

Juveniles and fire - 2006

Since 2002, reporting from OAIRS and Form 10 J has shown a slight decrease in the number of youth-set fires and the number of fire incidents.

In 2006, the average number of prior fires set by a youth before becoming involved with the fire department was four.

Gender Gender factors have remained constant for the last five years, with males accounting for 86 percent to 88 percent. Boys are significantly more likely than girls to be involved in firesetting incidents reported to the fire department.

Age In 2006, youths eight and over set the majority of fires. For the years 2002 to 2004, the age group of nine and under was between 31 and 37 percent. In 2005, the percentage peaked sharply to 49 percent followed by a sharp decline in 2006.

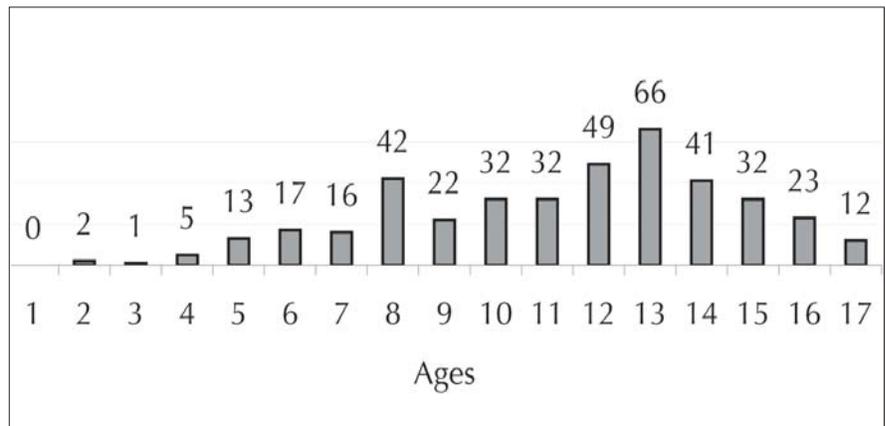
The age group of ten and over, from 2002 to 2004, rose steadily from 63 percent to 69 percent. In 2005, it declined sharply to 51 percent and rose sharply again to 71 percent in 2006.

Juveniles & fire	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Form 10	792	490	436	444	458
Form 10J	764	804	599	467	457
ODF (included in 10J)	34	39	28	21	37
Total juveniles	1556	1294	1035	911	915

Gender factors	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Male	696	697	485	382	366
Female	88	101	81	64	52
Percentage					
Male	89%	87%	86%	86%	88%
Female	11%	13%	14%	14%	12%

Age groups	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
9 years & under	37%	34%	31%	49%	29%
10 years & older	63%	66%	69%	51%	71%

Age distribution of youths involved with fire 2006



Ignition source From 2003-2006, the data show a growing preference for lighters over matches. A match was used in 16 percent of the fire incidents and a lighter in 42 percent. The ignition source was obtained from home 48 percent of the time.

This year, for the first time, we have broken the data out into ignition source by region of the state. Note the tables below and to the left. The higher numbers overall in the Northwest region reflect the greater density of population residing in the region.

Northwest region *				
	Fireworks	Matches	Lighters	Explosives
2003	109	64	89	5
2004	81	42	90	3
2005	54	48	95	4
2006	72	34	102	5
Totals	316	188	504	17

*Benton, Clackamas, Clatsop, Columbia, Hood River, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Polk, Tillamook, Washington, Yamhill

Eastern region **				
	Fireworks	Matches	Lighters	Explosives
2003	30	16	11	2
2004	25	8	7	3
2005	7	3	17	1
2006	6	8	15	5
Totals	68	35	103	11

**Baker, Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, Wheeler

Ignition source

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Matches	228	142	132	104
Lighters	367	288	282	269
Fireworks	194	134	76	93
Explosives	13	12	7	19
Smoking materials	29	21	35	37
Other (misc.)	119	126	135	114
Total incidents	950	723	667	636

Southwest region***				
	Fireworks	Matches	Lighters	Explosives
2003	11	8	8	0
2004	6	7	13	2
2005	6	4	16	0
2006	2	9	11	2
Totals	25	28	53	4

***Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, Lane

Incident location There were 553 fires with juveniles involved reported in the OAIRS program in 2006. These fires resulted in twenty-two civilian injuries and one firefighter injury and an estimated \$2.98 million in property loss. Of the 553 reported fires involving youths, 67 percent occurred outside.

