



Fires in Virginia Nursing Homes and Care Facilities Calendar Year 2005¹

General: For 2005, Virginia fire departments reported to the Virginia Department of Fire Programs seventy-five building fires in facilities that care for senior citizens. Forty localities were involved. Fifty-three incidents (71%) were responses to nursing homes²; twenty-two incidents (29%) were responses to residential board and care facilities³. One injury and \$100,135 loss were reported.

Building Fires: Forty-one incidents (55%) were fires in buildings confined to a non-combustible container (cooking container, chimney, trash can, etc.). Thirty-four incidents (45%) were fires in buildings that extended beyond a non-combustible container.

Building Height and Residential Living Units (RLU): Of the thirty-four fires that extended beyond a non-combustible container, four (12%) were in high-rise buildings⁴. The number of RLU was not reported in eighteen fires. Of the reported RLU, eight (50%) had less than 50 units, four (25%) had between 50-99 units, and four (25%) had 100 or more units.

Detectors: Detectors were present in twenty-nine (85%) buildings: Twenty-three of them operated; the fires were too small to activate in five incidents; in one incident the detector failed to operate. No detectors were present in two (6%) buildings. In three (9%) buildings, it was undetermined if detectors were present.

Automatic Extinguishment Systems (AES): AES were present in twenty-one (72%) buildings. No AES were present in six (21%) buildings. In two buildings (7%), it was undetermined if AES were present. In seventeen (71%) incidents, the fire was too small to activate the AES; one incident the AES operated and was effective; and in one incident, the detector did not operate. In the four fires in high-rise buildings, AES were present but the fire was too small to activate them.

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¹ Source: Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS); preliminary 2005 data as of May 5, 2006; 440 reporting fire departments; Article date May 30, 2006

² Nursing homes licensed by the state, providing 24-hour nursing care for four or more persons

³ Residential board and care, includes long-term care facilities, halfway houses, and assisted-care housing facilities

⁴ More than three stories above grade level