



# FACT SHEET » RESEARCH

## Firefighter Fatalities in the United States – 2016

A total of 69 on-duty firefighter deaths occurred in the United States in 2016. This is the fifth time in the past 6 years that the total number of deaths of firefighters has been below 70. The average number of deaths annually over the past decade is 79.

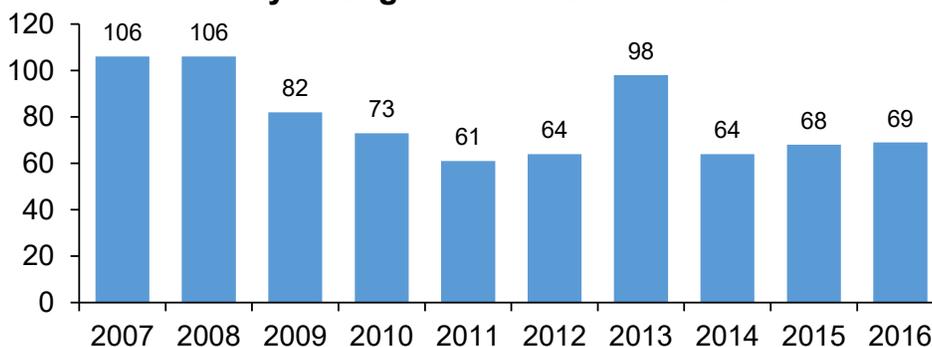
Of the 69 firefighters who died while on duty in 2016, 39 were volunteer firefighters, 19 were career firefighters, nine were employees or contracted with federal or state land management agencies, one was a member of an industrial fire brigade, and one was a prison inmate. This is the lowest number of career firefighter deaths in the 40 years that NFPA has done this study.

The largest share of deaths occurred while firefighters were responding to and returning from alarms (17 deaths), and the next largest share occurred while firefighters were operating at fires (15 deaths), each accounting for one-fifth to one-quarter of the total deaths. This is the lowest number of fireground deaths. In the highest loss incident, three firefighters died in a structural collapse in a dwelling.

Other findings include the following:

- ▶ The numbers of sudden cardiac death and internal trauma were tied with the largest number of deaths in 2016, with 26 deaths in each category.
- ▶ Of the deaths while responding to or returning from alarms, 10 were due to crashes, three were due to falls, two to sudden cardiac death, another to drowning when flood waters washed a vehicle off the road, and one to an alcohol overdose while returning from a wildland fire.
- ▶ The fireground deaths included six in fires involving dwellings and one death at a fire in a store. Six firefighters died at wildland fires and two at motor vehicle fires.
- ▶ The firefighters who died in 2016 ranged in age from 16 to 79, with a median age of 47 years.
- ▶ There were two deaths by suicide while on duty, two firefighters were murdered, and another firefighter was shot unintentionally by another firefighter.

**On-Duty Firefighter Deaths: 2007–2016**



Source: Firefighter Fatalities in the United States – 2016, NFPA, Rita F. Fahy, Paul R. LeBlanc, and Joseph L. Molis, June 2017.

Source: NFPA Research: [www.nfpa.org/research](http://www.nfpa.org/research)  
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