Misinformation About Fire Safety is Dangerous

Our Industry Wants You to Know the Facts

At the American Wood Council, we are committed to ensuring the safety of our homes and buildings and the first responders who protect us. Our staff provides regulators and fire services with the science-based research they need to develop effective building codes and safely respond to fires.

Contrary to misinformation generated by competitors, and as evidenced by the following example incidents of non-combustible fires from just the last three years, fire is a danger for all buildings and construction sites – regardless of building material. The data doesn’t lie: cooking and heating are the most common causes of home fires, regardless of structural material. Fires start in the contents and furnishings we bring into our homes, and occur in concrete, steel, masonry, and wood buildings alike. What is most important is building to code to ensure safe buildings for occupants and first responders.


### 2018

**New York City, New York**  
**Material**: Non-combustible  
One man died and six firefighters were injured in a 50th floor fire in Trump Tower. The residential floors of the building did not have sprinklers.

**Pompano Beach, Florida**  
**Material**: Non-combustible  
A resident died from smoke inhalation and 100 residents were displaced due to a fire in a 15-story non-combustible building. The building had no sprinkler system.

**Liverpool, England**  
**Material**: Concrete  
Approximately 1,300 vehicles were destroyed during a fire in a concrete multi-story car park. The Mayor of Liverpool told the BBC it was unlikely that the building could be saved.

**Ashburn, VA**  
**Material**: Concrete  
Fire in an under-construction building caused by a space heater did an ~$150,000 in damage.

### 2017

**New York City, NY**  
**Material**: Concrete  
A 6-alarm fire displaced 40 families over the holiday season. A NYPD officer and a tenant were injured.

**New York City, NY**  
**Material**: Concrete/Steel  
Fourteen people, including four firefighters, were injured in a four-story apartment fire.

**Bethesda, Maryland**  
**Material**: Non-combustible  
Six people and one firefighter were hospitalized after a three-alarm transformer fire at an apartment building. Over 500 apartments were evacuated, 1,500 residents were displaced and the fire caused $1 million worth of damage.

**Baltimore, Maryland**  
**Material**: Masonry Walls/Steel Framing  
A 94,000sf warehouse constructed with steel framing and masonry bearing walls was destroyed by a fire. Neighbors complained of breathing difficulties throughout the day-long firefighting operation.

**Upper Marlboro, Maryland**  
**Material**: Masonry/Steel  
Fire broke out on the roof of a building under construction, located on the grounds of the First Baptist Church of Glenarden. Cause is unknown.

**Dubai, United Arab Emirates**  
**Material**: Concrete/Aluminum Cladding  
One of the tallest residential buildings in the world, 79-stories, caught fire for the second time in about two years. Videos posted online showed flaming debris falling. Residents were moved to shelter while the building was closed for investigation.

**Honolulu, Hawaii**  
**Material**: Concrete/Steel  
A fire in a 36-story condominium complex killed 3 people. The building was constructed in 1971, before the city required sprinkler systems.

**Sanford, Maine**  
**Material**: Concrete/Brick  
Fire destroyed a former textile mill, including 2 5-story brick and concrete buildings and a 1-story connecting structure.

**London, United Kingdom**  
**Material**: Concrete/Aluminum Cladding  
Deadly fire in 24-story high-rise apartment building with 10 concrete columns, fitted with aluminum cladding during a 2016 refurbishment. Investigators believe an air gap was created by the cladding, acting like a chimney and allowing the fire to spread. There was no sprinkler system. This led to inspection and failure of over 90 UK buildings.

**Atlanta, Georgia**  
**Material**: Concrete/Steel  
Bridge collapse from fire severed a northbound highway which carries 250,000 vehicles/day. Southbound also closed for reconstruction.

**Las Vegas, Nevada**  
**Material**: Concrete  
Deadly fire in a 1-story concrete apartment building. There were no smoke alarms.

**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**  
**Material**: Concrete  
Deadly fire in 17-story high-rise catering to seniors. The building was not equipped with a sprinkler system; however smoke alarms were functional. Firefighters were called back to the scene when fire production was canceled for over a week.

**Newton, Kansas**  
**Material**: Concrete  
One fatality in a concrete high-rise fire.

### 2016

**Lockawanna, New York**  
**Material**: Steel  
Former Bethlehem Steel Factory burned and collapsed. Fire burned through 3 buildings, which were the size of 6 city blocks. No reported injuries, but nearby schools were evacuated and ash spread for miles in all directions. The cause was a hot light bulb falling on combustibles.

**Adelphi, Maryland**  
**Material**: Concrete/Steel  
Nearly 50 units were affected by fire in a 6-story, concrete apartment building. Several residents and firefighters sustained minor injuries, and 4 units were destroyed. 100 residents were displaced.

**New York City, New York**  
**Material**: Concrete  
Fire occurred at a hospital under renovation at the Langone Medical Center. The Fire Department said the cause was a spark from cutting metal.

**Dubai, United Arab Emirates**  
**Material**: Concrete/Aluminum Cladding  
A 63-story luxury hotel caught fire on New Year’s Eve, hours before the evening’s fireworks show. The building was evacuated and 16 people were treated for minor injuries. Fire alarms failed to activate. The building was fitted with aluminum cladding that had been outlawed for new buildings.

**Louisville, Kentucky**  
**Material**: Concrete/Steel Roof  
Outdated sprinklers and broken fire hydrants reportedly contributed to a fire that caused more than $50 million in damage to the General Electric Appliance Park. Employees were evacuated and production was canceled for over a week.

**Naples, Florida**  
**Material**: Concrete  
Deadly fire due to ‘highly flammable foam insulation’ according to the local fire chief. The building did not have sprinklers.

**Colville, Washington**  
**Material**: Concrete  
Fatal fire in a 2-story concrete block apartment fire.

**New York City, New York**  
**Material**: Concrete  
One fatality in a 14th floor fire in a concrete apartment building. One firefighter hospitalized for smoke inhalation.

**Newton, Kansas**  
**Material**: Concrete  
One fatality in a concrete high-rise fire in a low-income apartment building for seniors, many of whom had mobility issues. Two residents treated for smoke inhalation.

**Los Angeles, California**  
**Material**: Concrete  
Twelve buildings – including both businesses and homes – were either damaged or destroyed by a fire. One of the buildings contained furniture, which fueled the blaze. One firefighter was injured.

**Grand Island, Nebraska**  
**Material**: Concrete  
One fatality, one injury in a concrete public housing high-rise. The building did not have sprinklers.

**Los Angeles, California**  
**Material**: Concrete  
Deadly fire at 3-story concrete apartment building.