



U.S. Fire Administration  
Working for a fire-safe America

# Firefighter Fatalities in the United States in 2022

May 2024



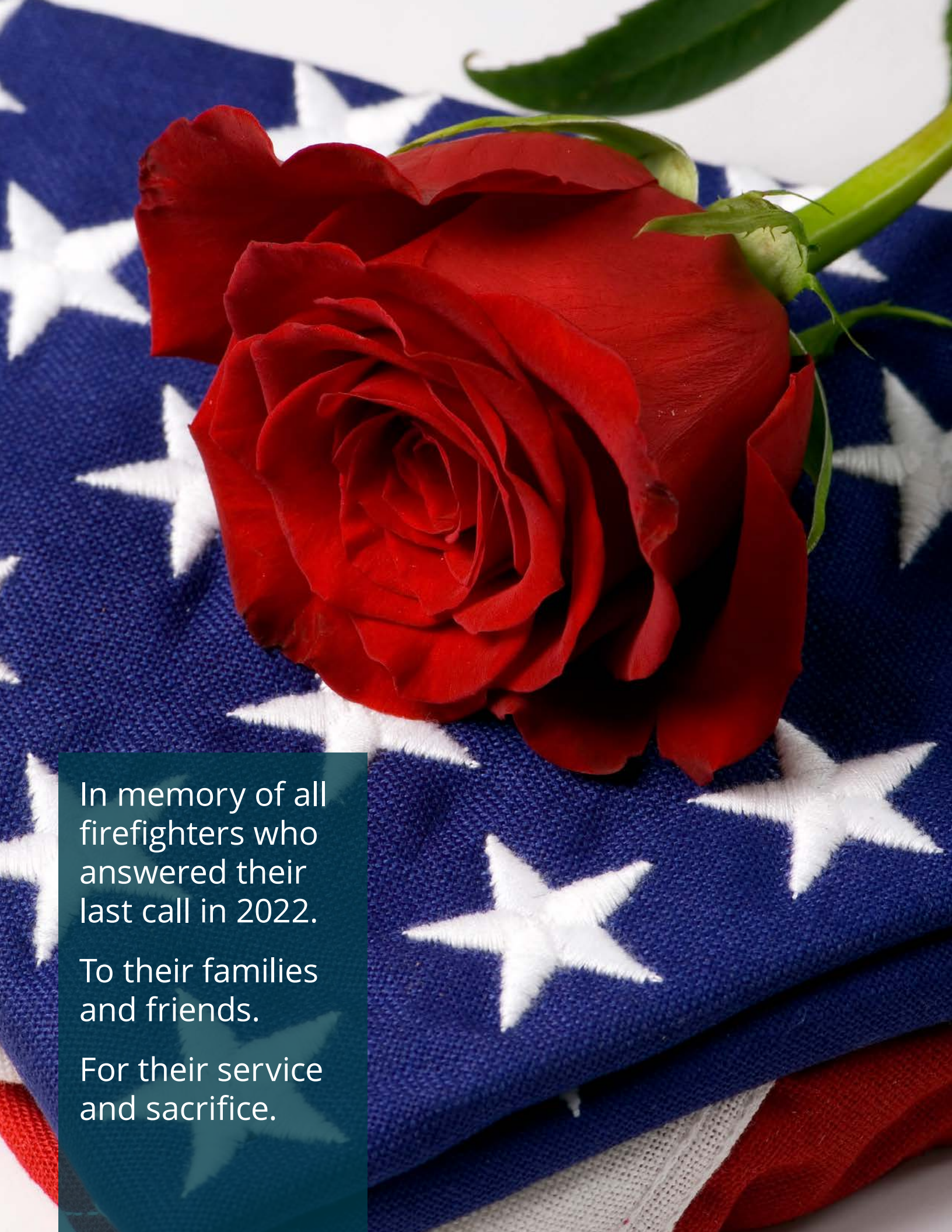
FEMA



# Firefighter Fatalities in the United States in 2022

Prepared by  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
U.S. Fire Administration  
National Fire Data Center  
and  
The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation  
[firehero.org](https://firehero.org)





In memory of all  
firefighters who  
answered their  
last call in 2022.

To their families  
and friends.

For their service  
and sacrifice.

## **Mission Statement**

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We support and strengthen fire and emergency medical services and stakeholders to prepare for, prevent, mitigate and respond to all hazards.

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U.S. Fire Administration  
Working for a fire-safe America





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## Acknowledgments

This study of firefighter fatalities would not have been possible without the cooperation and assistance of many members of the fire service across the United States. Members of individual fire departments; chief fire officers; wildland fire service organizations, including the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the National Park Service (NPS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS); the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ); the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA); and many others contributed important information to this report.

The National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF) was responsible for compilation of a large portion of the information used in this report. Their cooperation and work toward reducing firefighter deaths is gratefully acknowledged.

The ultimate objective of this effort is to reduce the number of firefighter deaths through an increased awareness and understanding of their causes and how they can be prevented. Firefighting, rescue and other types of emergency operations are essential activities in an inherently dangerous profession where unfortunate tragedies occur, often involving a responder. Firefighters accept a level of risk every time they respond to an emergency incident. These risks, however, can be greatly reduced through community risk reduction, firefighter training, sufficient emergency resource deployment, use of good strategy and tactics during on-scene operations, and overall firefighter health and safety.

## Background

Since 1976, the USFA has tracked the number of firefighter fatalities and conducted an annual analysis of the information related to these fatalities. Through the collection and analysis of information on firefighter deaths, the USFA can focus on specific problems and direct efforts toward finding solutions to reduce the number of firefighter fatalities in the future. This information is also used to measure the

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effectiveness of current programs directed toward firefighter health and safety. Several programs have been developed by the USFA in response to this annual report. For example, the USFA has sponsored research to create safer operational environments for firefighters by increasing awareness about emergency vehicle operations safety, the health and safety of the female emergency responder, fire service risk management, and fire station and roadway incident safety.

In addition to performing this analysis, the USFA, working in partnership with the NFFF, develops a list of all on-duty firefighter fatalities and associated documentation each year. If certain criteria are met, the fallen firefighter's next of kin, as well as members of the individual's fire department, are invited by the NFFF to the annual National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service. The service is held at the National Emergency Training Center (NETC) in Emmitsburg, Maryland, each year. The 42nd Annual National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend was held May 6-7, 2023, and families who lost loved ones in 2022 were invited to attend the ceremony. Additional information can be found at <https://www.firehero.org/events/memorial-weekend/> or by calling the NFFF at 301-447-1365.

Other resources and information regarding firefighter fatalities, including current fatality notices, the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial database and links to the Public Safety Officer Benefits (PSOB) program, can be found at <https://apps.usfa.fema.gov/firefighter-fatalities/>.



## Introduction

This report continues a series of annual studies initiated in 1986 by the USFA of on-duty firefighter fatalities in the U.S. The specific objective of this study is to identify all on-duty firefighter fatalities that occurred in the U.S. and its territories in 2022 and to analyze the circumstances surrounding each occurrence. The study is intended to help identify approaches that may reduce the number of firefighter deaths in future years.

### Who is a firefighter?

For the purpose of this study, the term “firefighter” covers all members of organized fire departments with assigned fire suppression duties in all 50 states; the District of Columbia; and the territories of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam. It includes career and volunteer firefighters; full-time public safety officers acting as firefighters; fire police; state, Native American tribal authorities and federal government fire service personnel; and privately employed firefighters, including employees of contract fire departments and trained members of industrial fire brigades, including full time or part time. It also includes contract personnel working as firefighters or assigned to work in direct support of fire service organizations (e.g., air-tanker crews).

Under this definition, the study includes not only local and municipal firefighters, but also seasonal and full-time employees of USFS, NPS, BLM, BIA, FWS, and other federal agencies, as well as state wildland agencies. The definition also includes prison inmates serving on firefighting crews; firefighters employed by other governmental agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE); military personnel performing assigned fire suppression activities; and civilian firefighters working at military installations.

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## What constitutes an on-duty fatality?

An on-duty fatality<sup>1</sup> includes any injury or illness that was sustained while on duty and proves fatal. The term “on duty” refers to being involved in operations at the scene of an emergency, whether it is a fire or nonfire incident; responding to or returning from an incident; performing other officially assigned duties, such as training, maintenance, public education, inspection, investigations, court testimony or fundraising; and being on call, under orders or on standby duty (except at the individual’s home or place of business). An individual who experiences a heart attack or other fatal injury at home while they prepare to respond to an emergency is considered on duty when the response begins. A firefighter who becomes ill while performing fire department duties and suffers a heart attack shortly after arriving home (or at another location) may be considered on duty since the inception of the heart attack occurred while the firefighter was on duty.

On Dec. 15, 2003, the president of the United States signed the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act of 2003 into law. After being signed by the president, the act became Public Law 108-182. This law presumes that a heart attack or stroke is in the line of duty if the firefighter was engaged in nonroutine, stressful or strenuous physical activity while on duty, and the firefighter became ill within 24 hours after engaging in such activity. The full text of the law is available at [https://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=108\\_cong\\_public\\_laws&docid=f:publ182.108.pdf](https://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=108_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ182.108.pdf).

The inclusion criteria for this study have been affected by this change in the law. Before Dec. 15, 2003, firefighters who became ill as the result of a heart attack or stroke after going off duty needed to register a complaint of not feeling well while still on duty to be included in this study. For firefighter fatalities after Dec. 15, 2003, firefighters are included in this report if they became ill as the result of a heart attack or stroke within 24 hours of a training activity or emergency response. Firefighters who became ill after going off duty, where the activities while on duty were limited to tasks that did not involve physical or mental stress, are not included.

A fatality may be caused directly by an accidental or intentional injury in either emergency or nonemergency circumstances, or it may be attributed to an occupationally related fatal illness. A common example of a fatal illness incurred on duty is a heart attack. Fatalities attributed to occupational illnesses also include a communicable disease, such as COVID-19, contracted while on duty that proved fatal when the disease could be attributed to a documented occupational exposure.

Firefighter fatalities are included in this report even when death is considerably delayed after the original incident. When the incident and the death occur in different years, the analysis counts the fatality as having occurred in the year in which the death took place.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>As of March 2023, the USFA is collaborating with the NFFF, NFPA, and the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) to consistently define line-of-duty and on-duty deaths. Any changes to historic tracking by each organization will be announced when complete.

<sup>2</sup>The USFA changed the analysis methodology beginning with its “Firefighter Fatalities in the United States in 2020” annual report. For the 2020 report and all subsequent annual firefighter fatality reports, firefighter fatalities are included in the total count and analyzed based on the date of death as opposed to previous annual reports where firefighter fatalities were included in the total count and analyzed based on the date of occurrence of the injury (that later resulted in death). All prior years in each graphic in this “Firefighter Fatalities in the United States in 2022” report, however, have been recalculated to reflect this change in methodology.



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At present, there is no established mechanism for USFA to identify fatalities that result from illnesses, such as cancer, that develop over long periods of time and may be related to occupational exposure to hazardous materials or toxic products of combustion. Current state and federal laws linking on-the-job exposure to cancer in firefighters may better inform USFA tracking in the future.

## Sources of initial notification

As an integral part of its ongoing program to collect and analyze fire data, the USFA solicits information on firefighter fatalities directly from the fire service and from a wide range of other sources. These sources include the PSOB program administered by the DOJ, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the U.S. Department of Defense, the National Interagency Fire Center, and other federal agencies.

The USFA receives notification of some deaths directly from fire departments and from such fire service organizations as the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the IAFF, NFPA, the National Volunteer Fire Council, state fire marshals, state fire training organizations, other state and local organizations, fire service internet sites, news services, and fire service publications.

## Procedure for verifying and including a fatality in USFA's annual reports

In most cases, after notification of a fatal incident, the USFA initially contacts local authorities by telephone to verify that the fatality occurred and collect information on the incident, its location, the jurisdiction, and the fire department or agency involved. Further information about the deceased firefighter and the incident is collected from the chief or designee of the fire department over the phone or by other forms of data collection. After basic information is collected, a notice of the firefighter fatality is posted at the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial site in Emmitsburg, Maryland, as well as on the USFA website. A notice of the fatality is also transmitted by email to a large list of fire service organizations and fire service members, as well as to approximately 40,000 GovDelivery subscribers.

