

State of Iowa

1931

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TWENTIETH ANNUAL REPORT  
OF  
STATE FIRE MARSHAL  
FOR THE YEAR 1930

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JOHN W. STROHM  
State Fire Marshal

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Des Moines

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1931  
TWENTIETH ANNUAL REPORT  
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Des Moines, Iowa, January 31, 1931.

HON. DAN W. TURNER, *Governor of Iowa,*

SIR: In compliance with the provisions of law, I have the honor to submit herewith the Twentieth Annual Report of the affairs of this office covering the period beginning January 1, 1930, and ending December 31, 1930, both dates included.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN W. STROHM,  
*State Fire Marshal.*

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL  
A PROCLAMATION

*To the People of Iowa:*

More than Six Million Dollars worth of property was destroyed by fire in this State last year. The removal of much of that vast sum from the assessment rolls shifted the taxing of thousands of values to the purses of others, many of whom themselves were energetic in preventing the spread of fire on their premises.

Flames claimed the lives of one hundred persons in the State of Iowa in 1929. Much of this great loss could have been prevented had diligence and care been exercised.

The effect of fire waste is State-wide, and the task of overcoming the evil lies almost wholly with the individual, with the farmer, the villager, and the city dweller.

Fire prevention is of vital importance to public welfare. To stimulate consciousness of the ever present danger from that source, and with the view of helping prevent in some measure the needless waste of life and property, I do especially designate the days including

OCTOBER FIFTH TO OCTOBER ELEVENTH  
1930

IOWA FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

and every citizen of this State is urged to make a special effort during that week to reduce the hazard from fire, to dispose of accumulated waste material, inspect heating equipment, chimneys, wiring and ventilation; and make repairs necessary to safety. Public and private places where people congregate should be examined. Safeguards necessary to protect life and property should be provided. Fire drills and educational exercises in schools will be fitting. The press, pulpit and radio having rendered valuable service in the past, are again relied upon to render their quota of inspiration for the common security. May we, as citizens of the State of Iowa, make the coming twelve months the year of our greatest conservation?

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have here-  
(Seal) unto set my hand and caused to be affixed  
the Great Seal of the State of Iowa.

Done at Des Moines, this 18th day of July, A. D., 1930.

By the Governor:

JOHN HAMMILL,  
*Governor.*

ED. M. SMITH,  
*Secretary of State.*

A PROCLAMATION

**STATE FIRE MARSHAL**

Appointed by the Governor. Term, Four Years. Expires July 1, 1931.

Office	Name	Legal Residence	Birthplace
Fire Marshal .....	John W. Strohm...	Clinton .....	Iowa
Deputy .....	G. G. Shanafelt...	Sigourney .....	Iowa
Assistant Deputy .....	Sam R. Starr .....	Dubuque .....	Illinois
Assistant Deputy .....	F. W. Scharfenberg	Davenport .....	Iowa
Stenographer and Clerk	Olive R. Sly.....	Boone .....	Iowa

The entire expense of the State Fire Marshal's Office is paid out of the general revenue of the state.

**ANNUAL REPORT OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL**

FIRE—AMERICA'S GREATEST ENEMY

"Every twenty seconds there is a fire. Every day of the year, every hour of the day, there are three fires a minute. This makes more than 1,577,000 fires a year."

"In the five years from 1924 to 1928, the total property loss from fire was \$2,086,392,098."

"With this" (1924-1928) "went a loss of more than 50,000 lives, almost as great as that of American soldiers during the World War."

"Fire is a direct charge added to the cost of living. It is a burden distributed indiscriminately—rich man, poor man, wage earner, capitalist, citizen and alien alike are affected."

"Fire Prevention is everybody's business. A fire in the home of your neighbor, or in the plant of your competitor, may destroy your home or your factory."

"Sprinkler systems, fireproof construction, and fire fighting apparatus, cuts insurance premiums enormously. They quickly pay for themselves by lower premiums, as well as in security for life, property and enterprise."

"According to H. C. Dickinson of the Department of Commerce, American farms and rural communities suffer an annual fire loss that ranges from \$100,000,000 to \$150,000,000. This is a real property loss—mostly uninsured."

"Fire is America's greatest extravagance and her greatest calamity. It is more. It is America's greatest disgrace, because it is unnecessary. It is her outstanding opportunity and responsibility."

President Hoover, in discussing fire losses, says: "They are, in effect a tax on every man, woman and child in the United States. This is one case where the 'taxpayers', entirely by their own efforts, can reduce the rate."

Fire Prevention is good business. It is also a humanitarian cause.

