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PROCEEDINGS

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Aline Lopes Camargo, Ângela Gaio Graeff, Carla Neves Costa, Deives Junior de Paula, Fabrício Longhi Bolina, Gabriela Lins Albuquerque, Hermes Carvalho, João Paulo C. Rodrigues, João Victor Dias, Paulo von Kruger, Ricardo A. M. Silveira, Saulo José Almeida, Tiago Ancelmo Pires

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IFireSS 2023 - International Fire Safety Symposium

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June 21st to 23rd, 2023

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Proceedings of IFireSS 2023 - International Fire Safety Symposium

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Preface

The Organising and Scientific committees of IFireSS 2023, as well as CIB W-14 Commission - Fire Safety, would like to thank your participation in the International Fire Safety Symposium – IfireSS – 2023, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The city of Rio de Janeiro allowed the creation of a unique and fantastic environment for the realization of this event.

The Symposium contributed to the exchange of ideas and knowledge in the area of Fire Safety and assisted in planning future research activities for the area.

The Symposium has had participants from different countries around the world and covered a wide variety of research areas including: Structural Fire Safety; Mechanical and Thermal Properties of Materials; Fire Chemistry, Physics and Combustion; Fire Reaction; Fire Safety in Vehicles and Tunnels; Fire Risk Assessment; Smoke Control Systems; Firefighting and Evacuation; and Fire Regulations, Standardization and Construction Trends.

The articles presented at this Symposium were of high quality, in different areas of fire safety, and these proceedings reflect that fact. They will serve as the basis for developments in the field, research projects and technical standards. The in-person or online presentations were superb and resulting in discussions of a high level for the area.

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and CIB W14 Commission**

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Contents

Preface	iii
Committees	iv
Organization and Sponsorship	vii
Keynote Speeches	1
Paper K01 - FIRE SPRINKLER PROTECTION – MODERN CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FOR WAREHOUSES (<i>Yibing Xin</i>)	2
Paper K02 - Behaviour of Timber Structures in Case of Fire (<i>Dhionis Dhima</i>) . .	4
Explosions	7
Paper 067 - EFFECT OF STANDOFF DISTANCE ON RESPONSE OF STEEL SECTIONS SUBJECTED TO NEAR-FIELD DETONATIONS (<i>Dravesh Yadav; Gaurav Srivastava</i>)	8
Paper 091 - Occurrence of Dust Explosions followed by fire in reinforced concrete silos (<i>Paulo Palmeira Machado; Carla Neves Costa</i>)	20
Firefighting	28
Paper 010 - A Smoke Sensor via CNN for Real-Time Victim Detection in Smoky Indoor Environments (<i>Sebastian Gelfert</i>)	29
Paper 107 - FLASHOVER CHARACTERISTICS IN CONFINED SPACE UNDER LOW PRESSURE (<i>Yuanhua HE; Zitong LI; Jingdong WANG; Di ZHANG; Jiaxin LIANG</i>)	40
Fire Chemistry, Physics and Combustion	53
Paper 017 - ANALYSIS OF THE POSSIBILITY OF IGNITION OF VARIOUS MATERIALS BY SHORTCIRCUIT SPARKS (<i>Kostiantyn A. Afanasenko</i>)	54
Paper 072 - INFLUENCE OF DIFFERENT CLAY MINERALS STRUCTURES ON THE FIRE RETARDANCY OF INTUMESCENT POLYMERS (<i>Ana Lucia S. Ventapane; Simone P. S. Ribeiro; Regina S. V. Nascimento; Alexandre Landermann</i>)	64
Paper 124 - COMPUTATIONAL MODEL OF FIRE BASED ON A FULL- SCALE EXPERIMENT (<i>Bruno C. L. de A. Matos, George C. B. Braga, Fernando L. da S. Ferreira, João Paulo C. Rodrigues, Rodrigo B. Caldas</i>) .	72
Fire Investigation	84
Paper 030 - PROPOSAL OF LEGAL EVIDENCE AND PROOF COLLECTION METHOD FOR FIRE INVESTIGATIONS (<i>André Luiz Gonçalves Scabbia; Caio Cesar Moreira; José Luiz Gavião de Almeida</i>)	85

