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Table of contents

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 1 | Introduction | 1 |
| 2 | Data | 2 |
| 2.1 | Overview | 2 |
| 2.2 | Toronto Fire Service Responsiveness | 2 |
| 2.3 | Fire Protection Equipments | 6 |
| A | Appendix | 8 |
| A.1 | Graph of areas of origin of fire incidents by number of occurrences | 8 |
| A.2 | Graph of ignition source of fire incidents by number of occurrences | 11 |
| A.3 | Attribution Statement | 14 |
| | Bibliography | 15 |

1 Introduction

The urban fire hazard is one of the most pressing issues in this context, especially in Canada where cities are dealing with such issues like climate, facilities or population density.As of July 1 2023, the population in urban area in Canada reached 33,812,133 (Statistics Canada 2024). Not only do fires in highly populated regions result in heavy losses in terms of property, but also, in the contest of people and the environment, the consequences are enormous. Also, urban fires are resources-dependent and require attention from city services and emergency services,

*Code and data are available at: <https://github.com/yulexun/toronto-fire>.

thus indicating the need for prevention, action and planning based on risk assessment. With such issues in mind, the knowledge of urban fire hazards in Canadian cities is needed for creating policies that address public safety and increase urban resilience.

In Canada, articles about fire incidents has a focus on wildfire. For instance, Goemans and Ballamingie (2012) discuss the fire mitigation plan during the 2003 wildfire at Kelowna, British Columbia, while Mamuji and Rozdilsky (2018) talk about the evacuation during the Fort McMurray wildfire in Alberta. The researches conducted about urban fire incidents are done in other parts of the world such as East Asia. Masood Rafi, Wasiuddin, and Hameed Siddiqui (2012) research the nature and level of this threat. They conclude that the lack of training in fire department, shortage of facilities and infrastructure the major issues in Pakistan. The research by Hari Murti et al. (2023) in Semarang City also emphasize the importance of community understanding and the installation of fire protection facilities. This article uses the data provided by opendatatoronto library (Gelfand 2022) in order to analyze fire occurrences in the city of Toronto, which is an important research gap in the study of fire incidents in America. This study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of fire patterns to improve fire prevention and emergency response strategies.

In this paper we visualize Toronto’s Fire Incidents data.

2 Data

2.1 Overview

The data used in this paper is obtained from the opendatatoronto library (Gelfand 2022). The dataset used is Fire Incidents. According to Gelfand (2022), it includes fire incidents as defined by the Ontario Fire Marshal (OFM) up to December 31, 2023. The data gathering and analysis is done in R (R Core Team 2024) with the following packages: opendatatoronto (Gelfand 2022), knitr (Xie 2014), tidyverse (Wickham et al. 2019), ggplot2 (Wickham 2016), dplyr (Wickham et al. 2023), and lubridate (Grolemund and Wickham 2011).

The cleaned data are divided into two groups in accordance to the two most important factors in urban fire incidents: responsiveness of fire department and fire protection equipments, as indicated by Hari Murti et al. (2023) and Masood Rafi, Wasiuddin, and Hameed Siddiqui (2012). The first group focuses on the fire services’ response time extent of fire and the loss of money, and the second group focuses on the loss of money, reason of fire incidents and the presence or operation of fire protection equipments. All other data features are ignored during the data cleaning process.

2.2 Toronto Fire Service Responsiveness

The first group of data shows the responsiveness of Toronto Fire Services. An example of this dataset is presented in Table 1. “Alarm Time” is the time when TFS are notified of the incident. “TFS Arrival time” is the timestamp of first arriving unit. The difference in minute is calculated at the data cleaning step as “TFS Response Time”. “Estimated Loss in Dollar” is the estimated loss measured in dollar. “Extent of Fire” is a categorical indicator from “1” to “11” according to the seriousness of the incident.

