

# The Fire 4-1-1

SPRING 2020

**SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:**

- Fire Safety During Quarantine
- Fire Science : Avoid Getting Burned
- Fire Safety Around the Yard

## Quarantine Fire Safety

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, residents are staying home which provides the opportunity to practice fire safety and complete those tasks you have been postponing. Start your fire safety to-do list by engaging in fire safety behaviors. Test [smoke alarms](#) to ensure they are working and change the batteries as recommended. Check the date on the back of the alarm to ensure it is not outdated; they should be replaced after 10 years. Have a house meeting and be sure everyone knows how to safely [escape a fire](#) should one occur. Keep in mind young children, older adults, and individuals with special needs may need assistance. There is

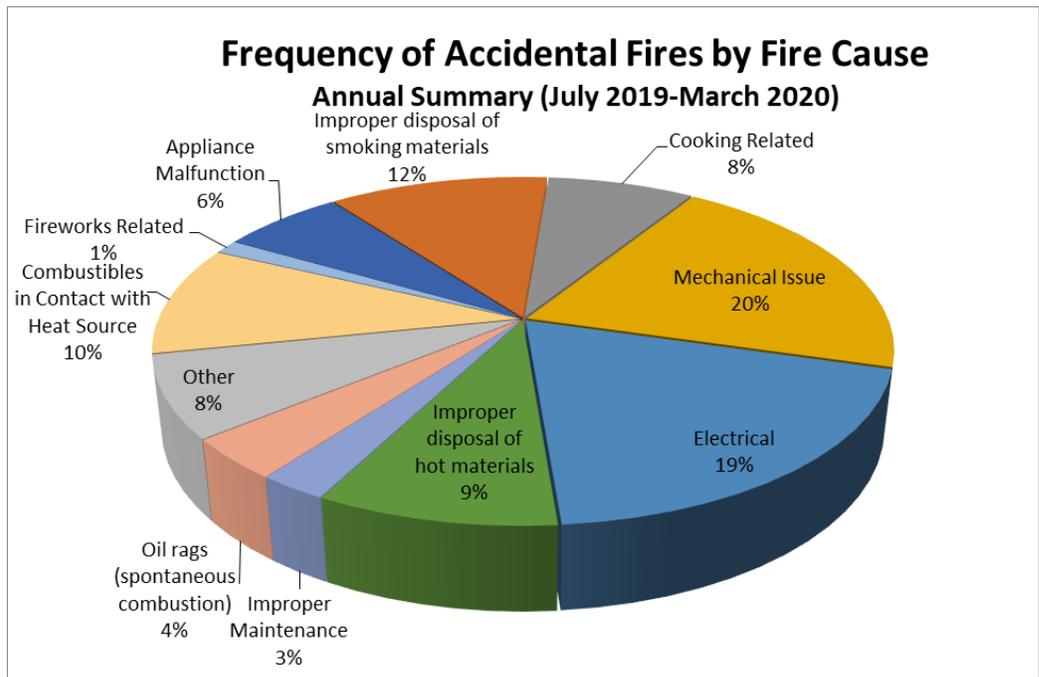


a lot more [cooking](#) going on at home so be sure to stay in the kitchen while frying, grilling, boiling, or broiling food. Keep anything that can burn like food packaging, oven mitts, towels, etc. away from the stovetop. Don't forget to turn pot handles inward and keep children and pets away from hot objects to prevent burns. Make fire safety a priority to keep you and your family safe. Fire is Everyone's Fight!