Paper 095 - INVESTIGATION ON KISS NIGHTCLUB FIRE (<i>Rodrigo A. Freitas; João Paulo C. Rodrigues</i>)	93
Paper 115 - LARGE EDDY SIMULATIONS OF FLAME MORPHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PAIR OF UNEQUAL POOL FIRES (<i>Siva K Bathina; Sudheer Siddapureddy</i>)	108
Fire in Industrial Buildings	120
Paper 007 - STRUCTURAL FIRE BEHAVIOUR OF PROTECTED TUBULAR STEEL COLUMNS IN INDUSTRIAL WAREHOUSES UNDER STANDARD AND SIMULATED FIRE CONDITIONS (<i>Pegah Aghabozorgi; Luís Laim; Aldina Santiago; Nuno Cândido</i>)	121
Paper 093 - A REVIEW OF THE COLLAPSE OF INDUSTRIAL STEEL BUILDINGS IN CASE OF FIRE (<i>Maria Luiza C. Moreira; João Paulo C. Rodrigues</i>) .	133
Paper 099 - NUMERICAL-EXPERIMENTAL INVESTIGATION OF FIRE PERFORMANCE IN INDUSTRIAL BUILDING FAÇADE CLADDING SYSTEMS (<i>Deives J. de Paula; João Paulo C. Rodrigues; Aline L. Camargo; Rúben F. R. Lopes</i>)	147
Fire Reaction	159
Paper 005 - INFLUENCE OF MINERAL WOOL THICKNESS ON CHANGES IN FIRE RESISTANCE OF LOAD-BEARING STRUCTURES (<i>Katarína Košútova; Linda M. Osvaldová</i>)	160
Paper 065 - EXPERIMENTAL FIRE PERFORMANCE OF WOOD BIO-CONCRETES: STUDY ON REACTION TO FIRE AND RESIDUAL STRENGTH (<i>Bruno M. C. Gomes; Amanda L. D. Aguiar; Monique A. F. Rocha; Alexandre Landesmann; Nicole P. Hasparyk, and Romildo D. Toledo Filho</i>)	170
Fire Risk Assessment	182
Paper 078 - GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM AND MULTI-CRITERIA ANALYSIS AS A FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT IN HERITAGE SITE (<i>Erika Esteves Lasmar; Paulo Gustavo von Krüger; Ana Clara Mourão Moura</i>) . .	183
Paper 079 - HOW DOES SOUTH KOREA PROTECTS ITS HERITAGE THROUGH FIRE PREVENTION AND RISK ANALYSIS – COMPARISON WITH FOUR ESTABLISHED ANALYSIS METHODOLOGIES (<i>Luana O. Gonçalves; Paulo Gustavo von Krüger; Marina R. Abrantes</i>)	194
Paper 092 - FIRE IN BELT CONVEYORS: A RISK ASSESSMENT APPROACH FOR A FIRE PROTECTION DESIGN (<i>Cassio R. Armani; Sérgio Colin; Victor S. Moraes</i>)	203
Paper 108 - ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT INSPECTION, TESTING AND MAINTENANCE INTERVALS ON THE RELIABILITY OF AN AUTOMATIC FIXED FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEM (<i>Henrique Pimenta</i>)	217
Paper 121 - FIRE PREVENTION IN HISTORICAL HERITAGE: case study in the city of Ouro Preto, Minas Gerais (<i>Ana Carolina Castanheira Pereira; Paulo Von Kruger</i>)	229
Paper 123 - ASSESSING THE DEGREE OF READINESS AT URBAN AREAS WITH ELEVATED FIRE RISK IN PORTUGAL (<i>A. L. Camargo; João P. C. Rodrigues</i>)	237
Fire Safety in Vehicles and Tunnels	240