Table 1: Top rows of cleaned Toronto Fire Service response time and loss data

| Alarm Time | TFS Arrival Time | TFS Response Time | Estimated Loss in Dollar | Extent of Fire |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| 2018-02-25 15:48:34 | 2018-02-25 15:52:04 | 3.500000 | 5000 | 1 |
| 2018-02-26 18:11:59 | 2018-02-26 18:15:50 | 3.850000 | 500 | 1 |
| 2018-03-03 09:49:14 | 2018-03-03 09:53:09 | 3.916667 | 0 | 1 |
| 2018-03-03 17:54:38 | 2018-03-03 17:59:42 | 5.066667 | 15000 | 2 |
| 2018-03-03 18:34:35 | 2018-03-03 18:40:47 | 6.200000 | 0 | 1 |

Figure 1a shows the line plot of Toronto Fire Service’s response time over the period between 2013 to 2023. The response time fluctuated around a relatively consistent level, typically between 5 and 10 minutes, with occasional spikes where the response time increased significantly above the usual range, particularly around 2014 and 2019. Figure 1b shows the line plot of estimated dollar loss of the fire incidents. Most of the incidents resulted in relatively low dollar losses, but there are several spikes that represent incidents where the loss was significantly higher. Some of the most notable spikes occurred between 2015 and 2019, with losses exceeding 2 million dollars.

Table 2a indicates the summary statistic and Figure 2a graphs the boxplot of TFS’s response time. The value mainly range from 4.03 minutes to 5.7 minutes as shown in Table 2a, with a mean value of 4.911868 minutes. Notably, in Figure 2a, several outliers are indicated by dots above the upper whisker, suggesting occasional instances of significantly higher response times.

Table 2b indicates the summary statistic and Figure 2b depicts the distribution of financial losses in boxplot. In Table 2b, values span from 0 dollar to over 3000000 dollars, with median value of 3000 dollars, mean value of 24551.64 dollars and standard deviation of 93520.08 dollars,

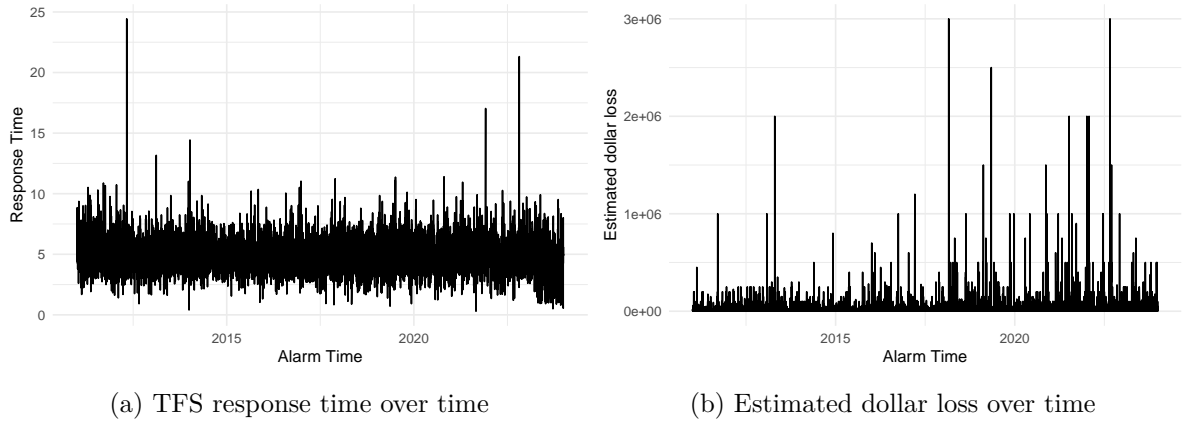


Figure 1: TFS response time and estimated dollar loss over time

indicating a skewed distribution. Figure 2b reveals numerous outliers above the upper whisker, highlighting instances of exceptionally high financial losses.

