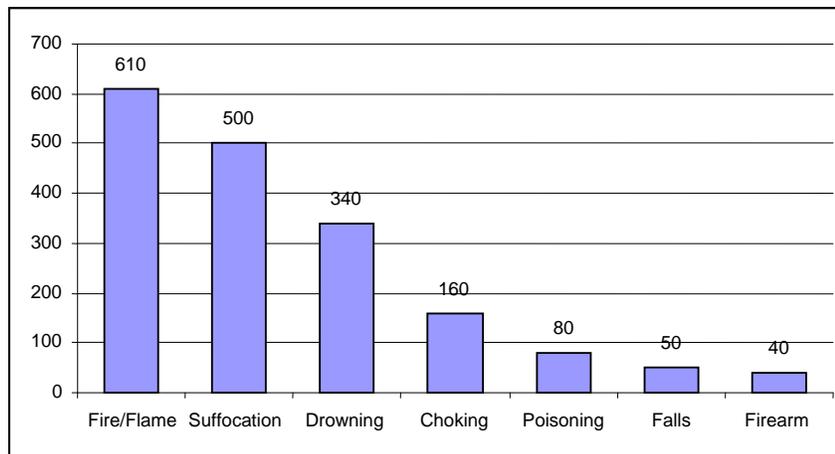


Home Safety

Key Facts

- Each year, an average of 2,096 children ages 14 and under die as a result of a home injury.¹
- Fires, suffocation and drowning are the leading causes of unintentional home injury death among children in this age group.²
- In 2004, approximately 2,300 children ages 14 and under died from unintentional injuries that occurred in the home. Nearly 80 percent of these deaths were among children ages 4 and under.³

2004 Deaths from Unintentional Home Injuries, Ages 0-14 ⁴



In 2004, deaths to children ages 14 and under in the home were attributed to the following causes:

Fire and flame burns

- At least 610 children died from fires and burns in the home. Nearly 60 percent were less than 4 years old.

Suffocation

- Approximately 500 children suffocated in the home; nearly 90 percent of these children were less than 4 years old.

Drowning

- Approximately 340 children drowned in or around the home and more than 80 percent were ages 4 and under.

Choking

- Approximately 160 children choked to death in the home; nearly 90 percent were ages 4 and under.

Falls

- Approximately 50 children died as the result of falls in the home or on home premises. Nearly 70 percent of these deaths occurred to children ages 4 and under.

Poisoning

- Approximately 80 children died from a poisoning incident in the home. Of these children, an estimated 60 percent were ages 4 and under.

Unintentional firearm injury

- Approximately 40 children died from unintentional shootings in the home. Three-quarters of these children were ages 5 to 14 years.

Who:

- Overall, children from low-income families are four times more likely to drown and five times more likely to die in a fire.^{5 6}
- Low-income families are less likely to use safety devices due to a lack of money, lack of transportation to obtain safety devices and/or a lack of control over housing conditions.^{7 8}
- For children less than 10 years of age, falls are among the top five causes of unintentional home injury death.⁹

Where:

- Deaths from an injury in the home vary widely by state. New Mexico, Mississippi and Arizona have the highest rates of unintentional home injury, exceeding the national average by more than 33 percent.¹⁰

Costs:

- Unintentional home injuries cost society at least \$222 billion per year in medical costs. For injuries that occur in the home, an additional \$165 billion in medical costs has been estimated.
- In terms of costs to society, the top five causes of unintentional home injury are falls, injuries involving the child being struck by/against, poisoning, cut/pierce wounds, and overexertion.

Prevention Strategies:

- Counseling and educational efforts moderately affect smoke alarm ownership in households. Community programs that give away smoke alarms have shown to reduce fire related injuries.¹¹
- Installation of a four-sided fence around home swimming pools has proven to be the only intervention effective in preventing drowning of young children. The fencing should include a self-closing and self-latching gate.¹²
- Window guards installed in homes have shown to be effective in preventing falls. New York City passed a regulation along with a window guard distribution program that resulted in a 35 percent reduction in window-related deaths and a 50 percent reduction in window-related falls.¹³
- Protective surfaces (rather than cement or asphalt) beneath playground equipment has shown to prevent the number of fall-related injuries as well as reducing the severity of injury.¹⁴

Suggested Citation: Safe Kids Worldwide (SKW). Home Safety. Washington (DC): SKW, 2007.

¹ Home Safety Council. Unintentional Home Injury in the United States. *State of Home Safety: 2004 Edition*.

² Home Safety Council. Unintentional Home Injury in the United States. *State of Home Safety: 2004 Edition*.

³ National Safety Council. Injury Facts. 2005 – 2006 edition. Itasca (IL): National Safety Council, 2006.

⁴ National Safety Council. Injury Facts. 2005 – 2006 edition. Itasca (IL): National Safety Council, 2006.

⁵ Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center. Harborview medical center viewpoint: a decade of injury control. Harborview (WA): Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center, 1995 Autumn.

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⁷ Rivara FP. Developmental and behavioral issues in childhood injury prevention. *Devel Beh Ped* 1995 October;16(5):362-70.

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⁹ Home Safety Council. Unintentional Home Injury in the United States. *State of Home Safety: 2004 Edition*.

¹⁰ Home Safety Council. Unintentional Home Injury in the United States. *State of Home Safety: 2004 Edition*.

¹¹ DiGiuseppi C. and Higgins J. *Systematic review of controlled trials of interventions to promote smoke alarms*. *Arch Dis Child* 2000 May;82:341-348.

¹² Thompson, D.C. and F.P. Rivara. Pool fencing for preventing drowning in children. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, 1998, Issue 1. Art. No.: CD001047. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD001047.

¹³ American Academy of Pediatrics. Falls from heights: windows, roofs, and balconies (RE9951). *Pediatrics*, 2001. 107: p. 1053-1056.

¹⁴ Chalmers, D., S. Marshall, and J. Langley. Height and surfacing as risk factors for injury in falls from playground equipment: a case-control study. *Injury Prevention*, 1996. 2: p. 98-104.