Paper 033 - FIRE IN ROAD TUNNELS IN BRAZIL - STANDARDS (<i>André Luiz Gonçalves Scabbia; Anthony Edward Pacheco Brown; José Luiz Gavião de Almeida</i>)	241
Paper 040 - FIRE PERFORMANCE OF R/C AND FRC TUNNELS EXPOSED TO FIRE: COMPARISON BETWEEN LINEAR AND NON LINEAR ANALYSES VIA A SIMPLIFIED 1D APPROACH (<i>Francesco Lo Monte; Patrick Bamonte</i>)	249
Fire Safety of Structures	259
Paper 004 - OPTIMIZATION OF STEEL INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS IN FIRE SITUATION (<i>Filip Ljubinković; Luís Laim; Aldina Santiago; Luís Simões da Silva; Luís Cordeiro</i>)	260
Paper 006 - THREE LARGE SCALE TRAVELLING FIRE EXPERIMENTS: INFLUENCE OF THE VENTILATION CONDITIONS ON THE FIRE DYNAMICS AND ON STEEL STRUCTURE (<i>Ali Nadjai; Naveed Alam; Marion Charlier; Olivier Vassart</i>)	272
Paper 013 - OPTIMIZED DIMENSIONING OF RIBBED SLABS IN FIRE SITUATION, USING GENETIC ALGORITHM (<i>Jessyca P. A. N. Fernandes; Tiago A. C. Pires; José J. R. Silva</i>)	283
Paper 014 - ANALYSIS OF THE CATENARY ACTION OF RESTRAINED STEEL BEAMS IN FIRE SITUATION (<i>Jlgor Charlles Siqueira Leite; Valdir Pignatta Silva</i>)	292
Paper 019 - Experimental fire tests on steel-to-timber connections with 90 and 120 minutes fire resistance (<i>Dhionis Dhima; Maxime Audebert; Abdelhamid Bouchaïr; Nicolas Pinoteau</i>)	304
Paper 020 - NUMERICAL STUDY OF THE BEHAVIOR OF CONTINUOUS STEEL-CONCRETE COMPOSITE BEAMS UNDER NON-UNIFORM BENDING MOMENTS IN FIRE SITUATION (<i>Bruno M. Siciliano; João Victor F. Dias; Rodrigo B. Caldas</i>)	318
Paper 031 - NUMERICAL SIMULATION OF CROSS-LAMINATED TIMBER-CONCRETE COMPOSITE FLOORS IN FIRE (<i>Julie Liu; Erica C. Fischer; Andre R. Barbosa; Arijit Sinha</i>)	330
Paper 038 - HYBRID FIRE FOLLOWING EARTHQUAKE TESTS ON FIRE PROTECTED STEEL COLUMNS (<i>Patrick Covi; Nicola Tondini; Manfred Korzen; Marco Lamperti Tornaghi</i>)	340
Paper 046 - NUMERICAL STUDY OF THE FIRE BEHAVIOUR OF A FUSIBLE LINK USING ALUMINIUM BOLTS FOR FIRE WALLS IN SINGLE-STOREY STEEL-FRAMED BUILDINGS (<i>Thi Thuy Mai; Sébastien Durif; Abdelhamid Bouchaïr; Christophe Renaud; Bin Zhao</i>)	350
Paper 047 - NUMERICAL ANALYSIS OF SHEAR BUCKLING OF STEEL AND COMPOSITE PLATE GIRDERS UNDER FIRE EXPOSURE (<i>Mehmed Numanović; Markus Knobloch</i>)	364
Paper 050 - MATERIAL TESTS AND NUMERICAL INVESTIGATIONS ON COMPOSITE STEEL AND CEMENT-FREE CONCRETE SYSTEMS IN FIRE (<i>Valentino Vigneri; Fangxia Lu; Ian Chamberlain; Andreas Taras</i>) . .	378
Paper 052 - Thermomechanical behaviour of Steel-Timber Composite beams (<i>Antoine Béreyziata; Maxime Audebert; Sébastien Durif; Dhionis Dhima; Abdelhamid Bouchaïr</i>)	392