Property destroyed by fire is lost forever in spite of the fact that fire insurance reimburses for the monetary loss.

Careful inspection and an immediate correction of all defects will help eliminate the causes of fire and thereby further reduce the cost of insurance.



Our fires cost us more than \$800.00 a minute, or \$48,200.00 an hour.

On an average there are three fires every minute. 1,577,000 fires a year.

The cost of fire is borne by everyone. Therefore, everyone should know how to fight it.

### FROM ONE SUNRISE TO ANOTHER

Every Twenty-four HOURS

The Monster, FIRE, takes this toll.

TWENTY-SEVEN people burned to death

NINE are children UNDER TEN YEARS

931 Dwellings 96 Farm Buildings

FIVE Schools FIVE Churches ONE Hospital

15 Hotels TWO Theatres FOUR Warehouses

EIGHT Public Garages SIX Department Stores

THREE Printing Plants THREE Dry-goods Stores

ALSO, More Than a MILLION DOLLARS' Worth of Personal Property.

READ! PONDER! THINK!

\* \* \*

HASTENING FIRE WITH KEROSENE IS DANGEROUS.

\* \* \*

CHIMNEYS IN HOUSE ATTICS OFTEN PROVE  
FIRE TRAPS.

Is YOUR Chimney Safe?

\* \* \*

### INSPECTION

To All Fire Chiefs:

Your special attention is called to Section 1632, Code, 1927, as amended by the Forty-third General Assembly, of the State of Iowa:

"Section 1. Section sixteen hundred thirty-two (1632), Code, 1927, is amended, revised, and codified to constitute two sections and to read as follows:

"1632. *Authority to Enter and Inspect.* The State Fire Marshal, his deputies and inspectors, in the performance of their duties, shall have authority to enter any building or premises and to examine the same and the contents thereof.

"1632-e1. *Additional Authority.* In order to effect the purposes of this chapter, the chief of the fire department aforesaid

shall have authority to enter any building or premises and to examine the same and the contents thereof, and orally or in writing, to order the correction of any condition, contemplated in Section Sixteen Hundred Thirty-three (1633), Code, 1927. Should said order be not complied with the officer making the inspection shall report such inspection and the facts thereof to the State Fire Marshal who shall proceed as though the inspection had been made by himself."

Many fires can be prevented by making regular inspections and ordering the removal or repair of such fire hazards as may exist in your town or city.

Accumulations of rubbish, defective flues, old roofs, etcetera, are among the common causes of fires and should not be allowed to exist.

### DRY CLEANING ESTABLISHMENTS

Section 13242. *Use of Dangerous Fluids Forbidden.* It shall be unlawful for any person to establish or operate any dye works, pantorium, or cleaning works, in which gasoline, benzine, naphtha, or other explosive or dangerous fluids are used for the purpose of cleaning or renovating wearing apparel or other fabrics, in any building any part of which is used as a residence or lodging house.

### DRY CLEANING IN THE HOME

Naphtha is as dangerous as dynamite when used carelessly for cleaning.

The following is taken from the "Farm Fire Prevention" magazine:

"Cleaning naphtha and benzine are not only highly inflammable in a liquid state, but have such low boiling-points that they give off large volumes of vapor at ordinary temperatures. This vapor is of course combustible like the liquids, but unlike the latter, it can, by mixing with the air, form a dangerous and powerful explosive. In an ordinary dwelling-house the use of naphtha or benzine is fraught with great danger. Both vaporize at ordinary temperatures, and the vapor is not absorbed in the atmosphere, but falls to the floor level where it flows in a stream in the direction of any air current by which it may be affected. If this stream should happen to come into contact with a flame in another room, it would carry the fire back to the bulk of the naphtha or benzine and cause an explosion.

"It is appalling to think that this potential dynamite is indiscriminately sold to people who are woefully ignorant of its deadly effects. It is about time that some action is taken to stop further unnecessary loss of lives. Educating the public might help, but prohibiting the sale of naphtha for home use is the only remedy."

We are pleased to note there were but 13 fires in 1930, as compared with 16 fires in 1929, and a reduction of property loss amounting to \$14,249, caused from "Cleaning with Gasoline."



## FIRE PREVENTION EDUCATION

Section 1651, Code, 1927, provides, as follows:

*"Fire Drills in Public Schools—Exits Unlocked.* It shall be the duty of the State Fire Marshal and his deputy to require teachers of public and private schools, in all buildings of more than one story, to have at least one fire drill each month, and to require all teachers of such schools, whether occupying buildings of one or more stories, to keep all doors and exits of their respective rooms and buildings unlocked during school hours."