Subsequently, more detailed information is routinely requested from fire departments that have experienced a fatality including National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)-1 (incident) and NFIRS-5 (fire service casualty) reports, the fire department's own incident and internal investigation reports, copies of death certificates and autopsy results, special investigative reports, law enforcement reports, photographs and diagrams, and newspaper or media accounts of the incident. Information on the incident may also be gathered from NFPA or NIOSH reports.

After obtaining this detailed information, a final determination is made as to whether the death qualifies as an on-duty firefighter fatality according to the previously described criteria. With the exception of firefighter deaths after Dec. 15, 2003, and the inclusion of COVID-19, the same criteria were used for this study as in previous annual studies. If needed, further detailed information may be requested by the USFA, either through follow-up with the fire department directly or from state vital records offices or other agencies. The final determination as to whether a fatality qualifies as an on-duty death for inclusion in its annual statistical analyses is made by the USFA based on existing laws and regulations at the time of the analysis.



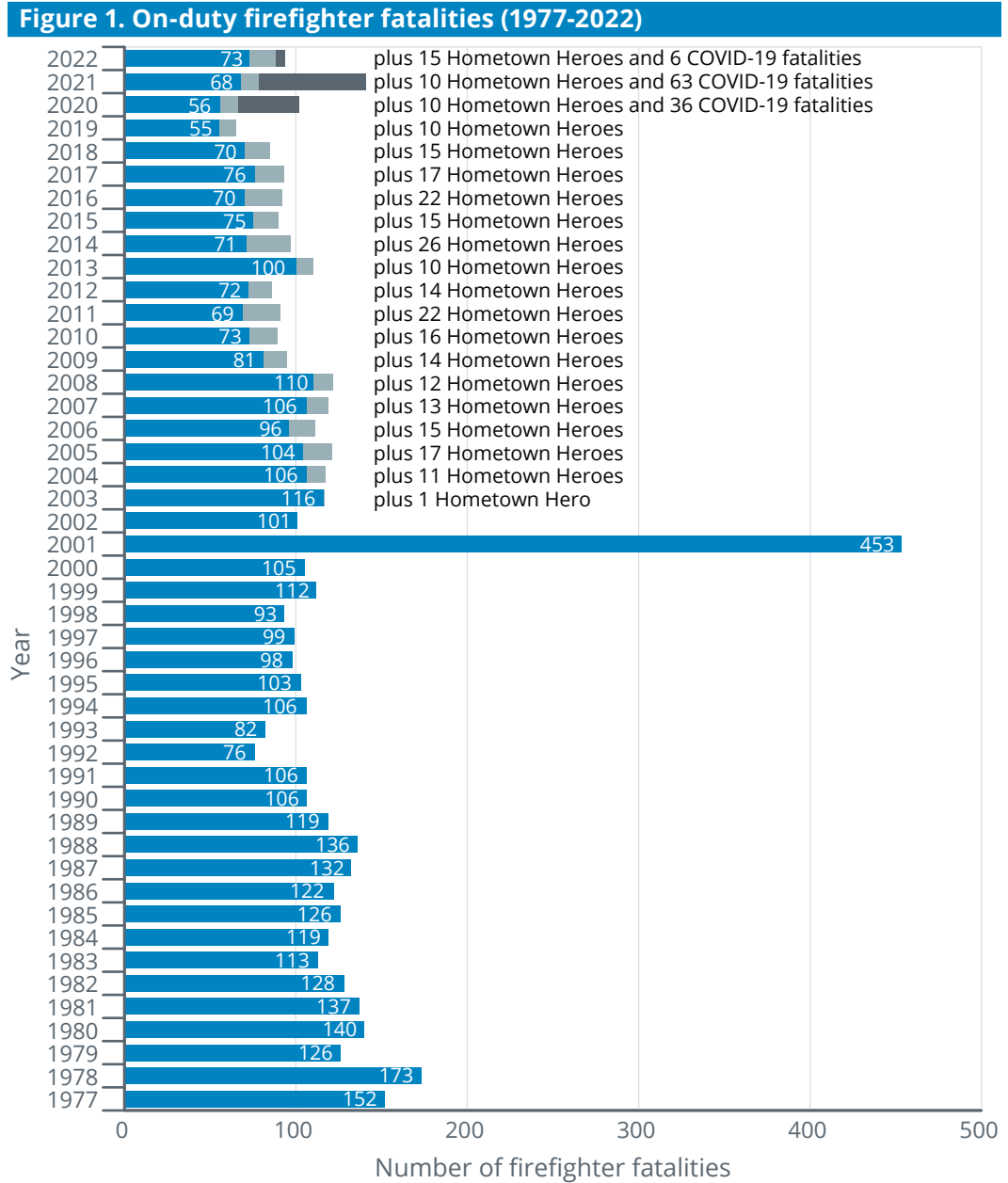
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## 2022 Findings

In 2022, 94 firefighters died from injuries sustained while on duty. This is 47 less than the 2021 total of 141 firefighter fatalities, a 33% decrease over the previous year. The 2022 total includes 15 firefighters who died under circumstances that were part of inclusion criteria changes resulting from the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act. It also includes 6 firefighters who died from complications of COVID-19, a decrease of 57 deaths from the 2021 total of 63. When not including these fatalities, there were 73 firefighter fatalities in 2022 that were non-Hometown Hero or did not occur due to complications relating to COVID-19 (Figure 1).

An analysis of multiyear firefighter fatality numbers and trends needs to acknowledge the changes from the December 2003 Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act as well as the inclusion of fatalities that occurred due to complications of COVID-19. As a result, some figures and tables in this report may not include the Hometown Heroes and COVID-19 fatalities in the total or may separate them. This does not, however, diminish the sacrifices made by any firefighter who died while on duty, or the sacrifices made by their family and peers.

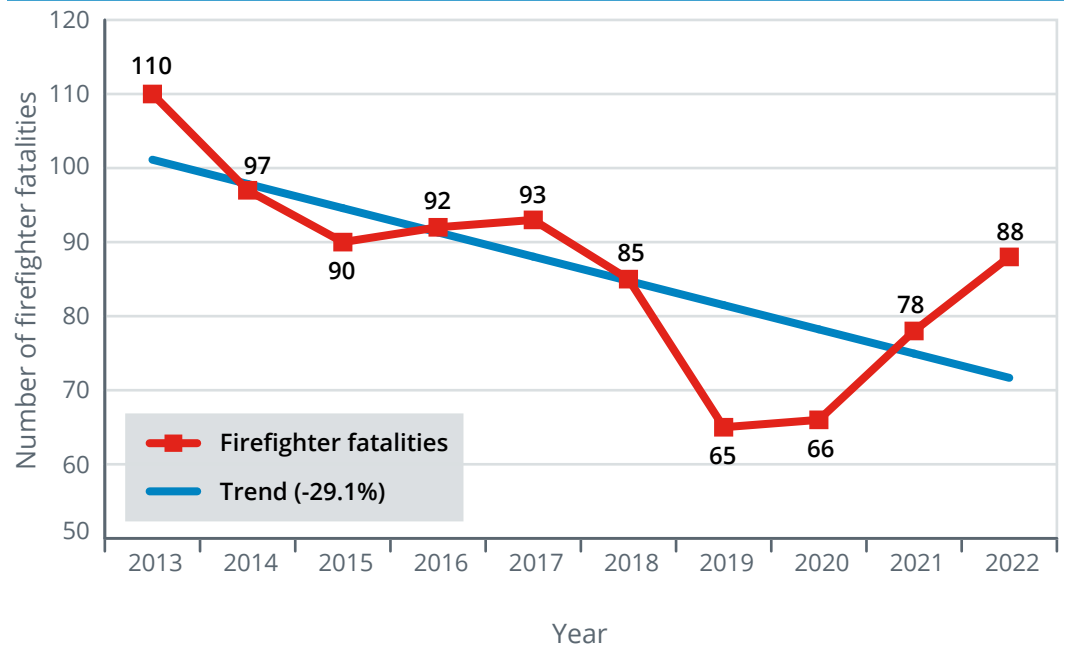
Figure 1 below shows the number of on-duty firefighter fatalities from 1977 through 2022.





From 2013 to 2022, there was a 29% decrease in on-duty firefighter fatalities (Figure 2).<sup>3</sup>

**Figure 2. On-duty firefighter fatalities (2013-2022)**

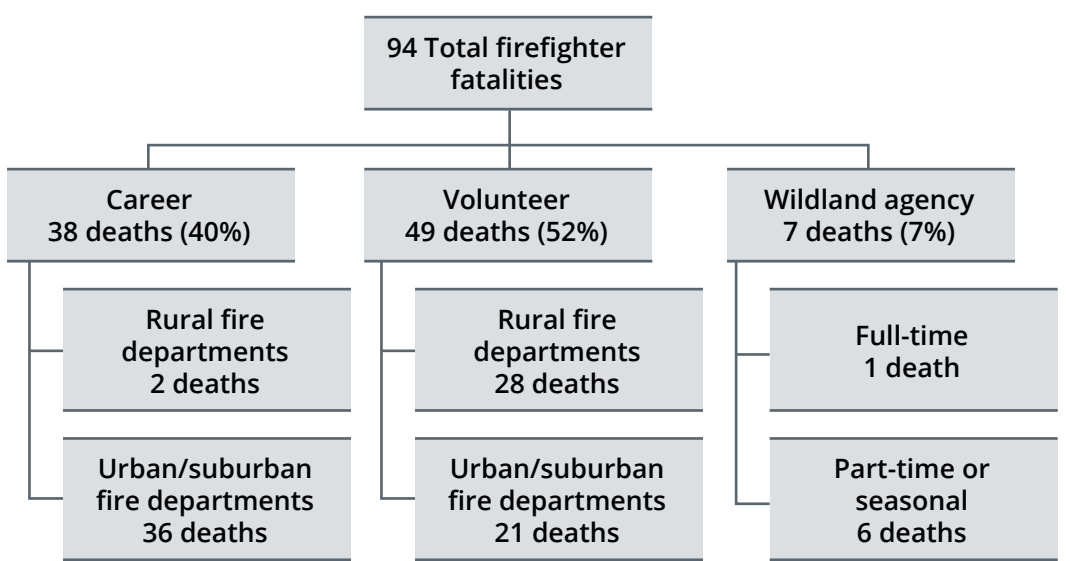


Note: Firefighter fatality counts include firefighters who died under circumstances that were part of inclusion criteria changes resulting from the Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefits Act but do not include COVID-19 fatalities for purposes of a trend analysis.

### Career, volunteer and wildland agency fatalities

In 2022, firefighter fatalities included 38 career firefighters (40%), 49 volunteer firefighters (52%), and 7 part-time or full-time members of wildland or wildland contract fire agencies (7%) (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Career, volunteer and wildland agency firefighter fatalities (2022)**



<sup>3</sup>This trend analysis does not include 36 firefighter fatalities in 2020, 63 firefighter fatalities in 2021 and 6 firefighter fatalities in 2022 that occurred due to complications of COVID-19.

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## Gender

The gender of the firefighters who died while on duty in 2022 consisted of 2 females and 92 males.

## Multiple firefighter fatality incidents

The 94 deaths in 2022 resulted from a total of 87 fatal incidents, including 1 multiple firefighter fatality incident taking the lives of 3 firefighters and 5 multiple firefighter incidents taking the lives of 2 firefighters each (Table 1).