Paper 059 - SIMPLIFIED CALCULATION METHODS FOR FIRE RESISTANCE CHECK OF GALVANIZED STEEL MEMBERS (<i>Margherita Autiero; Donatella de Silva; Antonio Bilotta; Emidio Nigro</i>)	402
Paper 060 - STRUCTURAL PERFORMANCE OF A LARGE-SPAN BI-DIRECTIONAL PARTIALLY PRECAST WAFFLE SLAB SYSTEM UNDER FIRE EXPOSURE (<i>Bruno Dal Lago; Francesco Lo Monte</i>)	414
Paper 071 - A SOFTWARE APP FOR ASSESSING THE FIRE RESISTANCE OF REINFORCED CONCRETE BEAMS (<i>Gabriela B. M. L. Albuquerque; Valdir P. Silva; Alio E. Kimura; Johnny A. B. Fontana</i>)	424
Paper 081 - FIRE BEHAVIOUR OF LIMESTONE MASONRY DURING AND AFTER FIRE (<i>Pierre Pimienta; Armita Obaie; Elodie Donval; Duc Toan Pham; Albert Noumowe; Javad Eslami; Dashnor Hoxha</i>)	436
Paper 083 - EFFECT OF Mo ADDITION ON THE STRUCTURAL PERFORMANCE OF STRUCTURAL STEEL COLUMNS AT ELEVATED TEMPERATURES (<i>Waibhaw Kumar; Umesh K. Sharma</i>)	450
Paper 086 - BEHAVIOUR OF MINIMALLY FIRE PROTECTED WOOD-STEEL- WOOD BOLTED CONNECTIONS REINFORCED WITH SELF-TAPPING SCREWS (<i>Oluwamuyiwa A. Okunroumu; Osama (Sam) Salem; George V. Hadjisophocleous</i>)	460
Paper 089 - NONLINEAR THERMAL ANALYSIS ON TIMBER CROSS-SECTIONS VIA CS-ASA/FA ENHANCED BY GID GRAPHICS PRE- AND POST- PROCESSORS (<i>Jackson S. Rocha Segundo; Caroline A. Ferreira; Ricardo A. M. Silveira; Thiago C. Assis; Lavínia L. M. Damasceno; Dalilah Pires; Rafael C. Barros; Ígor J. M. Lemes</i>)	472
Paper 090 - A NUMERICAL PARAMETRIC STUDY OF THE MEMBRANE ACTION OF CONTINUOUS COMPOSITE STEEL-DECK AND CONCRETE SLAB (<i>Matheus V. R. de Castro ; Carla N. Costa; João Paulo C. Rodrigues</i>)	482
Paper 102 - EXPERIMENTAL BEHAVIOUR OF INTUMESCENT PAINTING PROTECTED STEEL BEAMS SUBJECTED TO A NATURAL FIRE (<i>Marcus César Q. Araújo; João Paulo C. Rodrigues</i>)	496
Paper 106 - TEMPERATURE INCREASE THROUGHOUT HOT-DIP GALVANIZED STEEL SECTIONS AND CONNECTIONS OF COMPOSITE BEAMS IN THE FIRE SITUATION (<i>Justus Frenz; Jochen Zehfuß; Maria-Mirabela Firan; Martin Mensinger</i>)	507
Paper 109 - DEEP LEARNING-DRIVEN REAL-TIME PREDICTION OF KEY PHYSICAL PARAMETERS' EVOLUTION FOR EARLY-WARNING FIRE- INDUCED COLLAPSE OF STEEL TRUSSES (<i>Jinyu LI; Guo-Qiang LI; Shaojun ZHU</i>)	517
Paper 111 - EVALUATION OF THE BEHAVIOR OF COMPOSITE DOUBLE WEB-ANGLE CONNECTIONS AT AMBIENT TEMPERATURE AND IN A FIRE SITUATION (<i>Renato S. Nicoletti; Alex S. C. Souza</i>)	527
Paper 120 - STATE OF ART STUDY: ULTRASOUND TESTING ON STRUCTURAL CONCRETE BLOCKS SUBMITTED TO HIGH TEMPERATURES (<i>Rafaela O. Amaral; Everton F. C. Souza; Armando L. Moreno Jr.; Gisleiva C. S. Ferreira</i>)	541
Fire Safety Regulations, Standardization and Construction Trends	553
Paper 034 - RECENT ADVANCES IN BRAZILIAN PASSIVE FIRE PROTECTION STANDARDIZATION (<i>Marcos V. M. Sylverio; Antonio F. Berto</i>)	554