We regret to learn that there are some schools in Iowa where this law is not fully complied with, and we especially urge the co-operation of the local schools with the Fire Chiefs and Mayors in the various cities and towns, in an effort to properly educate the children along fire prevention lines, thereby helping to reduce the loss of life and property by fire in our state each year.

We have found iron bars at the windows of some of the rural school houses. These bars are used to prevent strangers from entering the building at night, but in case of fire during school hours, it would be very difficult for the children to leave the building safely.

Do you have a school house in your community with iron bars at the windows?

*To the Schools of Iowa:*

Every year the State Fire Marshal sends posters and other materials to the County Superintendents for distribution to the schools. These materials are full of up-to-date facts as to the causes and dangers of fires and the best methods of fire prevention. We have assured him that you are interested in receiving these materials and that he may expect your faithful co-operation in carrying out the fire drills as requested by law, in observing fire prevention week, and in teaching habits of usefulness.

Of course, you do more than that, for you realize the continual necessity of instruction in safety and in fire prevention. To translate knowledge of the fire tragedy into habits of carefulness is the painstaking work of the home and the school. More and more the world is looking to the schools to help create the right attitudes about safety and to teach the best procedures in fire prevention. Is every pupil in your school informed as to the essentials of fire prevention? Do you see to it that each one has correct practice in fire drills? Is each one aware of his own individual responsibility in reducing the fire hazard? Just what definite things have you done this winter to impress upon the children the principal cause of the fire losses is carelessness and the principal remedy is carefulness?

You realize also that the school children can become a most significant factor in reducing the Iowa fire record, if they will increase their desire to learn more about the subject and at the same time exercise their will to work in accordance with the proven facts. The citizenship period offers the time, and the subject is so concrete as to grasp the attention and to hold the interest. To help children learn to do the things which will better safeguard human life and conserve valuable property is an opportunity and a challenge before every teacher in Iowa.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) AGNES SAMUELSON,  
Superintendent of Public Instruction.

## IOWA STATE FIRE PREVENTION ASSOCIATION

Your special attention is called to the good work of the Iowa State Fire Prevention Association in 1930.

This report shows only a part of the work done by the Association, and they have been equally as active in every other city and town in the state:

Town	Number Inspections	Number Defects	Number Recommendations	People Addressed
Vinton	129	122	553	Adults 143 Children 960
Cresco	152	146	521	Adults 100 Children 964
Ottumwa	483	466	2,051	Adults 300 Children 4,458
Spencer	171	148	635	Adults 105 Children 950
New Hampton	107	99	435	Children 662
Totals	1,042	981	4,195	8,642

## DEATHS FROM FIRES IN IOWA

In 1930, there were 99 deaths reported as a direct result of fire. Of this number 27 were men, 21 were women, and 51 children, up to 20 years of age.

The Registrar of Vital Statistics of the State Board of Health rendered very valuable assistance in compiling this list.

## LARGEST FIRES OCCURRING DURING 1930

LOSS \$40,000.00 OR OVER	
Waterloo	January \$ 40,119
Keokuk	October 42,150
Des Moines	March 46,308
Des Moines	September 363,923
Des Moines	November 88,628
Council Bluffs	February 54,400

## CAUSES SHOWING GREATEST LOSS BY FIRES

	No. of Fires	Loss
Adjoining	254	\$ 276,991
Automobile	115	32,939
Bonfires	267	92,088



Brooder lamps and stoves.....	79	44,547
Children playing with matches.....	119	31,015
Defective auto wiring.....	199	59,298
Defective electric wiring.....	253	457,179
Defective flues.....	426	563,925
Defective and overheated heating plants.....	208	307,424
Defective oil and gasoline stoves.....	165	101,889
Electric iron with current left on.....	50	161,079
Gasoline carelessness.....	110	117,353
Incendiary.....	69	104,403
Lightning—not rodded.....	140	289,486
Match carelessness.....	74	68,410
Smoker's carelessness.....	300	110,789
Sparks from chimneys.....	1,938	682,681
Spontaneous combustion in rags and rubbish.....	110	147,687
Unknown.....	1,245	3,649,562
Using gasoline and kerosene to start fires.....	11	20,528

## SPECIAL MENTION

Ordinary bonfires cost the State of Iowa, \$92,088, during 1930, as compared with \$67,828, loss in 1929. This item alone shows an increase in property loss amounting to \$24,260.

Don't burn trash, brush or rubbish near buildings, fences, or other property, nor permit children to do so.

Children playing with matches caused 119 fires at a cost of \$31,015, in 1930, an increase of \$2,025, over 1929.

Keep matches in metal boxes where children cannot reach them.