**Table 1. Multiple firefighter fatality incidents (2013-2022)**

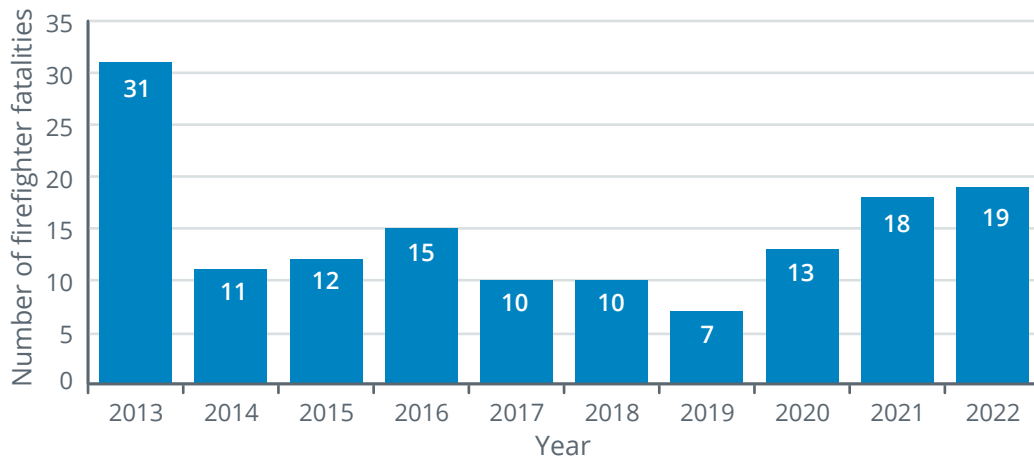
Year	Number of multiple firefighter fatality incidents	Number of firefighter fatalities resulting from multiple firefighter fatality incidents
2022	6	13
2021	2	4
2020	3	6
2019	0	0
2018	2	4
2017	1	3*
2016	3	7
2015	3	7
2014	2	4
2013	4	34*
10-year average	3	8

\*In 2013, there were 4 multiple firefighter fatality incidents that resulted in the deaths of 35 firefighters. Of these firefighters, 34 died in 2013 and 1 died in 2017.

## Wildland firefighting fatalities

In 2022, 19 firefighters (20%) were killed during activities involving brush, grass or wildland firefighting. This total includes part-time and seasonal wildland firefighters, full-time wildland firefighters, and municipal or volunteer firefighters whose deaths are related to a wildland fire (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Firefighter fatalities related to wildland firefighting (2013-2022)**



In 2022, an incident related to wildland firefighting resulted in 2 firefighter fatalities when the firefighters were returning from the scene of a wildland fire and were involved in a vehicle collision. Another incident occurred when 2 firefighters were fighting a wildland fire and their helicopter crashed, killing both occupants (Tables 2 and 3).

**Table 2. Firefighter fatalities associated with wildland firefighting (2013-2022)**

Year	Number of firefighter fatalities related to wildland firefighting	Number of fatal incidents related to wildland firefighting	Number of firefighters killed in multiple-fatality incidents related to wildland firefighting
2022	19	17	4
2021	18	17	2
2020	13	12	2
2019	7	7	0
2018	10	10	0
2017	10	10	0
2016	15	13	4
2015	12	9	5
2014	11	11	0
2013	31	13	19
10-year average	15	12	4

**Table 3. Aircraft firefighter fatalities associated with wildland firefighting (2013-2022)**

Year	Number of aircraft firefighter fatalities related to wildland firefighting	Number of aircraft fatal incidents related to wildland firefighting
2022	4	3
2021	3	2
2020	6	5
2019	1	1
2018	0	0
2017	0	0
2016	0	0
2015	2	1
2014	2	2
2013	0	0
10-year average	2	1

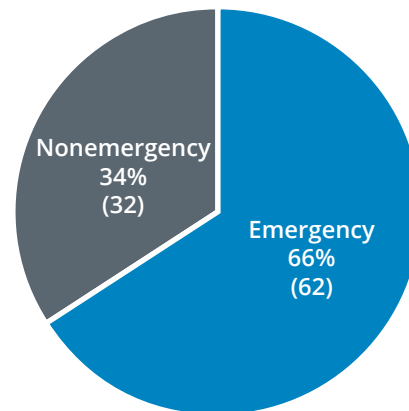


## Type of Duty

Activities related to emergency incidents resulted in the deaths of 62 firefighters (66%) in 2022 (Figure 5). This includes all firefighters who died at an emergency scene, responding to or returning from an emergency incident, and during other emergency-related activities. Nonemergency activities accounted for 32 firefighter fatalities (34%). Nonemergency duties include training, administrative activities and performing other functions that are not related to an emergency incident.

A multiyear historical perspective relating to the percentage of firefighter deaths that occurred during emergency duty is presented in Table 4.

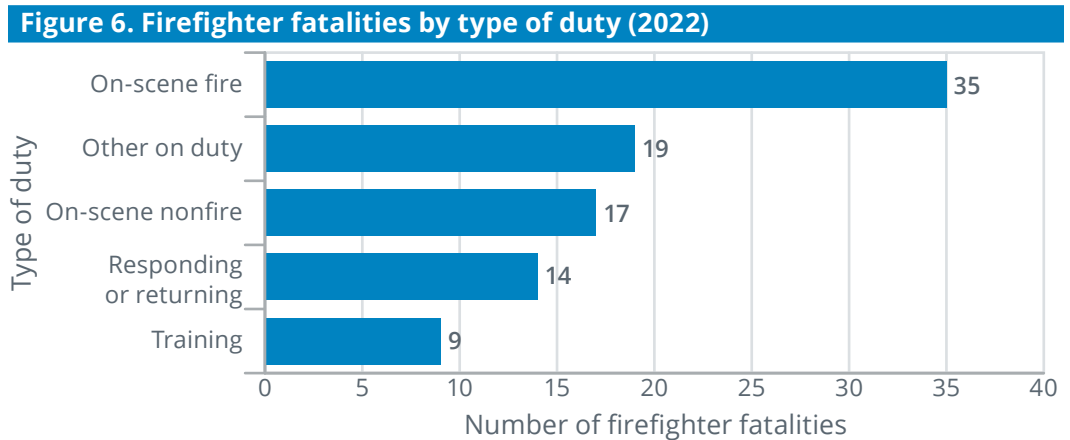
**Figure 5. Firefighter fatalities by type of duty (2022)**



**Table 4. Emergency duty firefighter fatalities (2013-2022)**

Year	Percentage of total firefighter fatalities
2022	66.0
2021	65.2
2020	70.6
2019	61.5
2018	52.9
2017	49.5
2016	41.3
2015	48.9
2014	45.4
2013	70.0
10-year average	57.8

The number of deaths by type of duty being performed for 2022 is shown in Figure 6.



## Fireground operations

35 firefighters experienced fatal injuries during fireground operations (on-scene fire) in 2022. Of these fatalities, 19 were at the scene of a structure fire, 15 were at the scene of a wildland or outside fire, and for 1, the type of incident is unknown. The average age of the firefighters killed during fireground operations was 47 years old, with the youngest being 25 years old and the oldest being 85 years old. Of those killed during fireground operations, 18 were volunteer, 11 were career and 6 were wildland firefighters. The nature of fatal injury for 14 of the firefighter deaths that occurred during fireground operations was heart attack (40%). The nature of fatal injury for the remaining 21 deaths were trauma (6), crushed (6), asphyxiation (3), burns (3), unknown (2) and violence (1).

### Type of fireground activity during fireground operations

Table 5 shows the types of fireground activities in which firefighters were engaged when they sustained their fatal injuries or illnesses during fireground operations. This total includes all firefighting duties on the fireground, such as wildland firefighting and structural firefighting. In 2022, the most common type of on-scene fire activity was advancing hoselines.

**Table 5. Type of fireground activity (2022)**

Type of fireground activity	Number of firefighter fatalities
Advance hoselines	22
Other	4
Unknown	3
Pump operations	2
Incident command	1
Not on scene	1
Forcible entry	1
Driving/operating vehicle/apparatus	1

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## Fixed property use for structural firefighting fatalities

Of the fatalities that occurred during fireground operations in 2022, 19 were firefighters who became ill or injured while on the scene of a structure fire. Of these fatalities, 15 (71%) occurred while on the scene of a residential structure fire. Table 6 shows the distribution of these deaths by fixed property use.

**Table 6. Structural firefighting fatalities by fixed property use (2022)**

Type of structure	Number of firefighter fatalities
Residential	15
Commercial	4

## Responding/returning

In 2022, as shown in Table 7, 14 firefighters died or experienced an onset of symptoms while responding to or returning from incidents. Specifically, 8 were responding to, and 6 were returning from, an incident.

The average age of the 14 firefighters was 45 years old. The youngest was 19 years old, and the oldest was 69 years old.

**Table 7. Firefighter fatalities while responding to or returning from an incident (2013-2022)**

Year	Number of firefighter fatalities that occurred while responding to or returning from an incident
2022	14
2021	12
2020	14
2019	8
2018	11
2017	12
2016	13
2015	8
2014	14
2013	15
10-year average	12

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## Training

In 2022, 9 firefighters died while engaged in training activities (Table 8). Of these firefighters, 4 died from heart attacks and 2 died due to trauma. The nature of death for the 3 remaining firefighters was unknown.

Of the 9 firefighters who died while engaged in training activities, 2 firefighters died during training exercises, 1 firefighter died after returning from a training exercise, 1 firefighter died during a water training program, 1 firefighter was involved in a motor vehicle accident while returning from fire department mandated training, 1 firefighter died after performing fire department-mandated physical fitness training, 1 firefighter died after conducting self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) training to fellow firefighters, 1 firefighter died while attending fire department-mandated training, and 1 firefighter died while preparing for a drill inside the firehouse.

The average age of the 9 firefighters was 46 years old. The youngest firefighter was 31 years old, and the oldest firefighter was 65 years old.

**Table 8. Firefighter fatalities while engaged in training (2013-2022)**

Year	Number of firefighter fatalities that occurred during training
2022	9
2021	9
2020	7
2019	5
2018	9
2017	12
2016	9
2015	7
2014	10
2013	7
10-year average	8



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## Other on duty

“Other on duty” refers to firefighters engaged in activities related to nonemergency situations, such as in-station duties, arson investigations and attending fire department-mandated meetings. In 2022, 19 firefighters died under these circumstances.

- 11 firefighters died from stress/overexertion.
- 1 firefighter died when he was hit by a dead tree that fell while participating in a prescribed burn.
- 1 firefighter was hit while assisting with traffic control at a fire department fundraiser.
- 1 firefighter died from exposure.
- 1 firefighter became trapped when he was in the process of moving a sand trailer.
- 1 firefighter died when the lift he was on fell, and he was struck in the head from the bumper of a parked apparatus.
- 1 firefighter died in a motor vehicle accident while working on department fundraising efforts.
- 2 firefighters died where the cause of fatal injury was unknown.

The average age of the 19 firefighters was 49 years old. The youngest was 25 years old, and the oldest was 77 years old.

## Nonfire emergencies

In 2022, 17 firefighters were killed during emergency duties not related to fire. These responses included 10 EMS incidents, 5 motor vehicle accidents and 2 technical rescue accidents.

Of the 17 firefighters who died during nonfire emergencies, 5 died from COVID-19, 4 from heart attacks, 4 from trauma, 2 from cerebrovascular accidents (CVAs) and 2 from drowning. The average age of these firefighters was 52 years old. The youngest was 20 years old and the oldest was 69 years old.



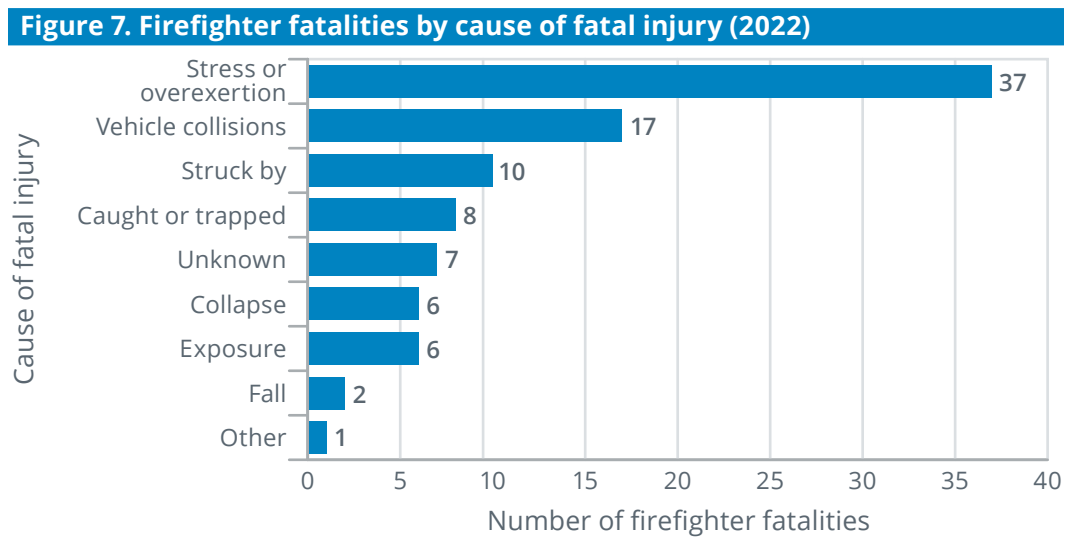




# Cause of Fatal Injury

The term “cause of fatal injury” refers to the action, lack of action or circumstances that directly resulted in the fatal injury. The term “nature of fatal injury” refers to the medical cause of the fatal injury or illness, which is often referred to as the physiological cause of death. A fatal injury is usually the result of a chain of events, the first of which is recorded as the cause.