Paper 044 - THE ULTIMATE TEST: COMPARING FIRE RESISTANCE TEST STANDARDS FOR NONLOADBEARING WALL CONSTRUCTION (<i>Chris D. McDonald; Alex P. Duffy; Angela Solarte</i>)	564
Paper 077 - HORIZONTAL SEPARATION REQUIREMENTS TOWARDS FIRE SPREAD REDUCTION BETWEEN ADJACENT DWELLINGS: A NUMERICAL ASSESSMENT (<i>Felipe R. Centeno; Liuá Hauser; Rodolfo P. Helfenstein</i>) .	578
Paper 100 - REVIEW OF TEST METHODS FOR EVALUATING THE BEHAVIOUR OF BUILDING ROOF SYSTEMS SUBJECTED TO EXTERNAL FIRES (<i>Deives J. de Paula; João Paulo C. Rodrigues; Aline L. Camargo; Rúben F. R. Lopes</i>)	588
Paper 112 - IMPLEMENTATION OF FIRE SAFETY ENGINEERING APPROACH IN THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND DESIGN PRACTICE IN EUROPE (<i>Adamantia Athanasopoulou; Francesca Sciarretta; Maria Luisa Sousa; Silvia Dimova</i>)	596
Paper 114 - NUMERICAL ANALYSIS OF VERTICAL COMPARTMENTATION IN MULTI-STORY BUILDINGS UNDER FIRE SITUATIONS (<i>Jaete C. Junior; Macksuel S. Azevedo; João Victor F. Dias</i>)	608
Mechanical and Thermal Properties of Materials at High Temperatures	620
Paper 002 - INFLUENCE OF THE DURATION OF FIRE INCIDENTS ON THE POST-FIRE IMPACT STRENGTH OF SELECTED STEEL GRADES USED IN CONSTRUCTION (<i>Mariusz Maslak; Michal Pazdanowski; Marek Stankiewicz; Paulina Zajdel</i>)	621
Paper 012 - FIRE ON AN INDUSTRIAL SHED: MORTAR, STEEL, COATING AND THERMAL INSULATING MATERIALS BEHAVIOUR (<i>Christian Paglia; Cristina Mosca</i>)	635
Paper 022 - THERMAL ANALYSIS COUPLED WITH MICROSCOPY FOR IN-SITU INVESTIGATION OF INTUMESCENT FIRE PROTECTIVE COATINGS (<i>Hafeez Ahmadi; Aixiao Fu; Hao Wu; Kim Dam-Johansen</i>) . .	642
Paper 027 - FIRE RETARDANT PROPERTIES OF GLASS FIBER REINFORCED POLYMERS WITH TRI-HYDRATED ALUMINUM (<i>Priscila T.T. Araujo; Alexandre Landesmann; Simone P. da S. Ribeiro</i>)	644
Paper 045 - MATERIAL CHARACTERISATION OF ULTRA-HIGH-STRENGTH STEEL S960QL AT ELEVATED TEMPERATURES UNDER STEADY-STATE AND TRANSIENT-STATE TEMPERATURE CONDITIONS (<i>Sara Uszball; Markus Knobloch</i>)	652
Paper 048 - EFFECT OF AUTOGENOUS SELF-HEALING ON HIGH TEMPERATURE EXPOSED ULTRA HIGH-PERFORMANCE CONCRETE (<i>Niranjana Prabhu Kannikachalam; Ahmed M. E. M. Alhadad; Francesco Lo Monte; Enrico Maria Gastaldo Brac; Roberto Rosignoli; Nele De Belie; Liberato Ferrara</i>) .	664
Paper 058 - INFLUENCE OF THE COMPRESSIVE STRENGTH IN THE OCCURRENCE OF SPALLING IN HIGH RESISTANCE CONCRETES SUBJECTED TO HIGH TEMPERATURES (<i>Paulo I. B. Perin; Ângela G. Graeff</i>)	674
Paper 085 - THERMAL-PROPERTIES OF ULTRA HIGH-PERFORMANCE CONCRETE (UHPC) (<i>F. Bolina; G. Poletto</i>)	686

Paper 113 - NUMERICAL MODEL FOR CELLULAR STEEL BEAMS UNDER FIRE SITUATION SUBJECTED TO THE LATERAL-TORSIONAL BUCKLING (<i>Caroline C. de Faria; Hermes Carvalho; Ricardo H. Fakury; João Paulo C. Rodrigues</i>)	703
Paper 119 - SELF-COMPACTING CONCRETE AT HIGH TEMPERATURE: A LITERATURE REVIEW (<i>Alessandro Simas Franchetto; Ana Júlia Smolinski Gouveia; Ângela Gaio Graeff; Mônica Regina Garcez</i>)	711
Research and Certification of Building Products	724
Paper 061 - A PLAN FOR THE TEACHING OF FIRE SAFETY IN ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM COURSES (<i>Evandro C. Medeiros; Ângela G. Graeff</i>) . .	725
Wildland/Urban Interface Fires	733
Paper 042 - IMPACT OF HOUSE, PARCEL, AND COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS ON STRUCTURE SURVIVAL DURING A WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE WILDFIRE (<i>Erica C. Fischer; Amy J. Metz; Abbie B. Liel</i>)	734
Author Index	745

Keynote Speeches

ANALYSIS OF THE POSSIBILITY OF IGNITION OF VARIOUS MATERIALS BY SHORT-CIRCUIT SPARKS



Kostiantyn A. Afanasenko^{a,*}

ABSTRACT

The paper studies the possibility of various substances ignition with an electric ignition source, namely, a short circuit, depending on different parameters. The comparative analysis of fires causes depending on the approach of their conditional classification is given. Among others, ignition sources of electrical origin are highlighted.

