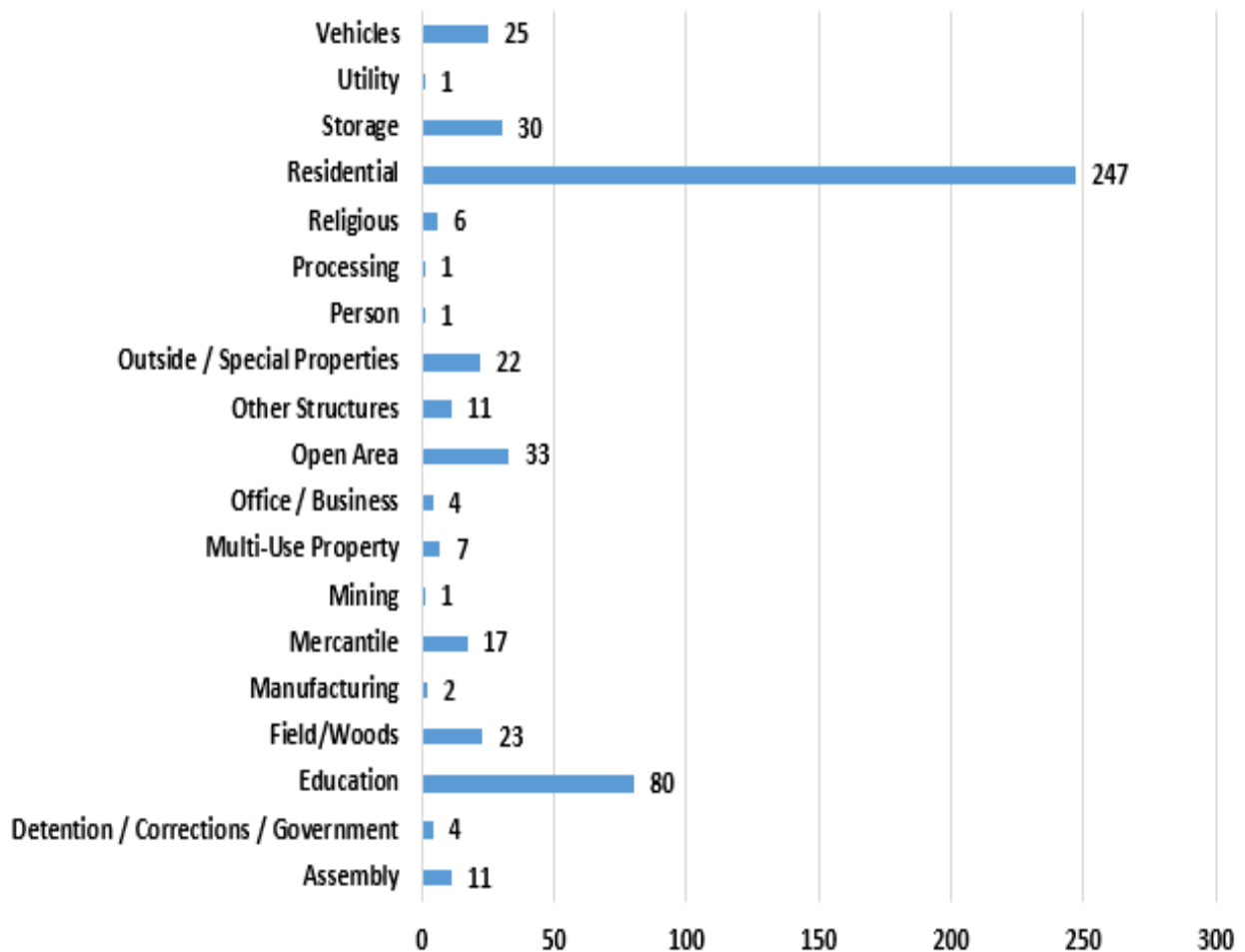
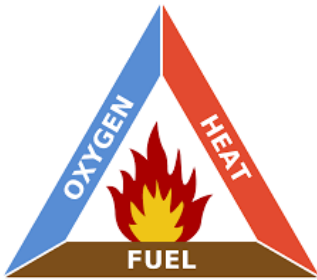