Figure 7 shows the distribution of deaths by cause of fatal injury or illness in 2022. In 2022, the leading cause of fatal injury was stress/overexertion followed by vehicle collisions.



## Stress or overexertion

Firefighting is extremely strenuous work, and it can be one of the more physically demanding of human activities. Stress or overexertion is a general category that includes all firefighter deaths that are cardiac or cerebrovascular in nature, such as heart attacks and strokes, as well as other events, such as extreme climatic thermal exposure. Classification of a firefighter fatality in this “cause of fatal injury” category does not necessarily indicate that a firefighter was in poor physical condition.

In 2022, 37 firefighters died due to stress or overexertion:

- ▶ 33 firefighters died due to heart attacks.
- ▶ 4 firefighters died due to CVAs.

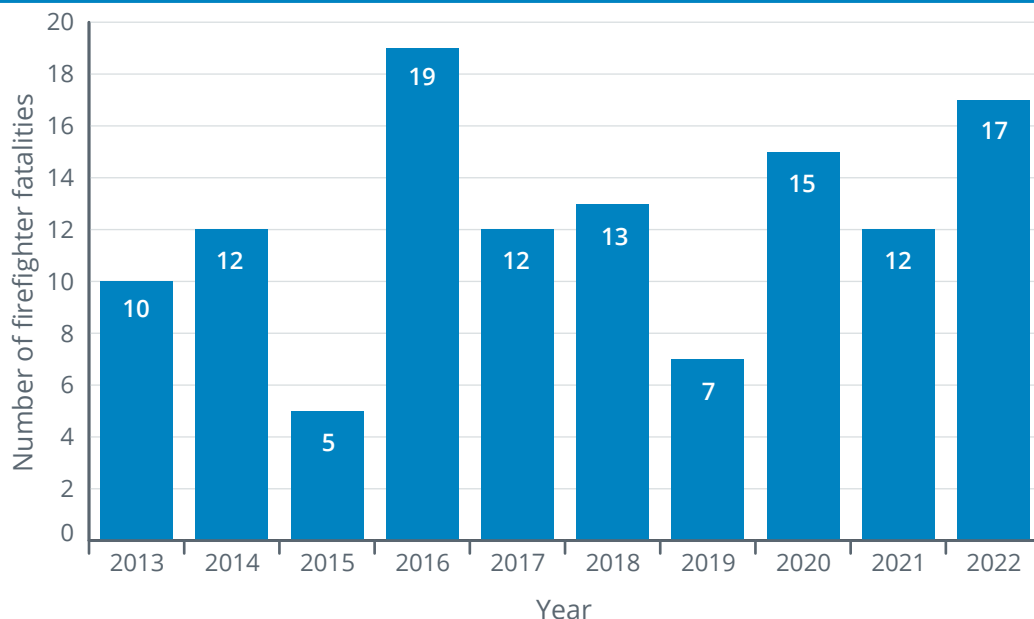
In addition, of the firefighters that died due to stress or overexertion, 15 (41%) were Hometown Heroes.

**Table 9. Firefighter fatalities caused by stress/overexertion (2013-2022)**

Year	Number of firefighter fatalities caused by stress/overexertion	Percentage of total firefighter fatalities caused by stress/overexertion	Number of Hometown Hero fatalities caused by stress/overexertion
2022	37	39.4	15
2021	39	27.7	10
2020	37	36.3	10
2019	37	56.9	10
2018	37	43.5	13
2017	54	58.1	16
2016	44	47.8	22
2015	61	67.8	15
2014	62	63.9	25
2013	40	36.4	10
10-year average	45	47.8	15

## Vehicle crashes

In 2022, 17 firefighters (11 volunteer, 3 wildland and 3 career) lost their lives due to vehicle crashes. Vehicle crashes were the second leading cause of fatal firefighter injuries for the year. In 2022, 4 deaths involved helicopters, 4 deaths involved staff support vehicles, 4 deaths involved tankers (water tenders), 2 involved fire department brush trucks, 1 death involved an ambulance, 1 death involved a ladder truck and 1 death involved a privately owned vehicle (POV).

**Figure 8. Firefighter fatalities in vehicle collisions (including aircraft) (2013-2022)**

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- A captain and another firefighter were operating at the scene of a wildfire. They were burned when their truck rolled over in a ditch. The captain was driving the apparatus when the road was obscured by smoke and the apparatus left the left side of the roadway and rolled. Both were treated in the burn unit. The captain was released from the hospital a few weeks later and had a checkup a week after that. He took a turn for the worse and died approximately 1 month later from the burn injuries he sustained in the incident.
  - 2 pilots were flying water bucket drop missions in support of firefighting operations at the Moose Fire when their helicopter crashed. Both pilots were transported to a local hospital for treatment but did not survive.
  - A pilot was operating a 1960 Bell 204B “Huey” helicopter. The purpose of the flight was to transport equipment to firefighters working on the ground by utilizing a 125-foot longline. After a normal liftoff, the helicopter extended as it maneuvered to hook up to the external load. A bang was heard and the helicopter bucked. The helicopter then rolled right, entered a nose low descent and crashed. Following the impact, a post-crash fire ensued, which consumed a majority of the helicopter. The engine’s transmission with the rotor head and blades were still attached and found separated approximately 20 feet from the main wreckage. The pilot died from the injuries sustained in the incident.
  - A firefighter was working on fundraising efforts for the department when he was involved in a motor vehicle accident. His personal vehicle crossed the center line and struck a farm tractor sprayer head-on. The firefighter was pronounced deceased at the scene. Initial reports were that he suffered a medical emergency which resulted in the accident. The firefighter was wearing his seat belt at the time of the crash.
  - A firefighter was the driver and sole occupant of a tanker (tender) responding to a structure fire. The apparatus entered a left-hand curve, the right wheels left the pavement, the apparatus left the roadway and rolled over. The firefighter was fatally injured in the crash and pronounced deceased at the scene. He was wearing his seat belt at the time of the crash.
  - A captain and a firefighter were responding in a 2,000-gallon tanker (tender) to a motor vehicle collision on a local highway. The captain was driving, and the firefighter was the front seat passenger. The apparatus was responding northbound in the right-hand lane of a highway and attempted to make a left-hand turn into a highway crossover. As the apparatus turned left, it was struck by a northbound tractor-trailer. The apparatus sustained major damage and caught fire as a result of the crash. Both the captain and the firefighter were killed in the crash.
  - A firefighter/emergency medical technician (EMT) was assigned to Rescue 294. Rescue 294 was dispatched to an emergency medical incident. The firefighter/EMT was the driver of the vehicle. Rescue 294 began its response to this incident. While Rescue 294 was responding to the original incident, it was diverted by dispatch to another emergency medical incident. During the response, Rescue 294 stopped at a stop sign prior to entering a highway. As the vehicle made a right-hand turn onto State Route 87, it was struck by a southbound tractor-trailer. The vehicles continued across the highway and came to rest. The firefighter/EMT was fatally injured in the crash. He was wearing his seat belt at the time of the crash.



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- A driver, his ladder company officer and 2 firefighters were responding to a residential structure fire. As they entered an intersection, the apparatus was struck by a Ford F150 pickup that ran the red light. The apparatus left the roadway and rolled over. All 4 firefighters were transported to local hospitals, but the driver was fatally injured. The 4 firefighters on the apparatus were wearing their shoulder and lap belts and none of them were ejected. The driver of the pickup was charged with several violations including driving while intoxicated and driving on a suspended driver's license.
  - A chief was a passenger in a 2014 Ford Expedition XL that was responding to the scene of a wildland fire. The Expedition was being driven by the county emergency manager. Visibility on the roadway was near zero due to the smoke produced by the fire. The chief's vehicle was driving southbound when they struck a northbound tractor-trailer head-on. The tractor-trailer was pulling a tank of approximately 5,000 gallons of water to the scene. At the time of the crash, the tractor-trailer was in a position left of the center line in the oncoming traffic lane. The chief was not wearing his seat belt at the time of the crash and a front air bag did deploy. He was transported to the hospital but did not survive. The emergency manager sustained severe injuries but did survive.
  - A chief and a firefighter were the driver and front seat passenger of a 2018 Chevrolet Tahoe fire department vehicle. The 2 were returning from a mutual aid traffic crash response. As the Tahoe drove southwest, a tractor-trailer approaching from the opposite direction crossed the center line to pass another vehicle. As the 2 vehicles neared one another, the chief tried to avoid a crash by going onto the shoulder. Unfortunately, the approaching truck also went onto the shoulder and the vehicles struck one another head-on. Both the chief and the firefighter were killed in the crash. Both firefighters were wearing their seat belts and multiple air bags were deployed in the crash. The driver of the tractor-trailer was charged with failure to pass safely and with criminally negligent homicide.
  - An assistant chief was the driver of a brush truck returning from a response. A firefighter was the front seat passenger. As the brush truck entered an intersection, a 2009 BMW station wagon turned left in front of the brush truck. The vehicles collided and the brush truck rolled onto its left side, ejecting the assistant chief who was crushed by the apparatus. The firefighter was partially ejected. Both firefighters were pronounced dead at the scene.
  - A lieutenant and 3 county sheriff's department employees were returning by helicopter from a wildland fire fight when it was involved in an accident. The pilot, 2 tactical flight observers and the rescue specialist sustained fatal injuries.
  - A chief was involved in a motor vehicle crash while returning from fire department mandated training at the local fire academy. As the chief was driving his borough-assigned vehicle, it was struck head-on by an oncoming vehicle that crossed the center line of the roadway. The chief sustained traumatic injuries and was transported via ambulance to a local hospital. After being stabilized, he underwent surgery to reconstruct his right hip. In the days after his surgery, he was transported to a long-term facility for further rehabilitation. After approximately 1 month in the long-term rehab facility, he was able to be transported home to continue further rehab there. Approximately 2 months later, the chief was transported back to

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the hospital for a medical emergency and passed away. An autopsy determined that his cause of death was pulmonary failure due to immobility produced by his injuries sustained in the crash. At the time of the original crash, the chief was using his seatbelt and air bags deployed.

## Struck by

In 2022, 10 firefighters were killed by being struck at the scene of vehicle accidents, wildland fires and while performing in-station duties.

- A captain and the members of his engine company were dispatched to a report of a dumpster fire. Upon their arrival on-scene, the captain reported a dumpster fire against a building and requested additional fire department units. As his firefighters stretched a handline to fight the fire, the captain began forcible entry to check for fire extension into the building. As he worked, he was struck by gunfire. Other firefighters treated him at the scene, and he was transported to a local hospital but did not survive. The shooter was convicted of second-degree murder and discharging a firearm.
- A wildland firefighter was fighting a wildfire when he was struck by a falling tree. Despite efforts from EMS personnel, the wildland firefighter passed away from the injuries he sustained in the accident.
- A firefighter was critically injured after being struck by a tree during a wildfire. Personnel and a helicopter were immediately deployed to the fire and airlifted the firefighter out of the mountainous terrain to a waiting medical helicopter, which transported him to a regional hospital. Despite lifesaving efforts by firefighters and EMS personnel assigned to the fire and responding medical staff, the firefighter succumbed to his injuries.
- A fire engineer and his engine company were dispatched to a vehicle collision on a local highway. While working at the scene, the fire engineer was struck by a vehicle traveling at high speed. He was treated at the scene and airlifted to a regional hospital. Despite treatment, the fire engineer died approximately 1 month later.
- A fire district and state patrol were dispatched to a 1 vehicle crash on the southbound lanes of I-71. A responding state trooper and a lieutenant were both finishing administrative tasks, standing next to the crashed vehicle. At that time, a commercial vehicle struck the left rear of the fire engine on scene. The commercial vehicle then struck the highway patrol cruiser before finally striking the vehicle involved in the original crash. Both the trooper and lieutenant were struck by the commercial vehicle. The lieutenant was fatally injured, and the trooper sustained severe injuries.
- A firefighter and his crew responded to a motor vehicle crash on I-90 East. Within a few minutes of arrival on the scene, a vehicle drove around the emergency vehicles blocking the scene and onto the shoulder and struck the firefighter. The driver then fled the scene. The firefighter was immediately rushed to the hospital where he was pronounced deceased. The driver that hit him was apprehended and in police custody.