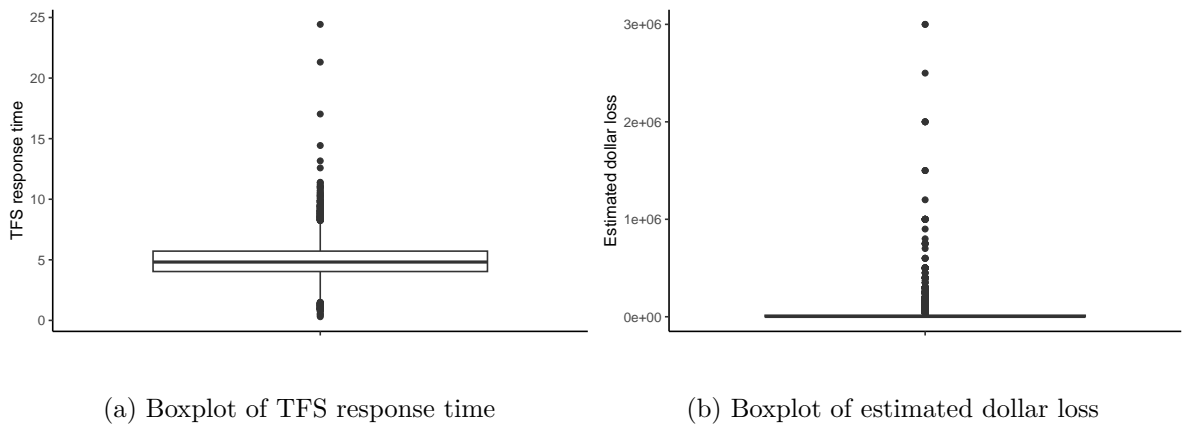


Figure 2: Boxplot of TFS response time data and estimated dollar loss

Figure 3 illustrates that most of the observed fires are relatively small in size. The x-axis depicts the extent of the fire, while the y-axis shows the frequency of observations. A notably tall bar at the start signifies a high occurrence of smaller fires. As fire size increases along the x-axis, the number of observations drops sharply, indicating that larger fires are far less frequent.

Figure 4 shows a line of best fit, which indicates a weak correlation between TFS response time and estimated dollar loss. There is a wide range of TFS response times for lower dollar losses.

Table 2: Summary Statistic of TFS response time data and estimated dollar loss

(a) Summary of TFS response time

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------|-----------|
| Min. | 0.300000 |
| 1st Qu. | 4.033333 |
| Median | 4.816667 |
| Mean | 4.911166 |
| 3rd Qu. | 5.716667 |
| Max. | 24.433333 |
| SD | 1.399413 |

(b) Summary of estimated dollar loss

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------|------------|
| Min. | 0.00 |
| 1st Qu. | 500.00 |
| Median | 3000.00 |
| Mean | 26584.26 |
| 3rd Qu. | 15000.00 |
| Max. | 3000000.00 |
| SD | 104422.21 |