Figure 14. Property Types of Juvenile Offender Fires

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AREAS OF ORIGIN – 2015

The top 3 “Areas of Origin” identified for the 7,065 Incendiary fires reported in 2015 were “Function Areas,” “Other” and “Multiple Places of Origin/Placement.”*



The top 3 “Areas of Origin” identified for the 3,440 Residential Incendiary fires reported in 2015 were “Function Areas,” “Multiple Places of Origin/Placement” and “Structural Areas.”*



The top 3 “Areas of Origin” identified for the 187 incendiary fires related to Commercial use reported in 2015 were “Function Areas,” “Assembly or Sales Areas” and “Means of Egress.”*



Areas of Origin	Total
Assembly, Sales Areas (Groups of People)	252
Function Areas	897
Means of Egress	329
Multiple Places of Origin/Placement	517
Not Applicable	24
Other	524
Service Areas	16
Service, Equipment Areas	15
Storage Areas	372
Structural Areas	327
Technical Processing Area	5
Transportation, Vehicle Areas	816
Unknown *	2,971

Residential Fires – Area of Origin	Total
Assembly, Sales Areas (Groups of People)	186
Function Areas	703
Means of Egress	254
Multiple Places of Origin/Placement	384
Not Applicable	11
Other	174
Service Areas	3
Service, Equipment Areas	8
Storage Areas	155
Structural Areas	258
Transportation, Vehicle Areas	24
Unknown *	1,280

Commercial Fires – Area of Origin	Total
Assembly, Sales Areas (Groups of People)	19
Function Areas	25
Means of Egress	17
Multiple Places of Origin/Placement	11
Not Applicable	2
Other	12
Service Areas	3
Service, Equipment Areas	1
Storage Areas	15
Structural Areas	11
Transportation, Vehicle Areas	2
Unknown *	69

* The category of “Unknown” was not listed as a top area of origin for incendiary fires, as the category includes all incidents where “Unknown” was selected or left blank by the user.

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HOUSE OF WORSHIP FIRES – 2015

Between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2015, BATS captured a total of 261 fire-related incidents involving a house of worship (HOW). Of the 261 HOW fires, 122 were listed in BATS as “Incendiary,” 53 as “Accidental” and 2 as “Natural.” There were also 84 fires listed as “Undetermined,” which included the final determination/classification of the fire investigation, along with fires pending further investigative activities and/or laboratory examination.