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- A firefighter and members of his fire department were at the scene of a motor vehicle crash. While at the scene, another vehicle, not involved in the initial crash, lost control and hit the firefighter. He was immediately taken to a local hospital, where he was later pronounced deceased. Road conditions were icy at the time of the crashes.
  - A lieutenant was assisting with traffic control at a fire department fundraiser at a local business. Signs were posted in the roadway warning of congestion and flagger ahead. A southbound pickup truck struck the lieutenant in the roadway. Firefighters came to his aid immediately and provided CPR. He was transported to a hospital but did not survive.
  - A wildland firefighter was assigned to a Type II Initial Attack Hand Crew working to prepare an area for a prescribed burning. While working in the area, he was hit by a dead tree that fell. He was transported down the hill to the medics where CPR was performed. All life-saving measures were unsuccessful, and he was pronounced deceased.
  - A firefighter was paged to respond to a weather watch due to impending violent storms. As he was leaving his farm, the firefighter was struck by a grain bin that was lifted off its foundation, the bin rolled off of a shed and landed on top of the firefighter. He was crushed and killed instantly.

## Caught or trapped

Being caught or trapped covers firefighters in wildland and structural fires who were unable to escape due to rapid fire progression and the byproducts of smoke, heat, toxic gas and flames. This classification may also include firefighters who drowned and those who were trapped and/or crushed.

In 2022, 8 firefighters died from being caught or trapped.

- Firefighters were dispatched to a report of a fire in a single-story residence. Once on-scene, firefighters found a small fire in a bedroom. The response of some fire units was canceled by on-scene firefighters and an engine, quint and patrol unit were held at the scene. Subsequently, firefighters found a working attic fire and requested the reassignment of responding units to the fire scene. Firefighters entered the structure to attack the fire. During the fire fight, a firefighter initiated a mayday. He activated the emergency feature on his portable radio and activated the alarm on his Personal Alert Safety System. His SCBA air supply had been depleted. Firefighters located the firefighter and provided emergency medical care, including CPR and advanced life support. He was transported to a local hospital where he was pronounced deceased. The firefighter's death was caused by asphyxiation and burns.
- Firefighters were dispatched to a report of a barn fire. Upon their arrival on-scene, firefighters found a fully involved barn with fire threatening exposures. Firefighters took a defensive posture and pulled handlines to protect exposures. As firefighters worked, there was a large explosion from a refrigerated shipping container. The explosion was due to pressure buildup inside the container. A firefighter was fatally injured in the explosion. The cause of the fire was recorded as suspicious/under investigation.

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- An assistant chief and a firefighter responded to a residential fire with possible entrapment. Approximately 1 hour into the fire fight, maydays were received from these firefighters on the second floor. On scene, Rapid Intervention Teams went to rescue the 2 firefighters. They were removed and immediately transported to a local hospital. Both firefighters were pronounced deceased a short time later. Both firefighters died of asphyxiation and burns. Investigation into the fatal fire is ongoing.
  - A firefighter and the members of her fire department responded to a wildland fire. During the fire fight, the firefighter became separated from her apparatus and from other firefighters. She was later discovered deceased by other firefighters. Her death was due to burns.
  - A chief was injured while attempting to put out a grass fire. His pants caught fire and he was unable to put the fire out before he was injured. Even after being burned, he continued to work to put the fire out and even drove a piece of department apparatus back to the scene. The chief was transported via ambulance to a nearby hospital and then to a regional burn center. For a time, his condition improved, and he responded to treatment. He became increasingly ill after the initial rally and succumbed to his burn injuries approximately 3 weeks after the initial incident.
  - A firefighter responded to the scene of a vehicle crash. While attempting to rescue a mother and daughter after their SUV was driven into the water, he was caught in the current and drowned. The vehicle crash was later reported to be a murder-suicide.
  - A firefighter/EMT and another firefighter were in the process of moving a sand trailer. They were located across the street from the fire station. The firefighter/EMT became trapped under the rear of the trailer when the trailer rotated backward, with the trailer's tongue in the air. The other firefighter called for help by portable radio and multiple firefighters responded from the fire station and from elsewhere. Hydraulic rescue tools, cribbing and a winch were used to raise the trailer off of him. He was extricated and transported by ground ambulance to a local hospital, where he died as the result of his injuries approximately 2 ½ weeks later.

## Unknown

In 2022, there were 7 firefighter fatalities for which the cause of fatal injury was unknown. There are a number of factors that may have contributed to the cause of fatal injury being classified as unknown, such as a lack of an autopsy at the time of death, or the cause of fatal injury was still being investigated at the time this report was published.

- Several firefighters responded to a building fire at a chiropractic office. While fighting the fire, 1 of the firefighters experienced a medical emergency and collapsed at the scene. The firefighter suffered smoke inhalation as he was trapped inside and then removed by other firefighters. He was airlifted to a regional medical center where he died 2 days later. The cause and nature of his death is under investigation.
- A crew boss was working under contract that was assigned to a wildland fire. Early one morning, he suffered a medical emergency and passed away. The cause of his death has yet to be determined.

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- A firefighter/EMT was found deceased on the bay floor by a fellow firefighter. The cause of his death is under investigation.
  - A captain was at the fire station when he was found unresponsive by fellow firefighters. He was pronounced deceased at the scene. The cause and nature of his death are under investigation.
  - A firefighter/EMT had returned to fire headquarters in the afternoon from a training exercise at another building in the city where he assisted newer firefighters with structural roof ventilation skills. While he was in the shower a short time later, other on-duty firefighters heard him rustling around and knew something was wrong. Firefighters found the firefighter/EMT unconscious. He had suffered some type of medical episode. He was transported to a local hospital where he was pronounced deceased. The cause of his death has yet to be determined.
  - A firefighter was at a training exercise when he suffered a medical emergency and collapsed. He was immediately taken to a local hospital where he passed away a short time later. An autopsy was scheduled, but the results are not available.
  - While attending fire department mandated training, a firefighter/paramedic suffered a medical emergency. He was immediately transported to the local hospital where he passed away a short time later. The cause of his death has yet to be determined.

## Collapse

In 2022, 6 firefighters were killed during structure collapses, equal in severity to the causes of fatal injury of “exposure.”

- Firefighters were dispatched to a report of a fire in a vacant 2-story residence. They found a working fire and began advancing hoselines into the building. Firefighters were in the interior of the structure when the roof and second story collapsed. A firefighter became trapped in the collapse. He was later removed from the structure but could not be revived. 2 other firefighters received nonfatal injuries in the collapse.
- Firefighters were dispatched to a report of a fire in a row house. Firefighters arrived on the scene and found a working fire in a vacant middle unit. Firefighters began to attack the fire. A catastrophic collapse occurred and trapped at least 4 firefighters. Of those trapped, 2 lieutenants and a firefighter/paramedic were killed in the incident. The cause of the fire was incendiary.
- A firefighter responded to a 3-alarm house fire in Brooklyn. He was critically injured in a collapse inside the building while he was fighting the fire. He later passed away from the injuries he sustained.
- A lieutenant and other firefighters were dispatched to a fire in a commercial building. After approximately an hour, the fire was brought under control. Firefighters were still on-scene when a building collapse occurred, killing the lieutenant, injuring 4 other firefighters and injuring a building inspector. The original fire was incendiary.

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## Exposure

In 2022, 6 firefighters were killed when they came into contact with or were exposed to harm. All 6 firefighters died from complications of COVID-19.<sup>4</sup>

## Fall

In 2022, 2 firefighters were killed from injuries sustained in falls.

- A chief was on the platform of a 25-foot scissor lift cleaning a new addition to his fire station. Someone activated the station's overhead door the door struck the scissor lift, and the lift toppled over. As the lift fell, the chief struck his head on the bumper of a parked apparatus and sustained a serious injury. He was treated and transported to a local hospital where he died the next day as the result of head trauma.
- A firefighter was preparing for a drill inside the firehouse when he fell approximately 20 feet and suffered a serious head injury. He was immediately treated by his fellow firefighters and was then rushed to a local hospital in critical condition. 4 days later it became clear to his family that he would not survive his injuries and was declared "brain dead." The firefighter was an organ donor, and his organs were transplanted to those in need. His official date of death was 1 week later.

## Other

In 2022, 1 firefighter died from a cause of fatal injury not listed in a specialized cause of fatal injury category such as stress/overexertion, struck by, etc.

- After being paged to respond, a training officer arrived in his POV at the scene of an individual driving an ATV that had fallen through the ice of a lake. While attempting to rescue the victim, the ATV vehicle that the training officer was in also fell through the ice. The initial victim was rescued by fellow firefighters; however, the training officer did not survive. His death was due to drowning.

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<sup>4</sup>The USFA includes in its on-duty firefighter fatality count those firefighters that contracted COVID-19 while on duty and died due to complications of the disease. All on-duty COVID-19 deaths have been verified with the fire department with which the firefighter was rostered.





## Nature of Fatal Injury

Figure 9 shows the distribution of the 94 firefighter deaths that occurred in 2022 by the medical nature of the fatal injury or illness. In 2022, heart attack was the leading type of nature of fatal injury, followed by trauma. Crushed was the third leading type of nature of fatal injury.

**Figure 9. Firefighter fatalities by nature of fatal injury (2022)**

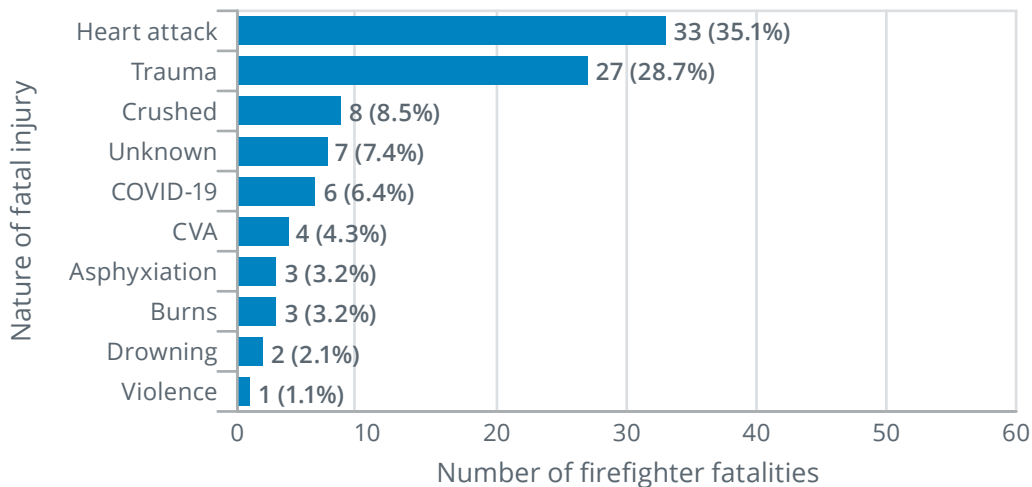
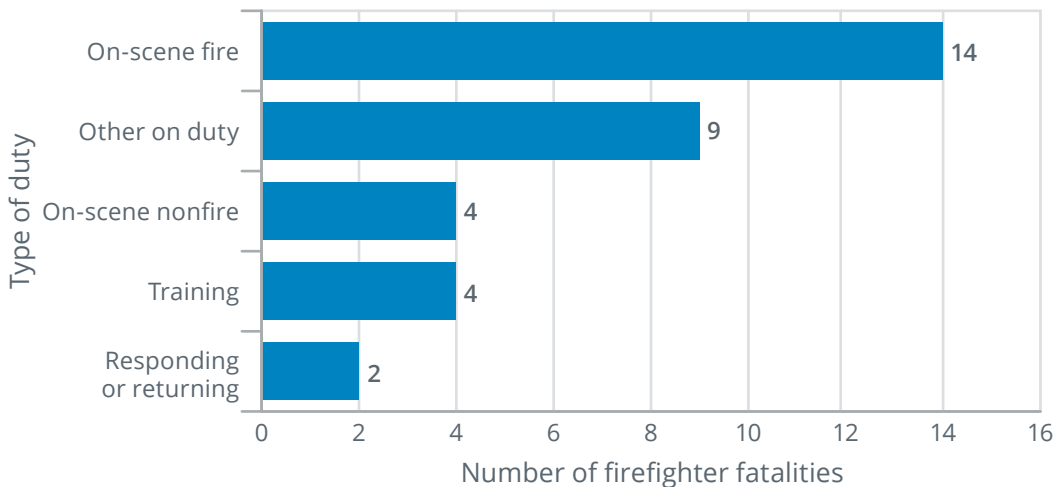


Figure 10 shows the type of duty involved for the 33 firefighters who died of a heart attack.