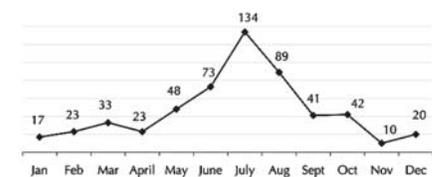
Locations of youth-involved fires have been consistent over the years that OSFM has been tracking juveniles and fire. They are locations that youths have access to: homes and apartments, schools, and yards and parks.

Incident location

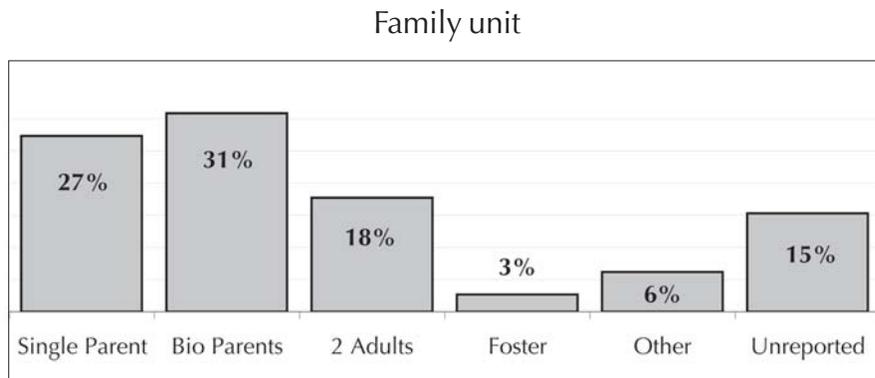
Incident location	2006
Single family/duplex	217
School	110
Street/alley/sidewalk	71
Apartment	65
Wildland & agricultural land	63
Yard/park/landscaping	55
Other	53
Other structure	36
Commercial building	24
Vacant lot	21
Vehicle	7
Church	6
Dumpster/trash	6
Other residence	5
Mailbox	0
n=739	

Month of occurrence As in previous years, the months of highest fire department involvement with youths are the summer months, peaking in July.

In July, seventy youth-involved fires were caused by fireworks, twenty-two by lighters, six by matches, and the remainder by a variety of other causes.