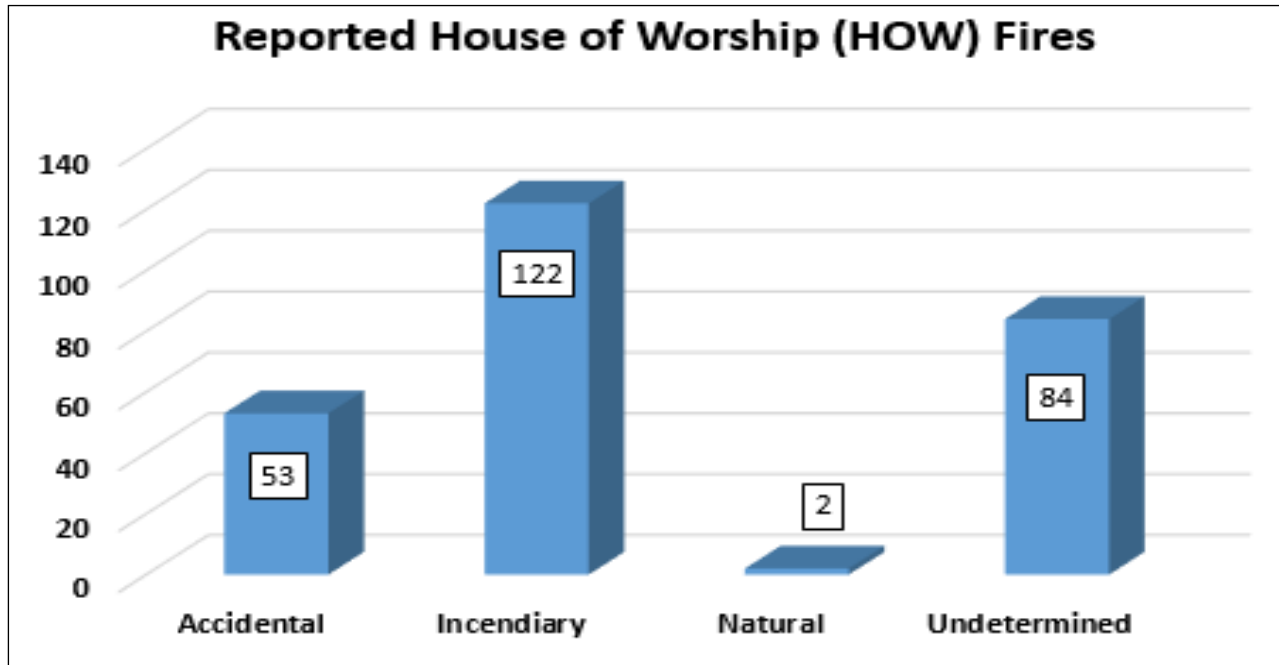


Figure 15. House of Worship Fires

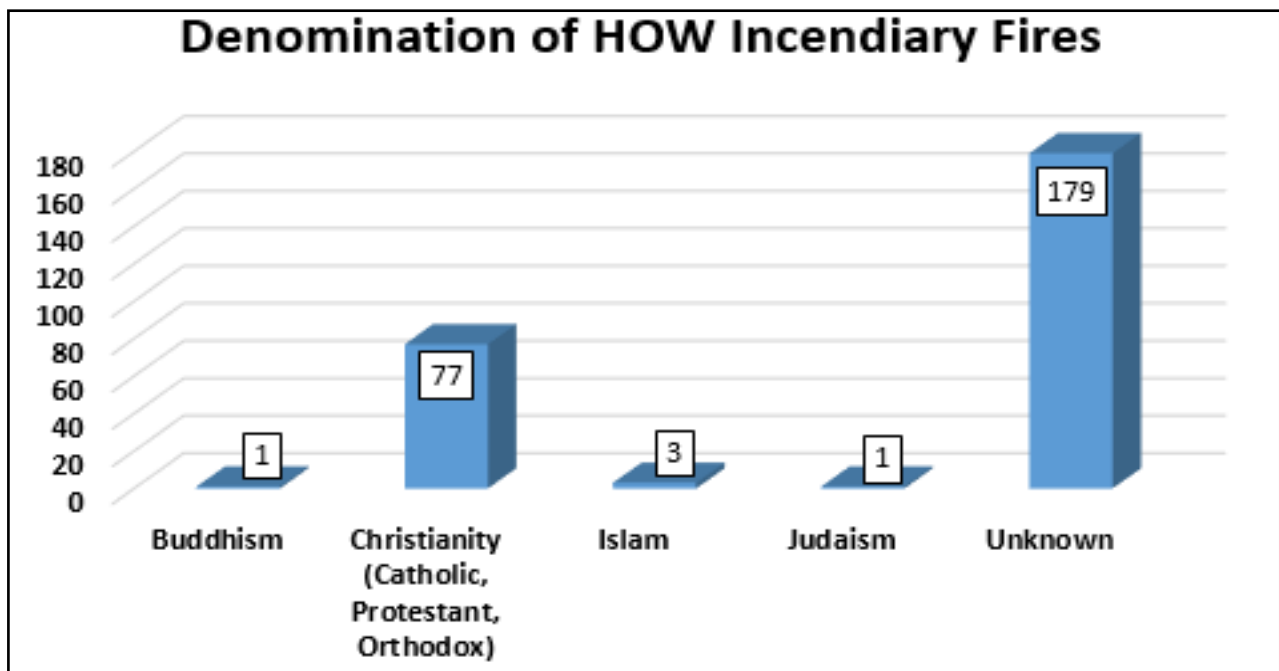


Figure 16. Denomination of HOW Fires

EDUCATION FIRES – 2015

There were 290 fires associated with an “Education” target between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2015. Of those 290 fires reported in BATS, 184 were listed as “Incendiary” and 72 were listed as “Accidental.” There were also 34 fires listed as “Undetermined,” which included the final determination/classification of the fire investigation, along with fires pending further investigative activities and/or laboratory examination. The target subtype category of “High School/Junior High/Middle School” accounted for 48 percent of all fire types and 57 percent of all Incendiary fires associated with an “Education” target.