**Figure 10. Heart attacks by type of duty (2022)**



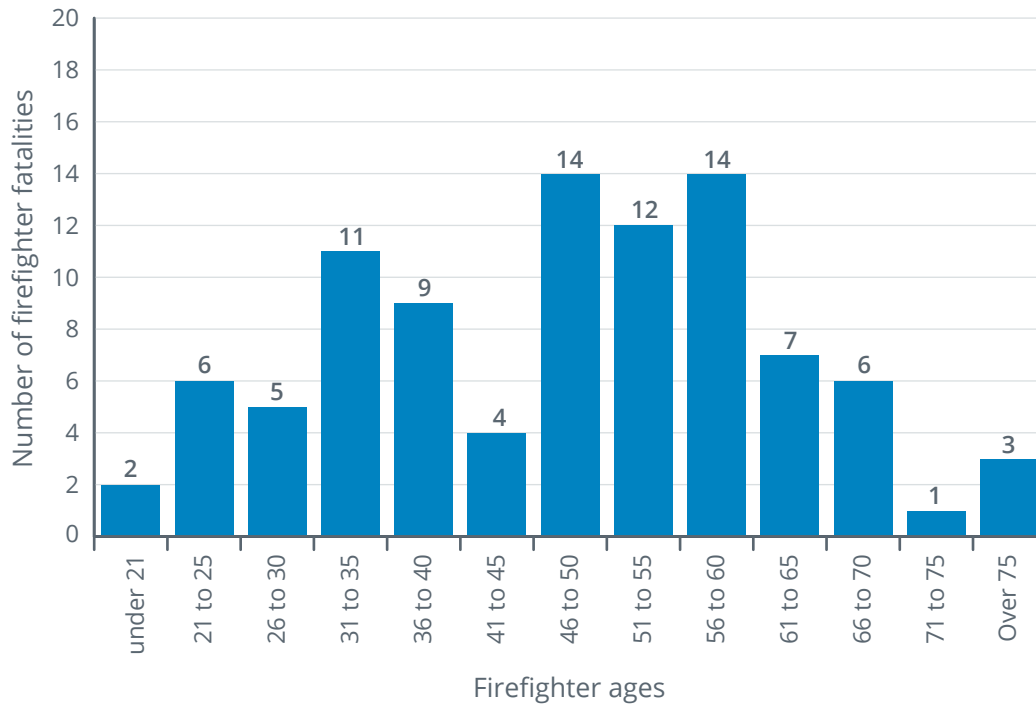




# Firefighter Ages

Figure 11 shows the distribution of firefighter deaths by age at the time of death. Table 10 provides a count of firefighter fatalities by age at death and the nature of the fatal injury.

**Figure 11. Firefighter fatalities by age at death (2022)**



**Table 10. Firefighter fatalities by age at death and nature of fatal injury (2022)**

Age	Number of firefighter fatalities caused by trauma/asphyxiation/other	Number of firefighter fatalities caused by heart attack/CVA
Under 21	1	1
21 to 25	6	0
26 to 30	4	1
31 to 35	8	3
36 to 40	6	3
41 to 45	4	0
46 to 50	5	9
51 to 55	7	5
56 to 60	7	7
61 to 65	3	4
66 to 70	4	2
71 to 75	0	1
Over 75	2	1



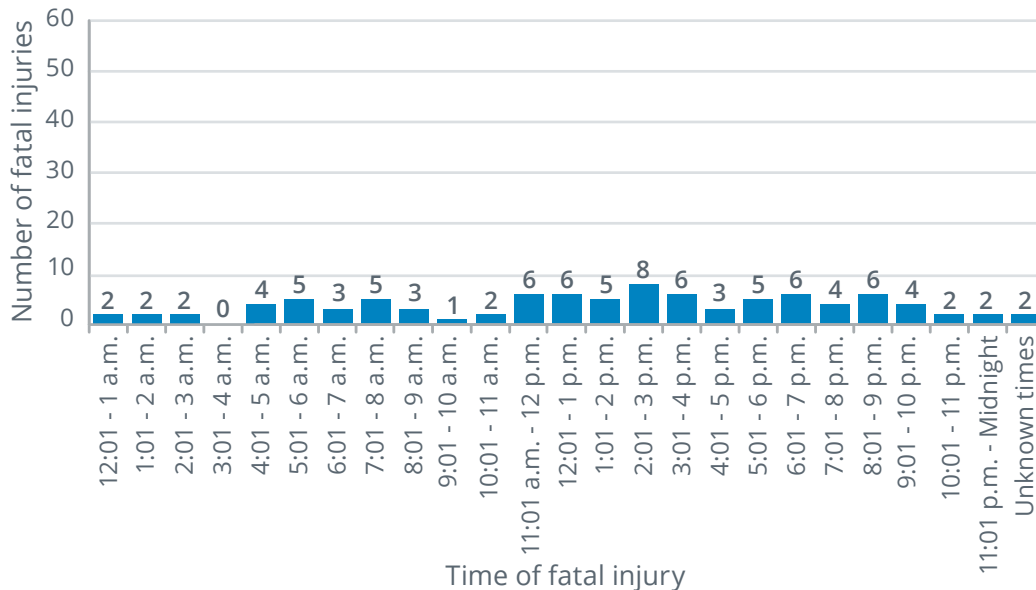
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# Deaths by Time of Injury

For 2022, the distribution of firefighter deaths according to the time of day when the fatal injury occurred is illustrated in Figure 12.

**Figure 12. Firefighter fatalities by time of fatal injury (2022)**

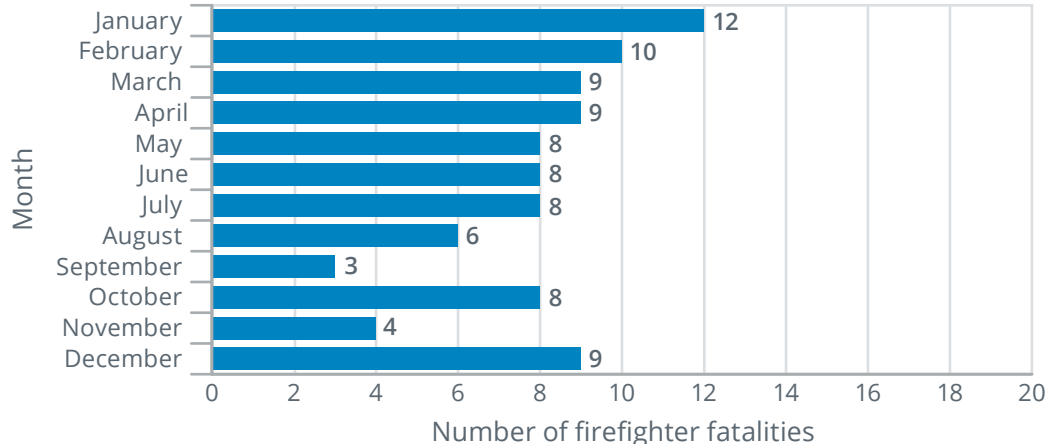


Note: Times are shown using the following formula: 12:01 a.m.-1:00 a.m.; 1:01 a.m.-2:00 a.m.; 2:01 a.m.-3:00 a.m., etc.

# Firefighter Fatality Incidents by Month of Year

Figure 13 illustrates when the 2022 firefighter fatalities occurred by month of year. Most fatalities occurred in the month of January, followed by the month of February.

**Figure 13. Firefighter fatalities by month of year (2022)**







## State and Region

The distribution of firefighter deaths in 2022 by state is shown in Table 11. Firefighters based in 36 states died in 2022.

The highest number of firefighter deaths in 2022 (based on the location of the fire service organization) occurred in Pennsylvania, with 7 losses. California, New York and Texas had 6 deaths each, followed by Maryland and New Jersey, which experienced 5 losses each.

**Table 11. Firefighter fatalities by state based on location of fire service (2022)\***

State	Number of firefighter fatalities	Percentage of firefighter fatalities
Pennsylvania	7	7.4
California	6	6.4
New York	6	6.4
Texas	6	6.4
Maryland	5	5.3
New Jersey	5	5.3
Alabama	4	4.3
North Carolina	4	4.3
Ohio	4	4.3
Tennessee	4	4.3
Colorado	3	3.2
Florida	3	3.2
Idaho	3	3.2
Missouri	3	3.2
Wisconsin	3	3.2
Arizona	2	2.1
Connecticut	2	2.1
Minnesota	2	2.1
Nebraska	2	2.1
New Mexico	2	2.1
Oklahoma	2	2.1

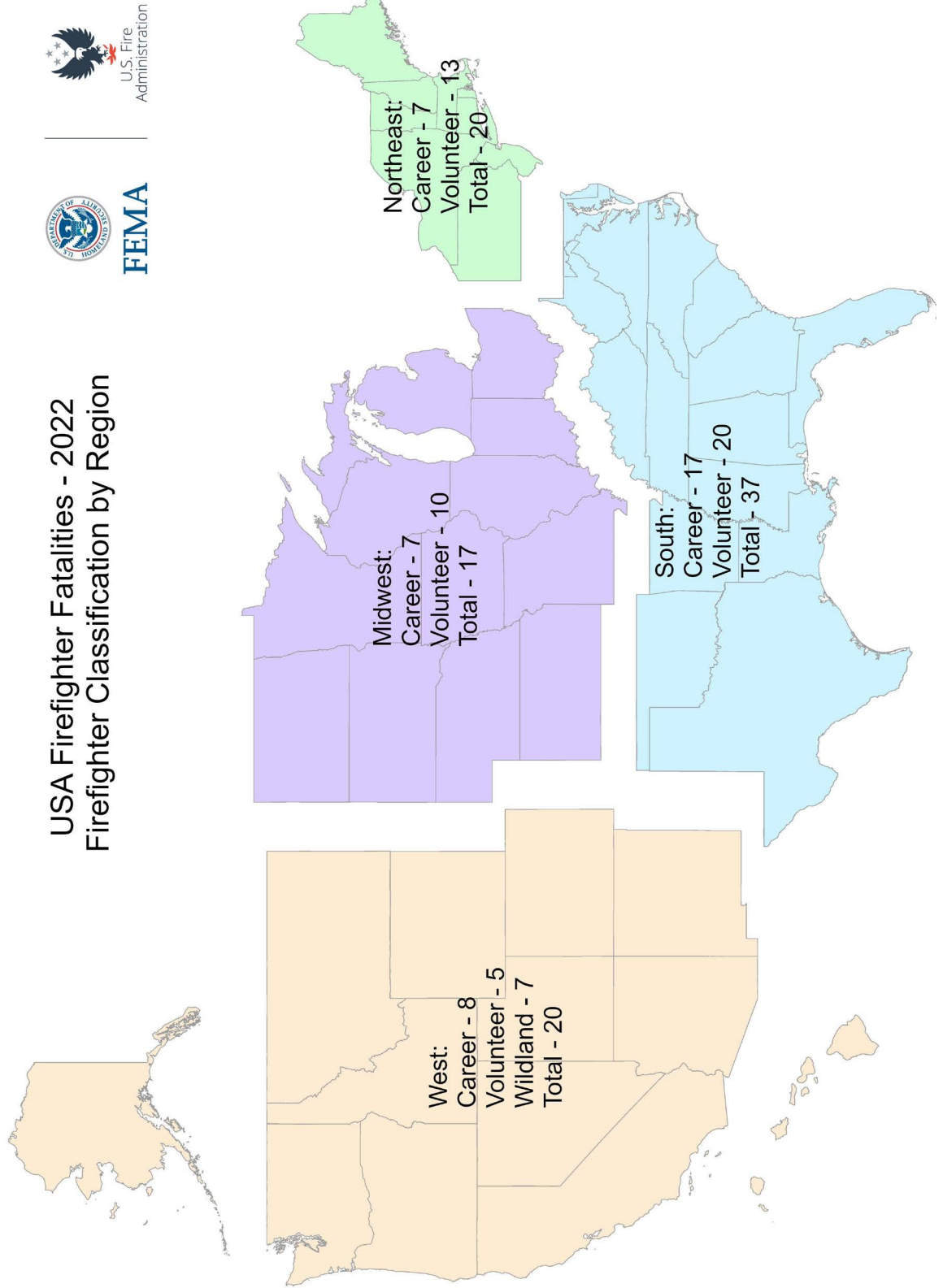
**Table 11. Firefighter fatalities by state based on location of fire service (2022)\*  
(continued)**