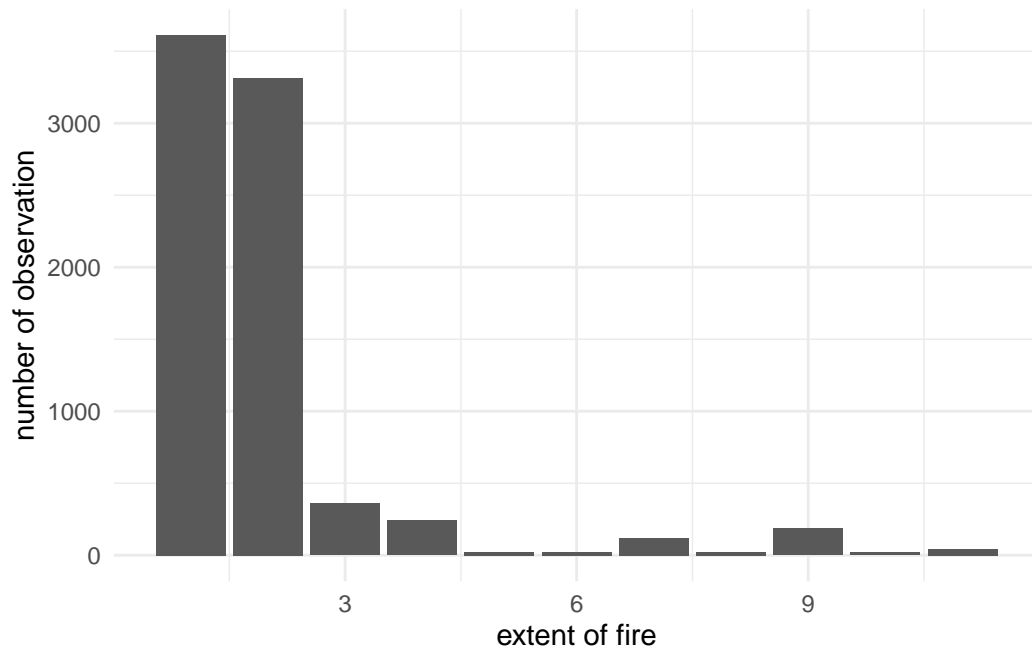


Figure 3: Distribution of extent of fire

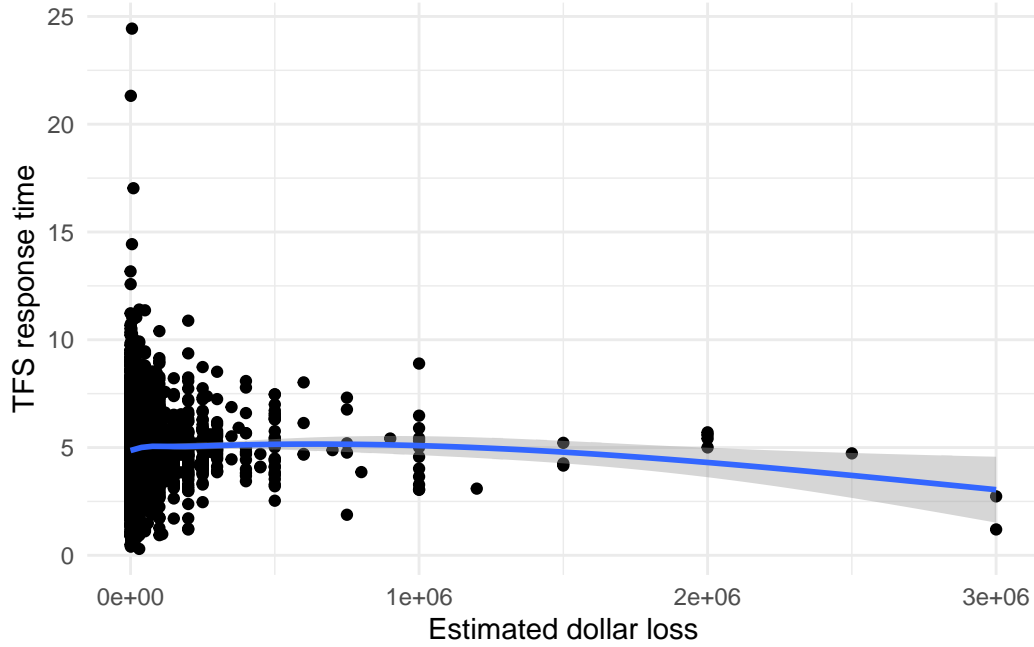


Figure 4: Line of best fit between TFS response time and dollar loss

2.3 Fire Protection Equipments

The second group of data shows the money loss, cause of fire and the presence of fire prevention equipments. Table 3 shows the first five rows of the second group of data. “Estimated Loss in Dollar” is the estimated loss measured in dollar. “Area of origin” indicates the area fire originate. “Ignition Source” shows the object causing fire. “Fire Alarm Status”, “Smoke Alarm Status” and “Sprinkler System Status” indicates the presence and operation of fire protection equipments. In the second group of data, ‘PO’ = System present, ‘N’ = System not present, and ‘P’ = System present but not operated.

Table 3: Top rows of cleaned data showing Area of Origin, Ignition source and Fire, Smoke, Sprinkler System Presence.

| Estimated Loss in Dollar | Area of Origin | Ignition Source | Fire Alarm Status | Smoke Alarm Status | Sprinkler System Status |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 5000 | 28 | 41 | P | PO | P |
| 500 | 24 | 11 | P | PO | N |
| 0 | 24 | 11 | N | PO | P |
| 15000 | 25 | 24 | N | N | N |
| 0 | 24 | 11 | P | PO | P |

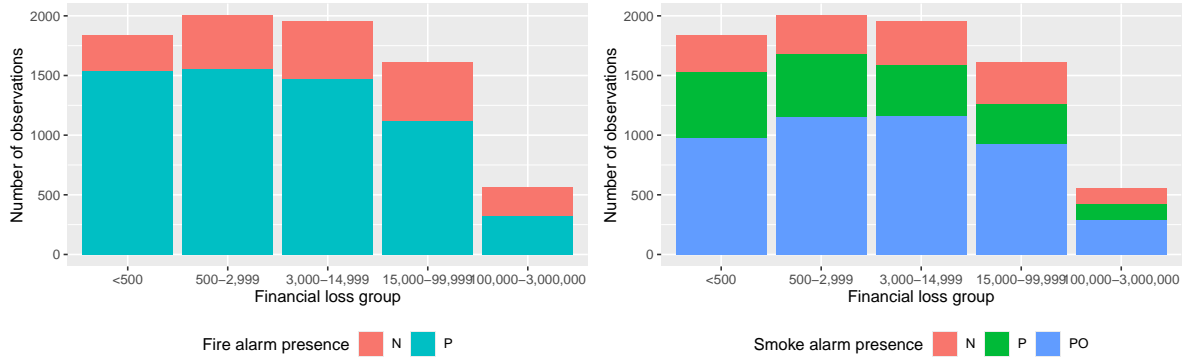
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| Estimated Loss in Dollar | Area of Origin | Ignition Source | Fire Alarm Status | Smoke Alarm Status | Sprinkler System Status |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|