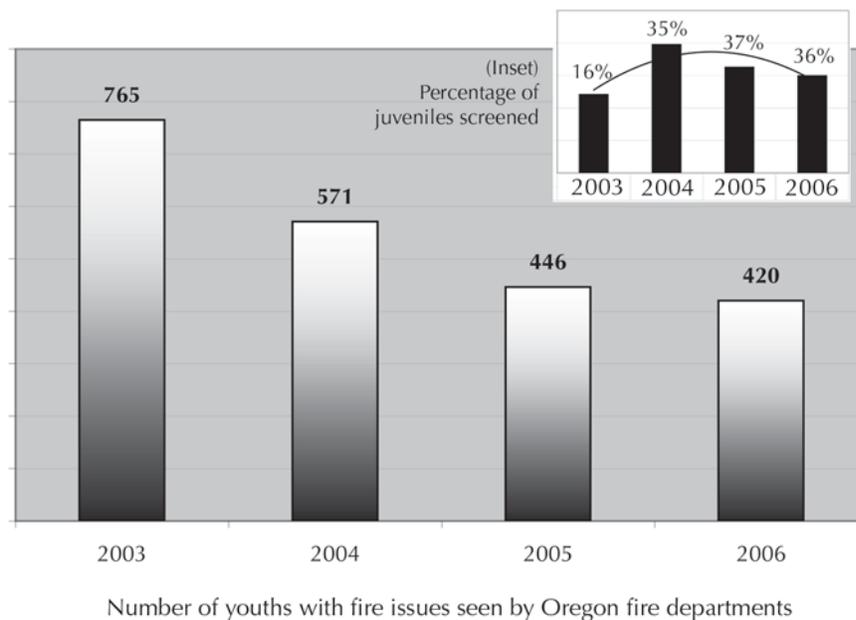


Family unit OSFM has been collecting data on family unit for several years and the findings remain consistent. In 2006, 49 percent of juveniles involved with fire lived in a two-adult family. Twenty-seven percent lived in a single parent situation.



Screening scores Forty-one percent of the youths involved with fire and seen by Oregon fire departments were referred for further evaluation and community services. The other 59 percent were determined to need fire education as the primary intervention for their behavior.

Youths reported to OSFM by the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) are not sent to fire departments for intervention. For this analysis of youths seen and screened, youths reported by ODF have been removed from the annual totals.



Impact of youth-involved fires

OAIRS data

- 139 structure fires resulted in ten civilian injuries and \$2.8 million estimated dollar loss;
- 373 outdoor fires resulted in two civilian injuries one firefighter injury, and nearly \$24,000 estimated dollar loss;
- 13 mobile property fires resulted in nearly \$55,000 estimated dollar loss; and
- 28 other fires resulted in two civilian injuries and over \$14,000 estimated dollar loss.

Total fires: 553

Total injuries: 23

Total estimated dollar loss (does not include suppression cost):

\$2,981,060.00

ODF data

- 37 juvenile-caused fires
 - 6 in Northwest area
 - 22 in Southern area
 - 9 in Eastern area
- 17 acres total burned
- Cost to suppress: \$36,360

Total fires: 37

Total suppression cost:

\$36,360

County juvenile incident data The table below shows the number of juvenile incidents with fire that came to the attention of fire departments. The OAIRS column details the number of fires requiring an engine response. The 10J column shows the number of youths receiving a fire department intervention. The total column reflects engine runs (if reported on Form 10J) and fire department interventions where an engine response may not have been needed.

County	Total	Intervention provided at fire dept 10J	Engine run reported on OAIRS
Baker	3		3
Benton	15	12	5
Clackamas	47	19	32
Clatsop	8	7	8
Columbia	61	6	56
Coos	10	5	7
Crook	3	2	1
Curry	2	1	1
Deschutes	35	21	17
Douglas	13	2	13
Gilliam	1		1
Grant	1		1
Hood	2		2
Jackson	16	4	14
Josephine	10	2	9
Klamath	20	10	15
Lane	71	18	58
Lincoln	8	3	7
Linn	27	1	27
Malheur	4	2	2
Marion	63	28	46
Morrow	3	1	2
Multnomah	204	83	146
Polk	6		6
Sherman	2		2
Tillamook	4		4
Umatilla	13	9	8
Union	4	2	3
Wasco	3	2	1
Washington	80	45	49
Yamhill	7	3	7
Total	746	288	553

[1918]

from the archives

“There have been several instances of suspicious fires reported to the department which, upon investigation, were traced to the depredations of juvenile offenders ranging in age from seven to sixteen years. It is not the policy or province of this department to deal harshly with youngsters of tender years, where, in the majority of cases, the parents are more to blame than the child, but some legal method of procedure should be devised whereby wayward minors, accompanied by their parents could be summoned to appear before a juvenile officer or magistrate of competent jurisdiction for cross-examination. No such authority exists under the present statutes for such examination, except upon formal complaint and warrant of arrest. Instances are rare which, under present limited authority of investigation, develop sufficient corroborative evidence to justify such extreme measures. Crafty parents of waywardly inclined children invariably take advantage of these statutory hobbles to thwart the investigations and lend encouragement to the embryo criminals who might otherwise be corrected and saved to law-abiding citizenship.”