

# 2020 Unintentional Fire-Related Fatalities of Children Ages 0-18

**5th**

Leading cause of accidental fatal injury was due to exposure to smoke, fire, or flames in the U.S. and Michigan.

**216**

U.S. children died as a result of accidental exposure to smoke, fire, or flames.

**12**

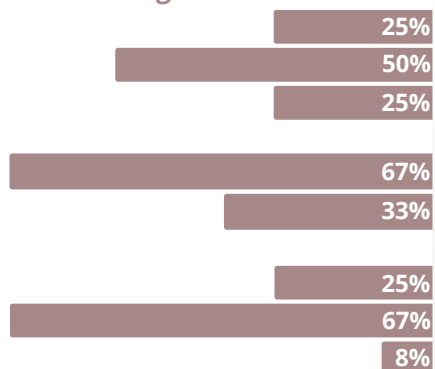
Michigan children died as a result of accidental fire/flame injuries.

**13**

The circumstances leading to 13 unintentional fire-related fatalities were reviewed by local Child Death Review (CDR) teams.

## Child's Demographic Information

### Michigan Fatalities in 2020



### Age

Under 5  
5 to 14  
15 to 18

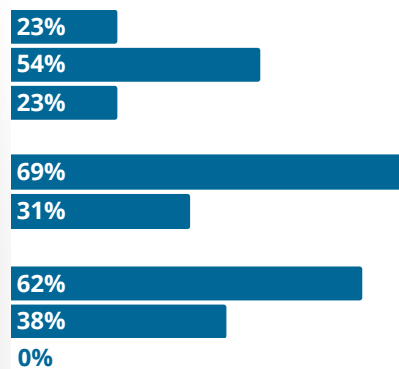
### Sex

Male  
Female

### Race

White  
Black  
Additional Groups

### Fatalities Reviewed in 2020



## Characteristics of Unintentional Fire-Related Fatalities Reviewed by Local CDR Teams

### Of the 13 Deaths Reviewed by Local CDR Teams

**85%**

of fires occurred in single homes.  
All of the children died due to fires that started in their own home.

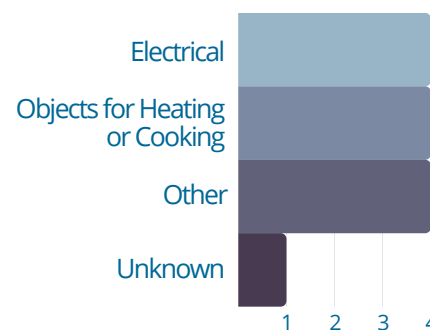
**85%**

of children had supervision at the time of the incident (or didn't need it).

**77%**

of children were known to have been found in a location other than where the fire started.

### Source of the Fire



## Barriers to Emergency Response and Safe Exit



Absence of properly functioning smoke alarms



Blocked or locked exterior door



Trapped above the first floor



Debris around the structure on fire delaying the fire department's response

# Child Death State Advisory Team Recommendations

The Michigan Child Death State Advisory Team (SAT) was established to identify and make recommendations on policy and statutory changes pertaining to child fatalities and to guide statewide prevention, education, and training efforts. The SAT reviews Michigan's child mortality data as well as local child death review team findings and recommendations to identify causes, risk factors, and trends in child deaths. The SAT offers the following recommendations to policymakers to prevent unintentional fire-related deaths:



Expand the proven-effective Sound Off program to more school systems around the state to teach young children about fire safety and aide in getting working smoke detectors into homes that lack them.



Explore opportunities for community-based prevention initiatives that partner with the State Fire Marshal to help distribute free smoke detectors.



Consider joining other states that have banned the sale of smoke detectors that rely on removable batteries.

## Opportunities for Prevention

# 2 min

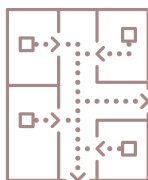
According to the [American Red Cross](#), people may have as little as two minutes to escape once a fire starts. The following strategies can save lives:



If a fire occurs in your home, "**GET OUT, STAY OUT, AND CALL FOR HELP.**" Go to your meeting space and never go back inside for anything or anyone.



Install, properly maintain, and regularly test smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms, and outside sleeping areas.



Work with all family members to create and regularly practice a fire escape plan that includes two ways to escape from each room in the home. Have a plan for young children and children with disabilities who may not be able to get outside by themselves.



Consider having one or more working fire extinguishers in the home and learning how to properly use them. Only adults should use fire extinguishers.



### Local Initiatives:

CDR teams have implemented initiatives in their local communities to prevent unintentional fire-related deaths. **Berrien County** partnered with local municipalities to compile a county-wide list of all multi-family dwellings. Several cities are working to create ordinances requiring annual building inspections to ensure local fire codes are met, including the presence of working smoke alarms.

## About This Data

The information presented in this brief is based on data gathered through Michigan's local CDR process. Data about deaths reviewed are presented by year of review by the local CDR team, which may not be the same as the year in which the child died. **It is important to note that not all child deaths in the state are reviewed. As not every child death is reviewed, Michigan's CDR Program dataset is not population-based and should not be directly compared with vital statistics data, nor should it be used to compute mortality rates.** It is recommended that complementary data sources are examined alongside the CDR Program data when making prevention, policy, or practice decisions.

### References

- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics. (2022). *2020 Michigan resident death files* [Unpublished raw data set].
- United States Department of Health and Human Services (US DHHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2020 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released 2021. Data are compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html> on Apr 3, 2023

## Contact Us

Additional CDR data, reports, and fact sheets can be found on our [website](#). Please contact the Michigan CDR Program at the Center for Child and Family Health (CCFH) at MPH at [MichiganCDR@mphi.org](mailto:MichiganCDR@mphi.org) with any questions or requests for additional data.