Are you guilty of going into the closets in your home with a lighted match or candle? This practice is extremely dangerous.

The joys of the holiday season should not be shattered by the tragedies which so often occur in public gatherings where wax candles and cotton are used on and around the Christmas tree.

Defective electric wiring caused 253 fires, resulting in a property loss of \$457,179, an increase of \$140,642, over 1929.

Don't change your electric wiring without consulting a competent electrician.

Defective flues caused 426 fires, resulting in a loss of \$563,925, during the year 1930. This is an increase of 80 fires, and an increase in property loss of \$134,405, over 1929.

Have all flues cleaned, examined and repaired at least once each year.

Defective and overheated stoves and heating plants caused a property loss of \$307,424 in 1930, as compared with \$371,105, in 1929.

While this item shows a decrease of \$63,681, the loss should be greatly reduced in 1931.

Electric irons with current left on were responsible for 50 fires in 1930, and a property loss of \$161,079, as compared with 40 fires and a loss of \$11,919, in 1929. This item shows an increase of \$149,160.

## DON'T LEAVE CURRENT ON ELECTRIC IRONS.

Gasoline carelessness caused 110 fires and a property loss of \$117,353 in 1930. An increase of \$94,253 over 1929.

Many lives were lost during the year as a result of gasoline carelessness.

Every precaution should be taken in the handling of gasoline, not only in the home, in the operation of gasoline stoves, lamps, etcetera, but in filling automobile tanks in your own garage, or at a filling station.

No owner, or owners, employee or servant at filling stations, or other places, should put or run any gasoline or any inflammable liquid or liquids into any automobile, truck or other motor vehicle tank while the motor thereof is running, or lights thereof are burning, or while anyone in such automobile, truck or other motor vehicle is smoking, or while any match, lighter, or any other fire producing thing of any kind is being lighted, struck, used or burning within 50 feet of the pump or hose being used or such tank being filled.

Heating tar, oils and grease on stoves caused 43 fires in Iowa last year, and a property loss of \$30,496.

Three hundred fires were caused by "Smoker's Carelessness" resulting in a loss of \$110,789, in 1930.

There is always danger in a discarded cigarette and cigar stub.

Sparks from chimneys on wooden shingles caused 1,938 fires, resulting in a loss of \$682,681, in 1930. This is an increase of 402 fires and a property loss of \$188,736, over 1929.

It would seem that there is plenty of argument and justification for close inspections of all residence properties which are covered with shingles that have outlived their usefulness and become curled and mossy, giving sparks from chimneys an opportunity to cause the enormous loss herein mentioned.

We would, therefore, suggest that the Fire Chief in cities and towns having a Fire Department, and the Mayor in towns where there is no Fire Department, make regular inspections of all properties within the corporate limits of the cities and towns, and order the removal or repair of such shingled roofs as have



become moss covered, and curled, creating a fire hazard and a menace to adjoining property, under the authority given by Section 1632, Code, 1927, as amended by the Forty-third General Assembly. (See note to "All Fire Chiefs" in this report.)

In 1930, there were 210 fires caused from "Spontaneous Combustion" in coal, dust, hay, straw, shavings, sawdust, rags and rubbish, amounting to a property loss of \$598,482.

Of this amount, \$147,687 worth of property was lost, as a direct result of fires caused from "Spontaneous Combustion" in rags and rubbish.

Is there an accumulation of rubbish in your basement, workshop, or anywhere about your premises?

Clean property seldom burns.

Metal containers should be used for any oily waste that may be had around the private or public garage.

In 1929, there were 849 fires reported to this department as "Cause Unknown," resulting in a loss of \$3,261,874, or an average loss of \$3,842 for each fire.

In 1930, there were 1,245 fires reported as "Cause Unknown," a loss of \$3,649,562, or an average loss per fire amounting to \$2,931.

While the number of fires increased in 1930, the average loss for each fire was \$911, less than in 1929.

The following article taken from the "Farm Fire Prevention" magazine is very clear as to the general opinion formed with regard to fires reported as "Cause Unknown":

"CAUSE OF FIRE UNKNOWN" Is the Alibi Offered When the Cause Is Known."

"The cause of the fire is unknown." "The cause of the fire is a mystery." How often we read such statements incorporated in reports of fires published in the local newspapers. In most instances this is the avenue of escape for those whose buildings burn when they DO KNOW what caused the fire, but because of the censure and blame which might be cast upon them for carelessness and neglect, they choose this way out.