### Accidental Fire Data for Fiscal Year 2020 Third Quarter (January-March)

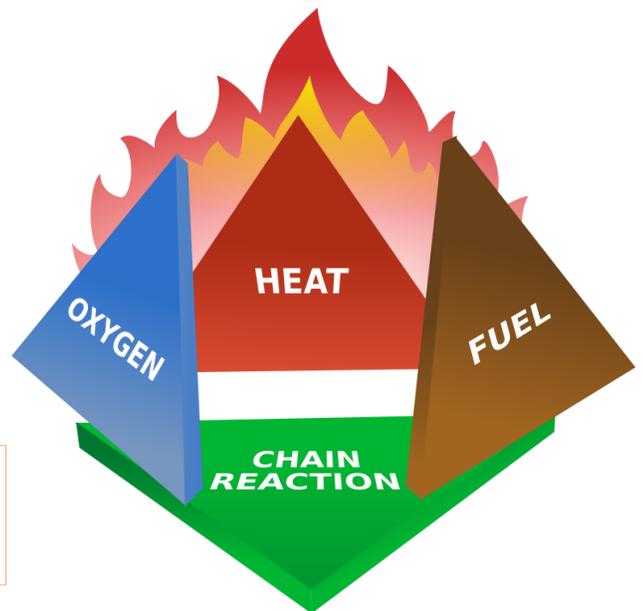
Fire Cause	Total Number of Fires	Total Dollar Loss Q3
Electrical	2	\$83,500.00
Improper disposal of smoking materials	3	\$861,500.00
Combustibles in contact with heat source	3	\$608,000.00
Other	1	\$325,000.00
Appliance malfunction	3	\$38,000.00
Mechanical Issue (Vehicle)	6	\$1,111,500.00
Improper disposal of hot materials	2	\$1,100.00
Fireworks related	1	\$5,000.00
<b>Total Number of Unintentional Fires</b>	<b>21</b>	
<b>Total Cost of Damages</b>		<b>\$3,033,600.00</b>

\*For more specific descriptions of fire causes visit [www.loudoun.gov/firerisk](http://www.loudoun.gov/firerisk).



## Don't Get Burned!

Fire officials frequently see the same type of fire causes throughout the year. While many believe that these fires are completely accidental, many of them could be prevented by citizens following basic fire safety tips. Commonly, individuals unintentionally place hot items like fire pit ashes, cigarette butts, used fireworks, etc. near items that can burn. A fire occurs when heat, fuel, and oxygen create a chemical reaction resulting in a fire. By following fire safety behaviors and ensuring the three components do not combine prevents a fire from occurring. Removing one component can extinguish a fire. When disposing of items that are hot, douse the items completely with water. Place ashes in a metal or ceramic container with a noncombustible lid and place it a safe distance from the home. You are your best protection against fire so be sure to practice fire safety everyday! To learn more about what you can do to be fire safe visit [www.nfpa.org/safetytips](http://www.nfpa.org/safetytips) for more information about fire causes and how to prevent them.



According to the Loudoun County Fire Marshal's Office reported accidental fires....

- 32% of fires are a result of an individual placing something that is hot near something that can burn
- These fires resulted in \$2,983,820 in damages

Image Credit: Gustavb - Own work, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=618479>

# Mulch Fire Safety

It is that time of year again when everyone is out sprucing up their lawn and laying mulch down. While mulch makes for a great looking yard, the Loudoun County Fire Marshal's Office wants to remind residents to use common sense and caution when using it.