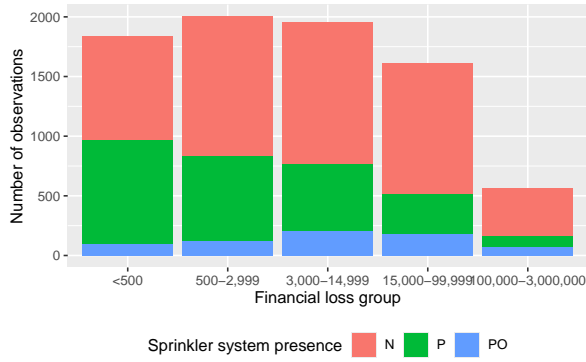
Figure 6 in [Appendix A.1](#) illustrates the distribution of the fire incidents’ area of origin. It consists 71 unique categories. The most common area of origin is category 24, which is cooking area or kitchen. Other common areas include category 64: Porch or Balcony, 22: Sleeping Area or Bedroom, 21: Living Area, and 27: Laundry Area. However, fires in these locations occur significantly less often compared to those in kitchens.

Figure 7 in [Appendix A.2](#) shows the distribution of ignition source in fire incidents. It contains 73 unique categories. The most common ignition source is 11: Stove, Range-top burner and 71: Smoker’s Articles. Other common ignition sources include 55: Candle, 43: Clothes Dryer, and 12: Oven.

Figure 5 shows the distribution of financial loss in group and the presence of fire prevention system. In Figure 5a, the graph shows that incidents with no fire alarm system (red bars) is less than incidents with fire alarm system (blue bars). Among the incidents with higher financial loss, there are more cases without fire alarm system. In Figure 5b, Most of the incidents happen with the smoke alarm present. Among the incidents with lower financial loss, more smoke alarms are present but not operated compared to higher financial loss cases. In Figure 5c, we can tell that a large proportion of incidents does not have a sprinkler system installed. Among those incidents with sprinkler system present, most of them are not operated.



(a) Distribution of financial loss group, and fire alarm presence (b) Distribution of financial loss group, and smoke alarm presence



(c) Distribution of financial loss group, and sprinkler system presence

Figure 5: Distribution of financial loss group, and fire prevention system presence

A Appendix

A.1 Graph of areas of origin of fire incidents by number of occurrences

Index of 'Area of Origin':

- 11 - Lobby, Entranceway
- 12 - Hallway, Corridor
- 13 - Stairway, Escalator
- 18 - Covered Court, Atrium, mall concourse
- 19 - Other Means of Egress
- 21 - Living Area (e.g. living, TV, recreation, etc)
- 22 - Sleeping Area or Bedroom (inc. patients room, dormitory, etc)
- 23 - Dining or Beverage Area (inc mess, canteen, lunchroom, cafeteria
- 24 - Cooking Area or Kitchen
- 25 - Washroom or Bathroom (toilet, restroom/locker room)
- 26 - Sauna
- 27 - Laundry Area
- 28 - Office
- 29 - Electronic Equipment
- 30 - Sales, Showroom Area
- 31 - Process Manufacturing (inc manf, prod assembly, repair)
- 32 - Assembly Area (inc school room, spectator area, church, etc)
- 33 - Laboratory
- 34 - Operating Room, Treatment or Examination Area
- 35 - Performance Area (inc stage, rink, boxing ring, gym floor, altar
- 36 - Backstage, dressing room
- 39 - Other Functional Area
- 41 - Closet (eg. clothes, broom, linen closet, etc.)
- 42 - Garage
- 43 - Locker (apartment storage)
- 44 - Trash, Rubbish Storage (inc garbage chute room, garbage/industri
- 45 - Supply Storage Room (inc maintenance/office/document storage, et
- 46 - Product Storage (inc products or materials awaiting manuf, assembly)
- 47 - Shipping/Receiving/Loading Platform
- 48 - Records storage area (inc vaults)
- 49 - Other Storage Area
- 50 - Basement/cellar (not partitioned)
- 51 - Elevator (includes shaft)
- 52 - HVAC Equipment Room (furnace room, water heater closet, boiler)
- 53 - Chimney/Flue Pipe
- 54 - Incinerator Room