"There is not one fire in 100 honestly caused by defective chimneys, stove pipes, stoves and furnaces, which could not be prevented if the owner or occupant of the property would do his or her duty. It doesn't require any special training or ability for any person to examine all of these and KNOW that they are safe. Any defect which would cause a dwelling to burn would be plainly visible to anyone who had any desire to save their property. Neglect along this line is almost criminal.

and if any lives are lost through fires from this cause, the person to blame for such fire should be held criminally accountable.

"Permitting mortar to crumble, causing openings between bricks in chimneys; allowing woodwork to be in close contact with chimneys with open cracks; allowing rubbish to accumulate around chimney, pipes and heating apparatus; hanging clothing on racks near stoves and pipes, is just plain, pure unadulterated carelessness and constantly inviting fire. Any person who will allow such conditions to exist is not entitled to any insurance protection or even the respect of his neighbors.

"Most of such class of risks are generally known to the neighbors who may be insured in the same company; therefore, it is the duty of the safe members of the insuring company to refuse to continue their insurance unless the company compels the careless one to clean up his property and make it safe or get out.

"The cause of fire indicated above, as given out after a fire, is pure bunk. You, dear reader, should see to it that your property is made safe. Don't YOU get into the 'Cause Unknown' class. If your property burns, be able to come out in the open and tell the cause. If the fire has resulted because of your carelessness or neglect, say so, thereby relieving your conscience. If you will frequently examine your property,

Iowa suffered a property loss of \$20,528, in 1930, as a direct result of the use of "Gasoline and Kerosene" to start fires. In addition to this property loss, many lives were sacrificed to this most careless practice.

Using kerosene, or gasoline to start the fire in the kitchen stove is extremely dangerous.

#### A COMPARISON OF THE LOSSES IN EIGHTEEN LARGEST CITIES IN IOWA IN 1929 AND 1930

	1929		1930	
	No. of Fires	Loss	No. of Fires	Loss
Burlington	99	\$ 329,053	109	\$ 76,639
Cedar Rapids	163	207,478	209	175,107
Clinton	141	36,439	160	127,653
Council Bluffs	218	180,582	212	205,846
Davenport	225	123,797	311	192,525
Des Moines	589	780,288	838	757,261
Dubuque	110	58,546	119	43,416
Fort Madison	53	26,365	56	26,869
Fort Dodge	117	111,465	98	52,187
Iowa City	68	74,638	59	89,015
Keokuk	61	22,232	62	69,033
Marshalltown	93	30,571	96	15,383
Mason City	67	36,680	97	70,312
Muscatine	69	33,083	87	30,300
Oskaloosa	25	8,380	21	16,184
Ottumwa	136	64,588	121	48,462
Sloux City	445	76,376	520	108,227
*Waterloo	186	81,871	138	66,975
Totals	2,865	\$2,282,432	3,313	\$2,171,394

\* For 11 months of 1930.



## FIREMAN'S SHORT COURSE

The Fireman's Short Course sponsored by the Iowa State College at Ames, each year, has been of great benefit to all those firemen who have been permitted to attend the Short Course, and we are especially anxious that every City Council in the State of Iowa shall send at least one or two firemen to attend the Fireman's Short Course at Ames, this year, the date of which will be announced later.

## FARM FIRES

There were 372 farm barn fires, and 666 farm dwelling fires, or a total of 1,038 farm fires, not counting other farm buildings, which were destroyed in Iowa in 1930.

It is estimated that there is one farm fire every fifteen minutes, or a hundred fires every twenty-four hours. The farm fire never burns out. Before the smoke of one fire is cleared away, and the ashes cooled enough to appraise the loss, the wild cry of "Fire! Fire!" is heard in another farm community.

One-third of the national fire waste occurs on farms, and good authorities tell us that four out of every five farm fires are preventable.

Lightning, defective chimneys and heating apparatus, matches and smoking, combustible roofs, spontaneous combustion, gasoline and kerosene, electricity, and lantern carelessness are the causes of most farm fires.

Every farmer can well afford to spend a little time making an inspection of his premises at least once each year, removing as many of the fire hazards as possible.

Do you smoke, and are you careful about disposing of your cigar and cigarette stubs?

Do you use a lantern about the barn at night, without taking precautions to keep it from overturning?

Candle, lamp and lantern carelessness caused a property loss of \$31,009 in 1930.

Where do you place hot ashes and cinders from the stove or furnace?

Ashes and coals piled against wood caused 73 fires in 1930, resulting in a loss of \$28,406 worth of property.

Where do you keep the incubator? Do you allow litter to accumulate about the stove or lamp in the brooder house?

Brooder house lamps and stoves caused a property loss of \$44,547, in 1930.