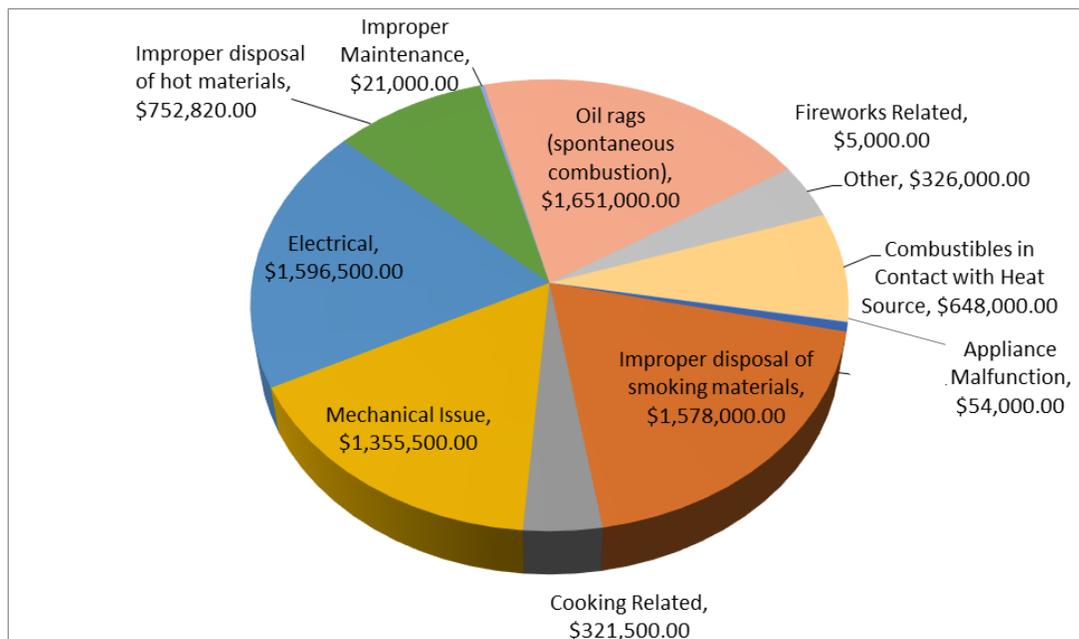
Each year hundreds of mulch fires are reported throughout the country. While these fires start out small, they often go undetected and can quickly turn into a devastating fire. Fires that start in landscaping mulch or other organic planting materials can spread quickly into shrubbery, up exterior walls and into the home or building causing significant damages. Most of these fires are caused by human carelessness through improper disposal of cigarettes and other smoking materials. To help prevent mulch fires at your home, please follow these safety tips:

- ⇒ Keep landscaped mulch beds as moist as possible.
- ⇒ Recognize that hot and dry spells, along with windy conditions allow mulch fires to start more readily.
- ⇒ Maintain at least 18 inches of clearance between the edge of the mulch bed and combustible building materials, such as exterior vinyl siding and decks.
- ⇒ Use non-combustible materials such as river rock, pea gravel or crushed rock for the first 18" around the base of a building with combustible siding and around gas and electrical meters.
- ⇒ Consider using brick or non-combustible exterior siding when building or renovating a structure.
- ⇒ Use only approved receptacles to dispose of matches, cigarettes and cigars such as sturdy metal or ceramic containers filled with sand, located away from the structure.
- ⇒ Immediately report any smoke or fire by calling 9-1-1.



Thanks to working smoke alarms, the occupants were alerted to the fire and were able to safely escape their home! This fire was caused by improperly discarded smoking materials and resulted in \$25,000 of damages.

## Accidental Fire Dollar Loss By Fire Cause Annual Summary (July 2019-March 2020)





**Loudoun County  
Fire Marshal's Office**

23675 Belmont Ridge Road #150  
Ashburn, VA 20148

Phone: 703-737-8600

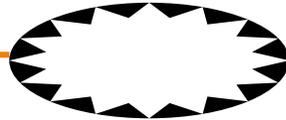
Fax: 703-737-8595

[www.loudoun.gov/firemarshal](http://www.loudoun.gov/firemarshal)

The Fire Marshal's Office (FMO) seeks to provide a safe working and living environment for residents, workers, and travelers within Loudoun County. The division investigates the origin of fires, explosive related incidents, as well as investigations into hazardous materials. Furthermore, we strive to reduce the risk of fire through the abatement of common fire prevention code violations. The public fire and life safety educational programs and juvenile fire-setter intervention program are additional resources we deploy to help ensure the fire and life safety of the citizens and visitors of Loudoun County.

There are additional special operational programs, such as the Bomb Squad and the Canine Program. However, these are collateral responsibilities assigned to regular staff, which transcend section boundaries.

The FMO is comprised of a team of civilians and sworn law enforcement officers to ensure division goals are met.



Smoke alarms are one of the best and easiest safety features you can have to alert you and your family if there is a fire in your home. The Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System offers free smoke alarm assessments to residents. During the visit, fire-rescue personnel ensure the home is adequately protected by working smoke alarms. They also provide valuable information on other fire safety topics. To request an assessment visit [www.loudoun.gov/smokealarms](http://www.loudoun.gov/smokealarms) and complete the online form or contact your local fire-rescue station.