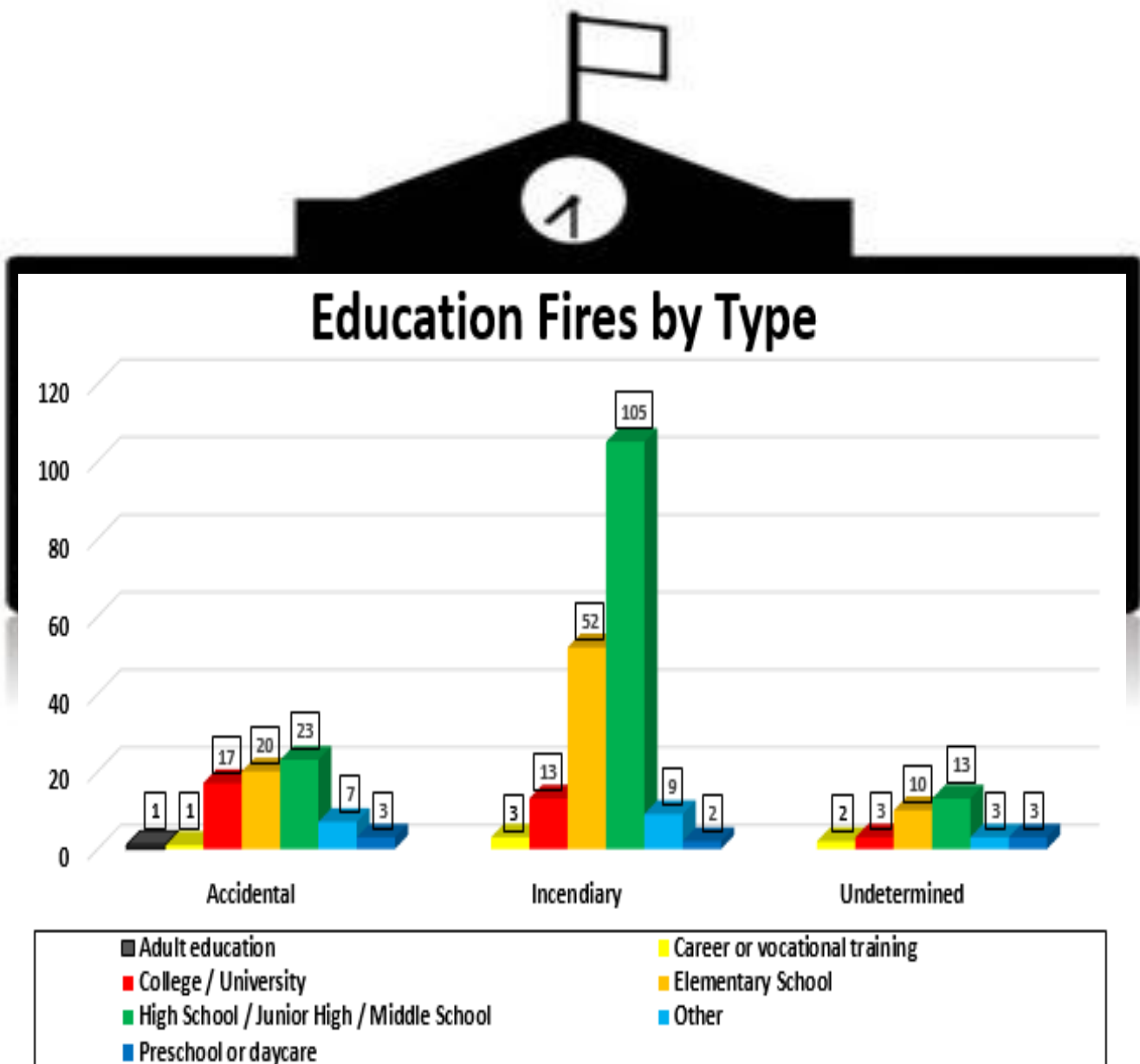


Figure 17. Education Fires

CONTACT INFORMATION

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