How about those old rags you used the other day to clean the car, and do you store the car in the barn on a floor strewn with chaff and flammable litter?

The "Farm Fire Prevention" magazine says:

## "BARN NO PLACE FOR AUTOMOBILE STORAGE"

"When a barn burns and the cause of the fire is reported as 'unknown,' and the owner reports that his automobile was housed therein, the cause of the fire may very frequently be charged to the auto. The barn floor is no place for an automobile with its usual storage of gasoline in the tank and highly charged batteries in the car. With hay and straw on the barn floor, gasoline and charged batteries in the auto, there is a fine setting for a fire. In the first place, the barn floor is a mighty dangerous place for an automobile and just so long as the practice is continued, mysterious (?) fires will occur and it is hoped that farmers will build garages away from the main buildings in which to store their automobiles, trucks and tractors, also in which to operate their power gasoline engines.

"When your auto is not acting right, 'spitting and sputtering,' you may make up your mind that something is wrong with the ignition, and you had better keep it out of the barn until the trouble has been located and remedied. Be careful. Do some serious thinking."

## RURAL FIRE TRUCK

A rural fire truck in rural communities is of the greatest importance. The building first discovered on fire may be burned or may be saved from destruction, depending upon how soon the fire truck arrives. However, it may be depended upon invariably that adjacent buildings will be saved which otherwise would be destroyed, entailing a far greater loss of the insured and the company carrying the insurance.

Use your every influence to encourage the installation of rural fire trucks in your community. Your property may be next in line for a fire.

## INVESTIGATIONS

During the year 1930, this office investigated 144 fires in 58 counties. In many of the cases investigated there was evidence tending to show that the fires were set for the purpose of collecting heavy insurance, but in our opinion the evidence was not sufficient to warrant a prosecution, and the only cases sent to the County Attorney were those, that in our opinion, should be presented to the Grand Jury for their action:

In five cases no indictments were returned.

In eighteen cases confessions were made.

One conviction.

Three cases pending.



## STATISTICAL WORK

It is the aim of this department to keep an up-to-date record of all fires which occur within the state, showing the name and address of the owner, name and address of the occupant, the date of the fire, hour of the fire, kind of structure, for what purpose the building is used, value of building, value of contents, damage to building, damage to contents, insurance carried on building, insurance carried on contents, and cause of fire, as required in Section 1627, Code, 1927.

The State Law requires Fire Chiefs to report all fires that occur within the corporate limits of their respective towns and cities.

In incorporated towns where there are no Fire Chiefs, the Mayor is required to report all fires.

Outside of the incorporated towns and cities, Township Clerks are required to report all fires that occur within the Township of which they are Clerk.

A fee of fifty cents for the report of each fire is paid to Fire Chiefs, Mayors and Township Clerks, and in addition to this fifty-cent fee, Township Clerks are allowed ten cents per mile each way for travel actually made from their residence to the scene of fire and return.

If information was obtained without travel, kindly mention this on your claim.

No allowance is made for telephone calls or postage.

Many Fire Chiefs, Mayors and Township Clerks are not reporting fires PROMPTLY and this delays our work in compiling statistical information.

Section 1625, Code, 1927, provides that all fires shall be reported to the State Fire Marshal WITHIN ONE WEEK of the occurrence of the fire.

Section 1626, Code, 1927, provides that any Chief of a fire department, Mayor, or Township Clerk who fails or refuses to make the investigation and report required of him, shall be fined in a sum not less than FIVE DOLLARS nor more than One Hundred Dollars.

Your co-operation in making reports PROMPTLY will be very much appreciated. Report blanks are furnished by this office. If you do not have these blanks, let me know and I shall gladly send them to you.

If you will answer ALL questions FULLY in every report, it will save time and trouble for you, as well as for this department,

as it causes an unnecessary delay in entering the report on our records when you fail to give complete information.

TABLE NO. I

Showing the total number of fires reported by counties. Cities of more than 10,000 are set out separately. Damage to buildings and contents is combined.