- 55 - Mechanical/Electrical Services Room
- 56 - Conveyor Shaft or Chute (inc dumbwaiter, laundry chute, garbage
- 57 - Ducting - Heating, Air Conditioning
- 58 - Ducting - Exhaust (inc cooking, fumes, etc.)
- 59 - Utility Shaft (eg. electrical wiring/phone, etc.)
- 60 - Other Building Services/Support Facilities
- 61 - Exterior Wall
- 62 - Roof
- 63 - Awning or Canopy
- 64 - Porch or Balcony
- 65 - Crawl Space (includes sub-structure)
- 66 - Concealed Ceiling Area
- 67 - Concealed Floor Area
- 68 - Concealed Wall Area
- 69 - Attic Area
- 70 - Other Structural Area
- 71 - Open Area (inc lawn, field, farmyard, park, playing field, pier,
- 72 - Court, Patio, Terrace
- 73 - Parking Area, Parking Lot
- 74 - Storage Area (outside)
- 75 - Trash, rubbish area (outside)
- 78 - Attached Deck
- 79 - Other Outside Area
- 81 - Engine Area
- 82 - Running Gear (inc wheels and braking systems, transmission syste
- 83 - Electrical Systems
- 84 - Fuel Systems (eg. fuel tank, etc.)
- 85 - Operator/Control Area
- 86 - Passenger Area
- 87 - Trunk/Cargo Area
- 89 - Other Vehicle Area
- 91 - Multiple Areas of Origin
- 92 - Residential/Business: Restaurant area
- 93 - Residential/Business: Other busines area