State	Number of firefighter fatalities	Percentage of firefighter fatalities
Oregon	2	2.1
Alaska	1	1.1
Arkansas	1	1.1
Delaware	1	1.1
Indiana	1	1.1
Iowa	1	1.1
Kansas	1	1.1
Kentucky	1	1.1
Louisiana	1	1.1
Michigan	1	1.1
Mississippi	1	1.1
South Carolina	1	1.1
Virginia	1	1.1
West Virginia	1	1.1
Wyoming	1	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*This list attributes the deaths according to the state in which the fire department or unit was based, as opposed to the state in which the death occurred. They are listed by those states for statistical purposes and for the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial at the NETC.



Figure 14



Sources: USFA's National Fire Data Center and NIFF.  
Note: There were zero firefighter fatalities reported in the U.S. territories for 2022.

Figure 15

## USA Firefighter Fatalities - 2022 by Fire Department Location

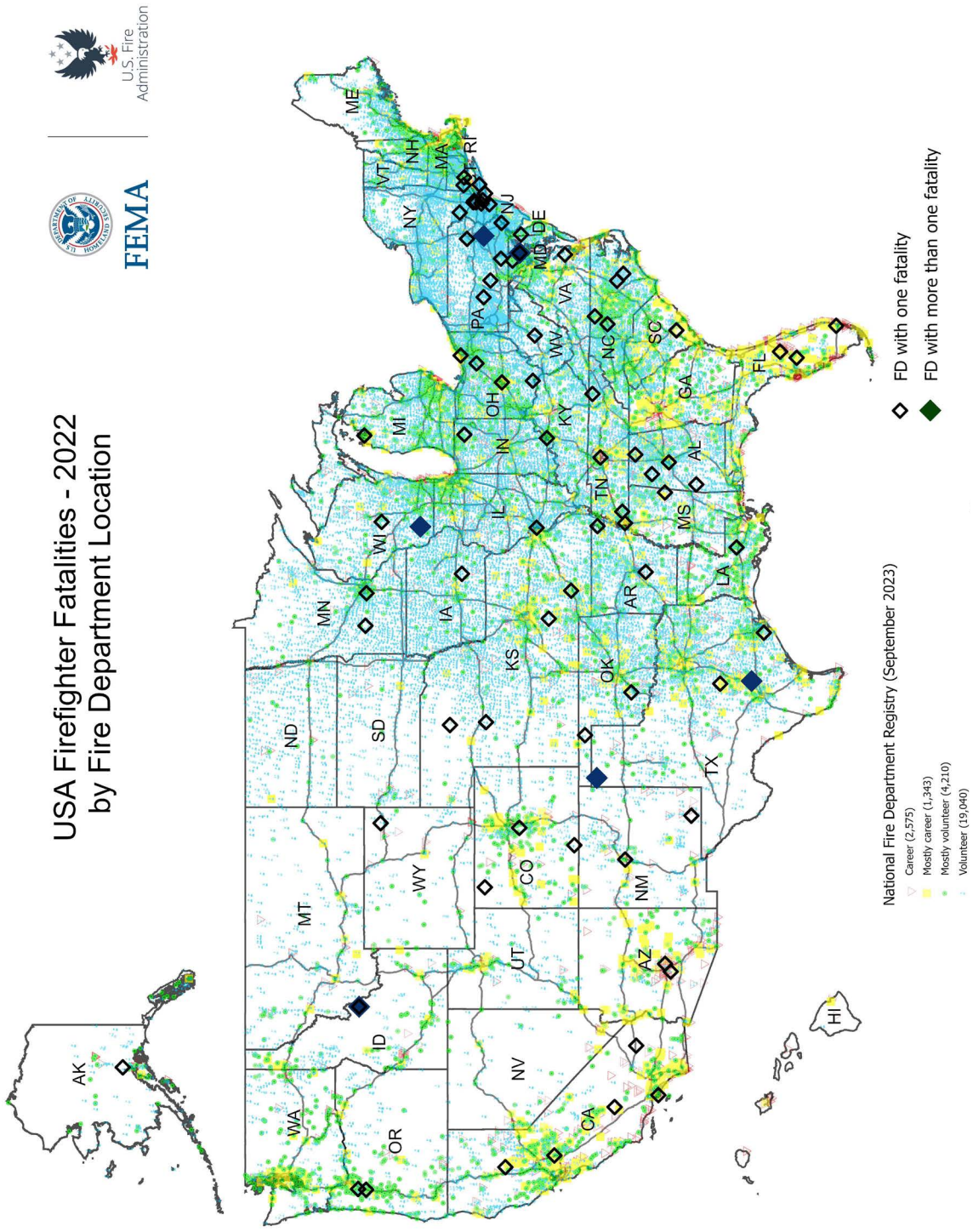
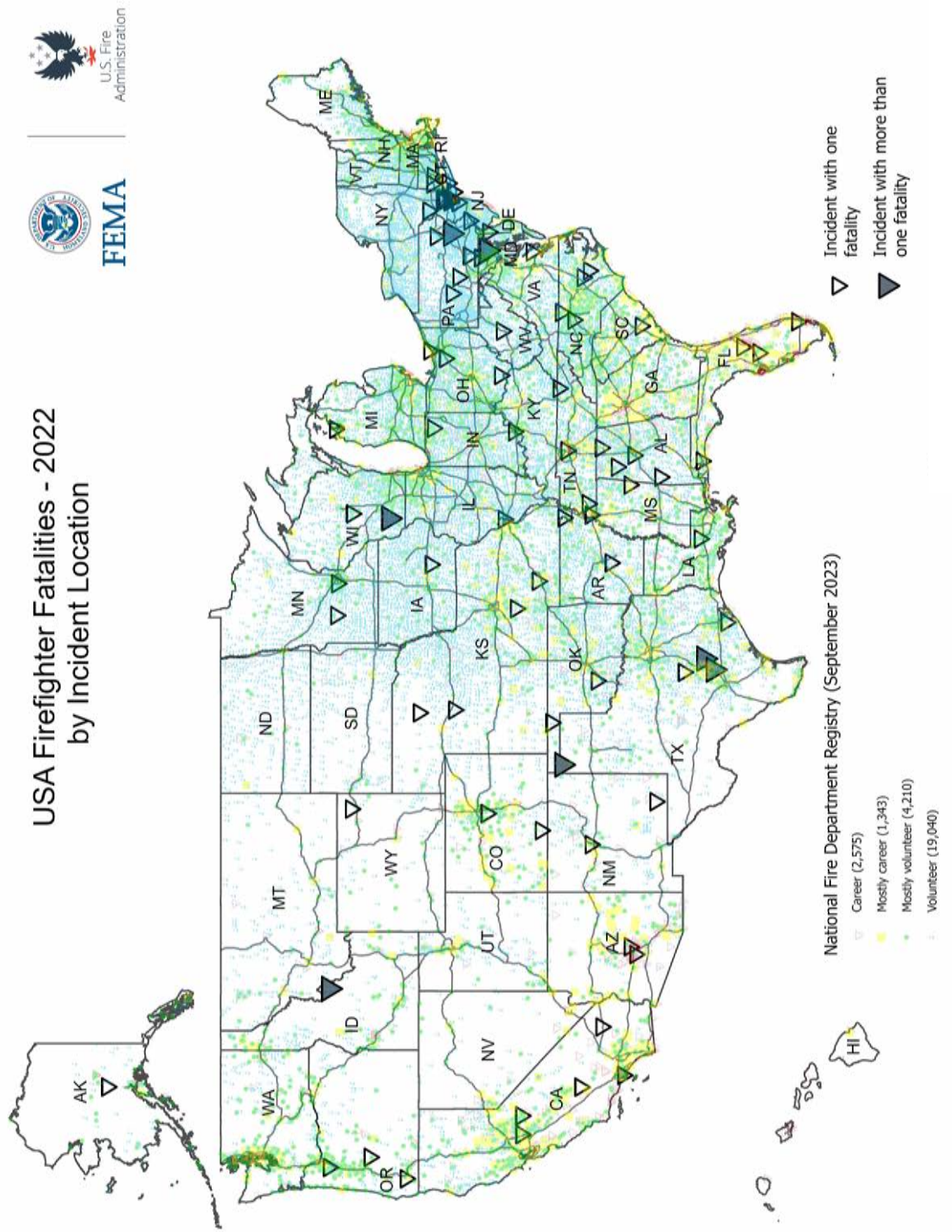




Figure 16



Sources: USFA's National Fire Data Center and NFFF.







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# Analysis of Urban/Suburban/Rural Patterns in Firefighter Fatalities

The U.S. Census Bureau defines “urban” as a place having a population of at least 2,500 or lying within a designated urban area. “Rural” is defined as any community that is not urban. “Suburban” is not a census term, but may be taken to refer to any place, urban or rural, that lies within a metropolitan area defined by the Census Bureau, but not within 1 of the central cities of that metropolitan area.

Fire department areas of responsibility do not always conform to the boundaries used by the Census Bureau. For example, fire departments organized by counties or special fire protection districts may have both urban and rural coverage areas. In such cases, where it may not be possible to characterize the entire coverage area of the fire department as rural or urban, firefighter deaths were listed as urban or rural based on the particular community or location in which the fatality occurred.

The following patterns were found for firefighter fatalities in 2022. These statistics are based on responses from fire department personnel, and when no data from the departments were available, the data were based upon population and area served, as reported by the fire departments.