Counties and Cities of 10,000 and Over	No. of Fires	Loss
Adair .....	51	\$ 65,040
Adams .....	29	47,076
Allamakee .....	37	39,868
Appanoose .....	66	116,979
Audubon .....	29	53,603
Benton .....	37	66,275
Black Hawk—Waterloo	138	66,975
Balance—Black Hawk County	36	79,925
Boone .....	96	81,769
Bremer .....	23	42,070
Buchanan .....	43	47,414
Buena Vista .....	31	60,090
Butler .....	27	30,578
Calhoun .....	43	35,806
Carroll .....	56	59,054
Cass .....	57	51,595
Cedar .....	37	86,721
Cerro Gordo—Mason City	97	70,312
Balance—Cerro Gordo County	24	22,911
Cherokee .....	45	71,484
Chickasaw .....	26	73,372
Clarke .....	21	33,884
Clay .....	39	70,251
Clayton .....	36	190,425
Clinton—Clinton	160	127,653
Balance—Clinton County	50	103,734
Crawford .....	44	106,512
Dallas .....	32	70,849
Davis .....	42	99,872
Decatur .....	43	105,083
Delaware .....	41	106,386
Des Moines—Burlington	109	76,639
Balance—Des Moines County	14	82,919
Dickinson .....	16	34,061
Dubuque—Dubuque	119	43,416
Balance—Dubuque County	16	31,149
Emmet .....	22	89,257
Fayette .....	60	64,589
Floyd .....	38	55,304
Franklin .....	23	43,759
Fremont .....	32	44,710
Greene .....	28	42,968
Grundy .....	25	110,041
Guthrie .....	16	33,499
Hamilton .....	36	59,102
Hancock .....	19	23,695
Hardin .....	50	58,878
Harrison .....	46	57,599
Henry .....	21	33,308
Howard .....	33	103,489
Humboldt .....	26	47,390
Ida .....	13	24,460
Iowa .....	18	34,470



Jackson	29	66,946
Jasper	124	95,338
Jefferson	58	77,945
Johnson—Iowa City	59	89,015
Balance—Johnson County	24	54,614
Jones	30	31,029
Keokuk	60	50,076
Kossuth	27	27,506
Lee—Fort Madison	56	26,869
Keokuk	62	69,033
Balance—Lee County	11	54,116
Linn—Cedar Rapids	209	175,107
Balance—Linn County	39	84,100
Louisa	36	33,241
Lucas	16	13,470
Lyon	30	93,030
Madison	42	58,194
Mahaska—Oskaloosa	21	16,184
Balance—Mahaska County	33	81,063
Marion	75	86,806
Marshall—Marshalltown	96	15,383
Balance—Marshall County	29	93,509
Mills	18	16,355
Mitchell	15	51,133
Monona	44	64,985
Monroe	47	72,559
Montgomery	55	36,212
Muscatine—Muscatine	87	30,300
Balance—Muscatine County	30	59,454
O'Brien	34	43,498
Osceola	17	18,830
Page	63	72,366
Palo Alto	29	39,825
Plymouth	45	71,944
Pocahontas	25	28,122
Polk—Des Moines	838	757,261
Balance—Polk County	61	83,257
Pottawattamie—Council Bluffs	212	205,846
Balance—Pottawattamie County	43	71,312
Poweshiek	51	67,195
Ringgold	29	47,042
Scott—Davenport	311	192,525
Balance—Scott County	30	65,194
Sac	22	22,557
Shelby	51	73,764
Sioux	25	27,943
Story	106	106,651
Tama	51	42,307
Taylor	29	71,003
Union	49	177,062
Van Buren	32	45,448
Wapello—Ottumwa	121	48,462
Balance—Wapello County	43	82,850
Warren	44	85,883
Washington	33	59,434
Wayne	52	91,496
Webster—Fort Dodge	98	52,187
Balance—Webster County	31	77,597
Winnebago	11	15,381
Winnishiek	24	22,588
Woodbury—Sloux City	520	108,227
Balance—Woodbury County	37	74,678

Worth	13	14,225
Wright	38	87,146
Total	6,987	\$8,353,175

TABLE NO. II

Showing the kind of property destroyed. Damage to buildings and contents set out separately.