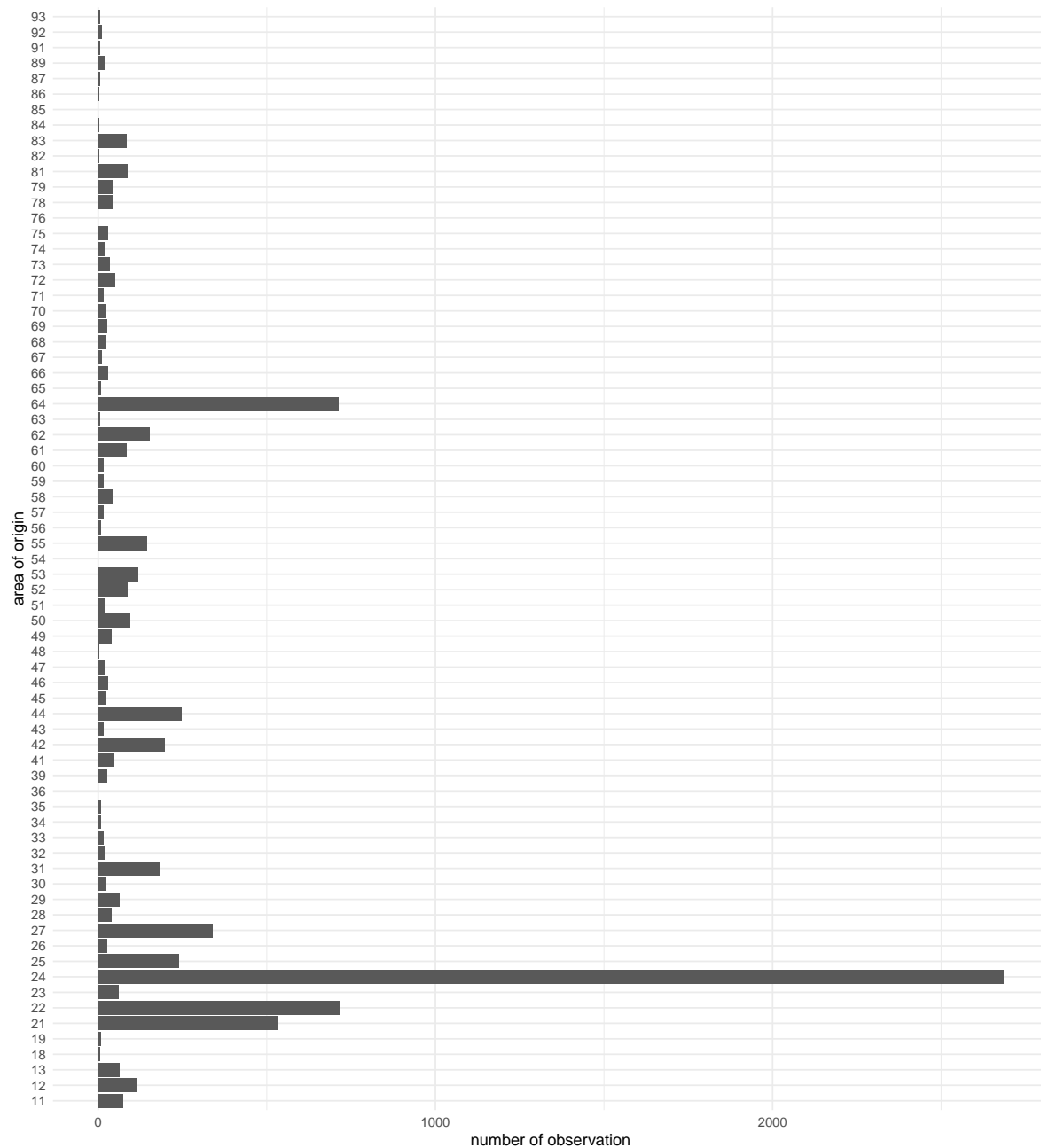


Figure 6: Areas of origin of fire incidents by number of occurrences

A.2 Graph of ignition source of fire incidents by number of occurrences

Index of 'Ignition Source':

- 100 - Outdoor fireplace/heater
- 101 - Exposure, source structure detached
- 102 - Exposure, source structure semi-detached or attached
- 103 - Exposure, source outside storage container, tank
- 104 - Exposure, source open fire (inc campfire, rubbish fire)
- 106 - Exposure, source grass, shrubs, trees
- 107 - Exposure, source vehicle (outside structure)
- 108 - Exposure, source other
- 11 - Stove, Range-top burner
- 12 - Oven
- 13 - Microwave
- 14 - Open Fired Barbeque - Fixed or Portable
- 15 - Range Hood
- 16 - Deep Fat Fryer
- 17 - Wood burning stove
- 19 - Other Cooking Items (eg Toaster, Kettle, elec frying pan)
- 20 - Service/Utility Lines (includes power/hydro transmission lines)
- 21 - Transformer
- 22 - Meter
- 23 - Distribution Equipment (includes panel boards, fuses, circuit br
- 24 - Circuit Wiring - Copper
- 25 - Circuit Wiring - Aluminum
- 26 - Terminations-Copper (incl receptacles, switches, lights)
- 27 - Terminations-Aluminum (incl receptables, switches, lights)
- 28 - Cord, Cable for Appliance, Electrical Articles
- 29 - Extension Cord, Temporary Wiring
- 30 - Other Electrical Distribution Item
- 31 - Central Heating/Cooling Unit
- 32 - Water Heater
- 33 - Space Heater - Fixed
- 34 - Space Heater - Portable
- 35 - Fireplace - Factory Built
- 36 - Fireplace - Masonry
- 37 - Fireplace Insert
- 38 - Chimney - Factory Built
- 39 - Chimney - Masonry
- 40 - Flue Pipe
- 41 - Other Heating Equipment

- 42 - Television, Radio, Stereo, Tape Recorder, etc.
- 43 - Clothes Dryer
- 44 - Iron, Pressing Machine
- 45 - Washing Machine
- 46 - Electric Blanket, Heating Pad
- 47 - Refrigerator, Freezer (includes vending machine)
- 48 - Air Conditioner - Window or Room Unit
- 49 - Other Appliances
- 51 - Incandescent Lamp - Light Bulb, Spotlight
- 52 - Florescent Lamp (includes ballast)
- 53 - Christmas Lights, Decorative Lighting
- 54 - Lamp (eg. coal, oil, naphtha, etc.)
- 55 - Candle
- 56 - Halogen Lamp or light
- 59 - Other Lighting Equipment
- 61 - Incinerator
- 62 - Heat Treatment Equipment (eg. furnace, oven, kiln, quench tanks,
- 63 - Painting Equipment
- 64 - Chemical Processing Equipment (eg. reactors, distilling units, e
- 69 - Other Processing Equipment
- 71 - Smoker's Articles (eg. cigarettes, cigars, pipes already ignited
- 72 - Cutting/Welding Equipment
- 73 - Blow Torch, Bunsen Burner
- 74 - Salamander
- 75 - Matches (open flame)
- 76 - Lighters (open flame)
- 77 - Matches or Lighters (unable to distinguish)
- 79 - Other Open Flame Tools/Smokers' Articles
- 80 - Portable generator
- 81 - Vehicle - Electrical
- 82 - Vehicle - Mechanical
- 83 - Other Electrical
- 84 - Other Mechanical
- 85 - Vehicle collision
- 88 - Multiple Ignition Source or Igniting Equipment (suspected arson)
- 91 - Fireworks
- 92 - Open Fire (eg. camp fire, rubbish fire, etc.)
- 93 - Hot Ashes, Embers, Spark
- 94 - Static Electricity (spark)
- 95 - Lightning
- 96 - Chemical Reaction (eg. spontaneous combustion, etc.)
- 97 - Rekindle