**Table 12. Firefighter fatalities by coverage area type (2022)**

Urban/suburban	Rural	Total
57	37	94





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# Appendix

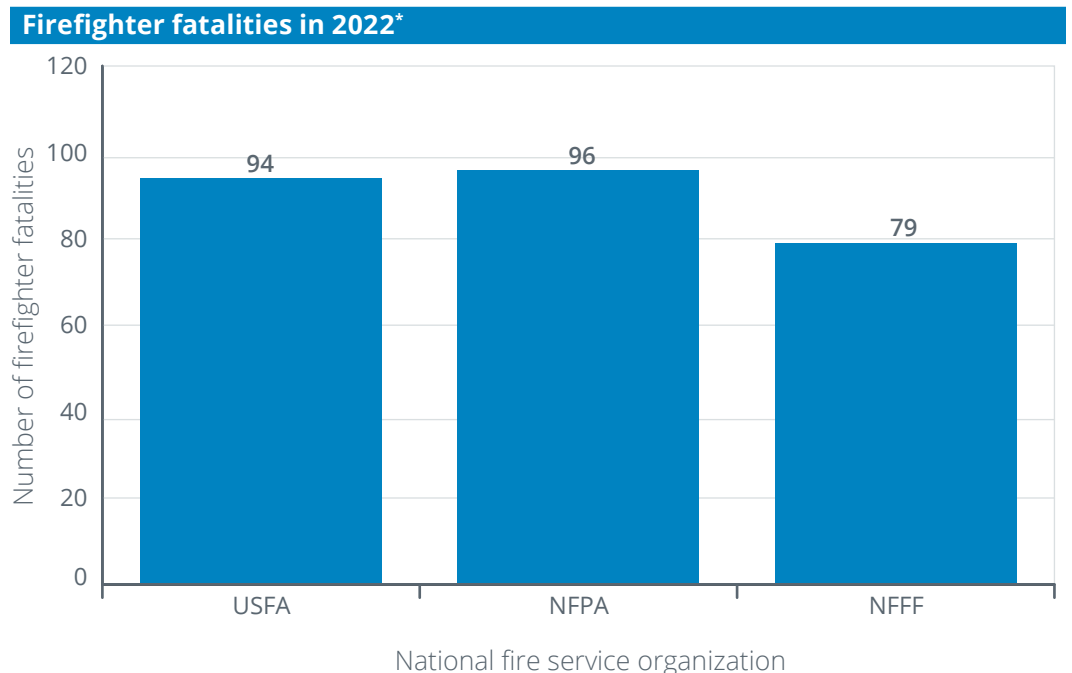
## Firefighter Fatality Inclusion Criteria — National Fire Service Organizations

The NFPA, the NFFF, the USFA and other organizations individually collect information on firefighter fatalities in the United States. Each organization uses a slightly different set of inclusion criteria based at least in part on the purposes of the information collection for each organization and data consistency.

As a result of these differing inclusion criteria, statistics about firefighter fatalities may be provided by each organization that do not coincide with one another. This section will explain the inclusion criteria for each organization and provide information about these differences.

The USFA includes firefighters in this report who died while on duty, became ill while on duty and later died, and firefighters who died within 24 hours of an emergency response or training regardless of whether the firefighter complained of illness while on duty. The USFA counts firefighter deaths that occurred in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and United States protectorates such as Puerto Rico and Guam. Detailed inclusion criteria appear starting on page 7 of this report.

For 2022, the USFA reported 94 on-duty firefighter fatalities. This number includes 6 firefighters that died in 2022 as a result of COVID-19 and its complications.



\*USFA methodology for the analyses of firefighter fatalities was changed in 2020. Starting with the 2020 report, firefighter deaths are counted in the year that the death occurred rather than the year that the fatal incident occurred.

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## Inclusion criteria for the National Fire Protection Association's annual firefighter fatality study

### Introduction

Each year, the NFPA collects data on all the firefighter fatalities in the U.S. that resulted from injuries or illnesses that occurred while the victims were on duty. The term “on duty” refers to the following:

- Being at the scene of an alarm, whether it is a fire or nonfire incident (including EMS calls).
- Responding to or returning from an alarm.
- Participating in other fire department duties, such as training, maintenance, public education, inspection, investigation, court testimony or fundraising.
- Being on call or standby for assignment at a location other than the firefighter's home or place of business.

On-duty fatalities include any injury sustained in the line of duty that proves fatal, any illness incurred as a result of actions while on duty that proves fatal, and any fatal mishaps involving nonemergency occupational hazards that occur while on duty. The types of injuries included in the first category are mainly those that occurred at a fire or other emergency incident scene, in training, or in crashes while responding to or returning from alarms. Illnesses (including heart attacks) are included when the exposure or onset of symptoms occurred during a specific incident or on-duty activity. Fatal heart attacks and strokes are included if they occur within 24 hours of duty.

### What is a firefighter?

The types of firefighters included in this study are the following:

- Members of local career and volunteer fire departments.
- Seasonal, full-time and contract employees of state and federal agencies who have fire suppression responsibilities as part of their job description.
- Prison inmates serving on firefighting crews.
- Military personnel performing assigned fire suppression activities.
- Civilian firefighters working at military installations.
- Members of facility or industrial fire brigades.

Fatal injuries and illnesses are included even in cases where death was considerably delayed. When the injury and death occurred in different years, the incident is counted for the year of the injury. In the case of COVID-19 deaths, the NFPA is following inclusion criteria similar to that used by the PSOB program and the IAFF in counting active on-duty firefighters who were working at the time their illness was diagnosed.

The Safeguarding America's First Responders Act allows PSOB to recognize the eligibility of COVID-19 diagnoses for firefighters within 45 days of their last day on



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duty. NFPA recognizes that other organizations report the number of duty-related firefighter fatalities using different, more expansive definitions, and some include deaths that occurred when the victims were off-duty (See, for example, the USFA and NFFF websites). Readers comparing reported losses should carefully consider the definitions and inclusion criteria used in any study.

### Categories not included in the study

The NFPA study does not include members of fire department auxiliaries, nonuniformed employees of fire departments or EMTs who are not also firefighters, chaplains or civilian dispatchers. The study also does not include suicides as on-duty fatalities even when the suicide occurs on fire department property.

The NFPA recognizes that a comprehensive study of firefighter on-duty fatalities would include chronic illnesses (such as cardiovascular disease and certain cancers) that prove fatal and that arose from occupational factors. In practice, there is as yet no mechanism for identifying on-duty fatalities that are due to illnesses that develop over long periods of time like cancer. This situation creates an incomplete picture when comparing occupational illnesses to other causes of firefighter deaths. The size of this gap in information is undetermined at this time due to the limitations in tracking firefighters' exposure to toxic environments and substances, and the potential long-term effects of such exposures.

### 2022 experience

In 2022, a total of 96 on-duty firefighter deaths occurred in the United States, according to the NFPA inclusion criteria.

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## National Fallen Firefighters Foundation

The National Fallen Firefighters Memorial was built in 1981 in Emmitsburg, Maryland. The names listed there begin with those firefighters who died in the line of duty that year. The U.S. Congress created the NFFF to lead a nationwide effort to remember America's fallen firefighters. Since 1992, the tax-exempt, nonprofit foundation has developed and expanded programs to honor our fallen fire heroes and assist their families and co-workers by providing them with resources to rebuild their lives. Since 1997, the foundation has managed the National Memorial Service held each October to honor the firefighters who died in the line of duty the previous year. In 2023, the National Memorial Service was held in May.

### **\*The National Fallen Firefighters Memorial line-of-duty deaths shall be determined by the following standards:**

1. For the purpose of this memorial the term "firefighter" means an individual whose official duties include fire suppression, fire investigation or fire police activities and who is actively employed on a full-time, part-time, volunteer or contract basis by a local county, state or federal agency, with or without compensation, to provide primary fire protection for an organized jurisdiction having authority.

This definition also includes seasonal and full-time employees of the USFS, BLM, FWS, NPS, and DOE and state wildland agencies; contract fire suppression personnel and pilots working under the official auspices of one of the above; prison inmates serving on fire crews; civilian firefighters working at military installations; and privately employed firefighters including trained members of industrial or institutional fire brigades.

In 2010, the foundation expanded the definition of firefighter to include active-duty, enlisted and officer U.S. Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Navy and Marine Corps military personnel assigned to fire stations who die performing emergency services in accordance with their position description. The 2 exclusions from this policy are: (1) personnel who die fighting fire on board Navy ships where all sailors are considered firefighters, and (2) personnel who die from direct enemy action or attack.

2. "Line of duty" means any activity or action that a firefighter is obligated or authorized by statute, rule, regulation, condition of employment or service, official mutual-aid agreement, or other law, or for which they are compensated to perform under the auspices of the fire service protection agency they serve, and that such agency legally recognizes the activity or action to have been obligated or authorized at the time performed.

### **Additionally, the following criteria will be applied when evaluating circumstances of each death for inclusion on the national memorial:**

- Deaths meeting the DOJ's PSOB program guidelines for a favorable determination. (See [PSOB site](#) for current information.)
- Deaths directly resulting from cancer, disease or infection that are defined as meeting the criteria of the decedent's home state occupational exposure presumption laws. **(Note: applies only to such deaths occurring on or after Jan. 1, 2018.)**

In all cases, documentation must be provided showing a direct link from a single emergency incident or training activity to the firefighter's injury and subsequent death. Examples of documentation that can be submitted are: department incident or run reports, newspaper articles, notarized witness statements, hospital records, physician

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reports and disability records. For deaths resulting from a heart attack or stroke, documentation must be provided showing the firefighter's participation in emergency response or training activities within the designated time frame (24 hours) before the onset of the cardiovascular event. If the injury or cardiovascular event results in long-term disability or hospitalization, documentation will also be required indicating that the individual did not return to full-duty status as a firefighter prior to their death.

In certain cases, the foundation will abstain from rendering a decision regarding eligibility for inclusion on the national memorial until the PSOB program makes its determination.

**Such cases are:**

- Deaths where the decedent is under the age of 18.
- Deaths that occur while the firefighter was engaged in a nonemergency fire department duty (i.e., station or apparatus maintenance, special-event standby assignments, parades, community service details, fundraising events, etc.).
- Deaths that occur during the firefighter's commute to/from their assignment.
- Deaths where there is a report of alcohol or controlled substance involvement.

If a claim for death benefits has been filed with the PSOB office, the foundation will hold the case in a "Pending" status until the PSOB renders its decision. If the DOJ determines the firefighter's death was line of duty based on their guidelines, the foundation will rule the death eligible for inclusion on the national memorial. If the DOJ determines the firefighter's death does not meet their criteria for payment of death benefits, the foundation will rule the death ineligible for inclusion on the national memorial. If no claim for PSOB benefits is filed within 1 year of the firefighter's death, the foundation will close out the file as "Not Eligible" for inclusion on the national memorial.

**Specific cases will be excluded from consideration for inclusion on the national memorial, such as:**

- Deaths attributed to alcohol or controlled substance abuse.
- Deaths resulting from the firefighter acting in a grossly negligent manner at the time of their death.

Acceptance for inclusion on the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial in no way impacts decisions made by the federal government regarding the awarding of PSOB benefits.

The NFFF honored 144 firefighters who died in the line of duty at the planned May 2023 Memorial Weekend. Of those, 79 firefighters that were honored are associated with incidents and deaths that occurred in 2022 and 65 deaths as the result of incidents that occurred prior to 2022. Of the 144 deaths, 3 were the result of COVID-19 and its complications that occurred in 2022 and 24 from previous years.\*\*

\*Criteria for Inclusion on the National Memorial - National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (firehero.org)

\*\*For firefighter deaths due to complications of COVID-19 in 2020, 2021 and 2022, the Safeguarding America's First Responders Act creates a general presumption that a public safety officer who dies from COVID-19-related complications sustained a personal injury in the line of duty if the COVID-19 diagnosis occurred within 45 days of their last day on duty. Based on the NFFF criteria for deaths due to infectious disease, the circumstances of the fatality can be determined to meet the criteria for inclusion on the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial when the death is approved for death benefits at the federal level or meets the criteria outlined by the DOJ PSOB program.



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# Acronyms

<b>BIA</b>	Bureau of Indian Affairs
<b>BLM</b>	Bureau of Land Management
<b>CVA</b>	cerebrovascular accident
<b>DOE</b>	U.S. Department of Energy
<b>DOJ</b>	U.S. Department of Justice
<b>EMS</b>	emergency medical services
<b>EMT</b>	emergency medical technician
<b>FWS</b>	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
<b>IAFF</b>	International Association of Fire Fighters
<b>NETC</b>	National Emergency Training Center
<b>NFFF</b>	National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
<b>NFIRS</b>	National Fire Incident Reporting System
<b>NFPA</b>	National Fire Protection Association
<b>NIOSH</b>	National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
<b>NPS</b>	National Park Service
<b>POV</b>	privately owned vehicle
<b>PSOB</b>	Public Safety Officer Benefits
<b>SCBA</b>	self-contained breathing apparatus
<b>USFA</b>	U.S. Fire Administration
<b>USFS</b>	U.S. Forest Service





U.S. Fire Administration  
Working for a fire-safe America

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