	No. of Fires	Damage to Buildings	Damage to Contents
Auto top and tire shops	1	\$ 0	\$ 10
Autos and trucks	406	34,294	2,341
Bakeries	16	5,380	6,801
Banks	9	2,939	2,796
Barns—Farm	372	740,360	321,377
Town	147	93,525	39,110
Battery Stations	3	2,083	1,597
Railway box cars, etc.	20	16,197	810
Chicken brooders and poultry houses	154	27,712	37,174
Churches	30	189,555	47,458
Cleaning and dyeing	21	5,371	8,444
Corn cribs and granaries	41	26,766	33,100
Dance halls	8	50,500	9,150
Depots and freight houses	9	11,438	3,300
Dwellings—Farm	666	1,264,774	399,467
Town	3,239	849,094	330,599
Elevators and seed houses	15	100,714	45,752
Engine and boiler rooms	1	250	50
Factories, various kinds	49	58,116	106,502
Filling station and oil storage	29	25,057	17,580
Foundries	4	2,224	3,320
Funeral homes	3	1,215	4,850
Garages—private	287	39,777	46,308
Public	74	156,664	143,040
Hog houses	27	14,150	9,150
Hospitals	2	1,094	100
Hotels	31	25,350	4,849
Houses, apartments	100	73,299	35,598
Ice houses	11	4,060	1,945
Junk yards	6	1,663	1,520
Laundries	15	3,132	4,940
Lodge halls	11	14,599	3,613
Lumber yards	9	5,216	7,250
Mills, feed, flour, planing, etc.	5	9,936	35,397
Old Peoples' Homes	0	0	0
Offices and office buildings	46	13,149	7,878
Packing plants and stock yards	12	8,755	5,243
Pool halls	13	10,349	6,149
Post offices	3	2,875	2,800
Printing plants	11	22,756	35,046
Restaurants	108	64,348	59,087
Schools	48	284,629	60,706
Sheds—coal and wood	130	21,019	3,975
Machine	21	5,583	11,337
Shops, various kinds	82	33,636	35,619
Stores	360	543,055	1,145,697
Summer kitchens	31	4,896	3,178
Theatres	21	71,253	71,080
Warehouses and storage	88	57,212	63,981
Miscellaneous	192	97,502	28,680
Total	6,987	\$5,097,521	\$3,255,654
			* 5,097,521
			\$8,353,175



TABLE NO. III

Containing a summary of the origin of the various fires reported, the number of each, and the total damage to the buildings and contents for the year 1930.

Causes	No. of Fires	Loss
Adjoining	254	\$ 276,991
Ashes and coals against wood	73	28,406
Automobile	115	32,939
Blow and oil torches	41	42,500
Bonfires and rubbish	267	92,088
Brooder lamps and stoves	79	44,547
Candle, lamp and lantern carelessness	36	31,009
Children playing with matches	119	31,015
Cleaning with gasoline	13	4,219
Clothing and bedding near stoves and pipes	32	9,981
Curtains blowing into flames	9	579
Defective auto wiring	199	59,298
Defective electric wiring	253	457,179
Defective electric appliances	58	64,617
Defective fireplaces	15	8,610
Defective flues	426	563,925
Defective and overheated heating plants	208	307,424
Defective oil burners (domestic)	26	85,775
Defective oil and gasoline stoves	165	101,889
Defective pipes to stoves	78	39,636
Electric iron with current left on	50	161,079
Films	12	14,267
Fireworks	16	3,532
Friction	0	0
Fumigation	2	186
Gasoline carelessness	110	117,353
Gasoline and volatile oil explosion	70	91,233
Grease, paint, tar, boiling over	43	30,496
Incendiary	69	104,403
Lightning—not rodde	140	289,486
Rodde	2	7,300
Lightning running in on radio wires	0	0
Match carelessness	74	68,410
Smoker's carelessness	300	110,789
Smoking meat	7	2,398
Sparks from engine and locomotives	44	19,108
Sparks from flues on wooden shingles	1,938	682,681
Spontaneous Combustion:		
Coal, dust, etc.	18	159,098
Hay and straw	80	291,247
Rags and rubbish	110	147,687
Shavings and sawdust	2	450
Sugar	0	0
Static electricity	6	2,980
Thawing water pipes	22	8,156
Unknown	1,245	3,649,562
Using gasoline and kerosene to start fires	11	20,528
Miscellaneous	150	88,118
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6,987</b>	<b>\$8,353,175</b>

## CONCLUSION

While the number of fires in 1930 was 6,987, or an increase of 1,648 fires, and the property loss for 1930 was \$1,576,702 more in 1930 than it was in 1929, the average loss per fire was \$1,195.53 in 1930, compared with \$1,269.24 for each fire in 1929.

The per capita loss for 1930 was approximately \$3.38.

A careful study of the figures set out in the tables in this report should convince you that we should exercise greater care in eliminating fire hazards which are likely to start fires, and which often cause great conflagrations and loss of life as well as loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars in property.

A large percentage of the 6,987 fires which occurred in 1930, were due to carelessness and indifference.

The newspapers throughout the state have been most liberal with their space in publishing statistical information from the records in this department and this publicity has been very helpful in creating a greater interest in Fire Prevention among the citizens of the state.

I desire to express my sincere thanks to all Fire Chiefs, Mayors, Sheriffs, County Attorneys, and all others for the hearty co-operation given this department during my term in office.

I especially urge the co-operation of every citizen of the State of Iowa, in the conservation from destruction by fire by exercising more care and by safeguarding their property.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN W. STROHM,  
State Fire Marshal.