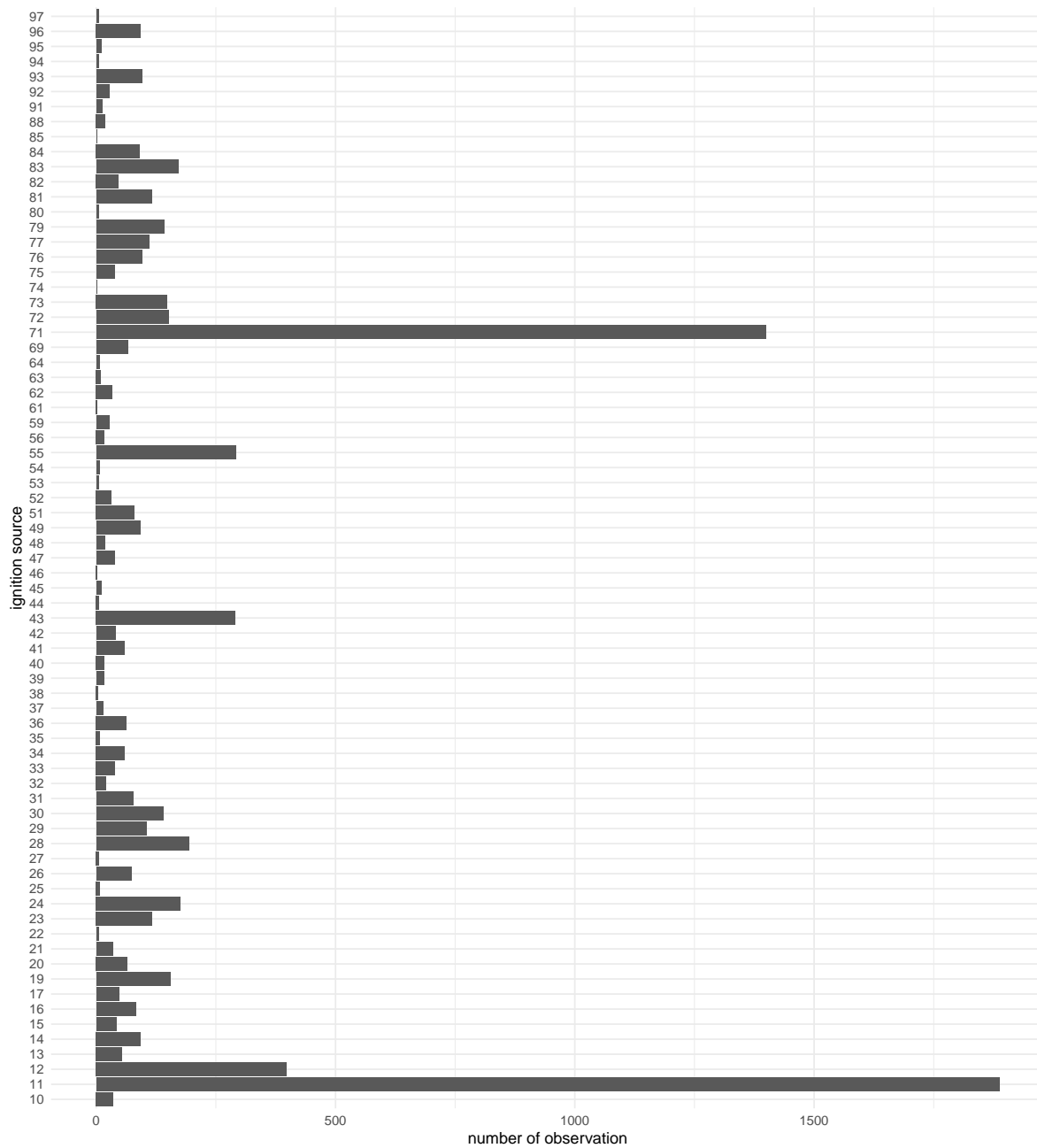


Figure 7: Ignition Source of fire incidents by number of occurrences

A.3 Attribution Statement

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