An analysis of the fires causes statistical data collection used by various countries is carried out. It has been established that when using different approaches to their collection, the number of electrical ignition sources varies from 15 to 27%. And up to 50% of them are short circuits. The main characteristics of a short circuit and its fire hazard are considered. It has been established that in the event of a short circuit an intense scattering of sparks (drops of molten metal) is observed.

The paper considers the methods for calculating the flight times of a various metals spark in various aggregation states and the possibility of igniting combustible materials by them. Found that a drop of molten copper will be a ignition source for textiles, rubber and fabric with dimensions larger than 2.9 mm; a drop of molten steel will be the ignition source for solid combustible materials with dimensions larger than 2.6 mm.

Keywords: short-circuit, ignition source, sparks.

1. ANALYSIS OF THE FIRES CAUSES AND FIRES STATISTICS

Fires at critical infrastructure facilities usually have serious consequences. As a result, people can be injured, and serious damage can be caused to both businesses and the environment.

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At the same time, the causes (ignition sources) of fires at such objects can be divided into 4 groups: open fire, thermal features of mechanical energy, thermal features of chemical reactions, thermal features of electrical energy. The latter, according to statistics, can reach up to 25% of the total.

1.1 Analysis of typical fires causes

Fires causes of can vary in a fairly wide range. The authors [1] identifies the following classification of the fires causes:

1. Arson.
2. Production equipment failure, violation of the technological process: defects in the design, manufacture and installation of production equipment; violation of technological regulations; electrostatic discharge; destruction of moving parts and parts, getting into moving mechanisms of foreign parts; malfunction of the devices cooling system, surfaces friction; malfunction, lack of spark-extinguishing equipment; other malfunctions of production equipment.
3. Violation of fire safety rules during installation and operation of electrical installations: lack of design and production of electrical installations, the electrical network short circuit; violation of the design rules of electrical installations and electrical networks; violation of the rules of electrical installations technical operation; violation of fire safety rules during the operation of electrical household appliances.
4. Violation of fire safety rules during electric gas welding works.
5. Explosion.
6. Self-ignition of substance and materials.
7. Violation of fire safety rules during the installation and operation of furnaces: improper arrangement and malfunction of heating furnaces and chimneys; violation of fire safety rules during the operation of furnaces.
8. Violation of fire safety rules during installation and operation of heat-generating units and installations: lack of design and manufacture of heat-generating units and equipment; violation of the installation rules of heat-generating units and equipment; violation of fire safety rules during the operation of heat-generating units and equipment.
9. Violation of fire safety rules during operating household gas, kerosene, and gasoline appliances.
10. Careless handling of fire: smoking carelessness; carelessness during fire works (heating pipes, engines and other equipment with an open fire); another reason for careless handling of fire.
11. Mischief of children with fire.
12. Lightning discharge.
13. Undetermined cause.
14. Other reasons.

Thus, identifying the main causes of fires (ignition sources) and determining the degree of their danger is an urgent task.

1.2 Statistical data on ignition sources as fires causes

An ignition source is an object that emits thermal energy sufficient for ignition (combustion initiation is an exothermic process that includes redox transformations of substances and materials and is characterized by the presence of volatile products and light radiation) [2].

According to the nature of origin, ignition sources are classified as follows:

- open fire, heated combustion products and surfaces heated by them;
- thermal features of mechanical energy;
- thermal features of electrical energy;
- thermal features of chemical reactions (open fire and combustion products are separated from this group into an independent).

If all fires in Ukraine to be taken for 100%, then fires caused by "violation of fire safety rules during installation and operation of electrical installations" amount to an average of about 25 % annually from the total number of fires; fires due to "electrostatic discharge" and "lightning discharge" account for about 1% of the total number of fires. Analysis of various statistics shows that the approach to data collection is quite different.

For example, in Canada, during the fires causes data collection, all fires are taken into account, including ecosystems, residential, non-residential buildings, etc. [3]. With this approach, the number of electrical ignition sources can reach 15%. (figure 1).

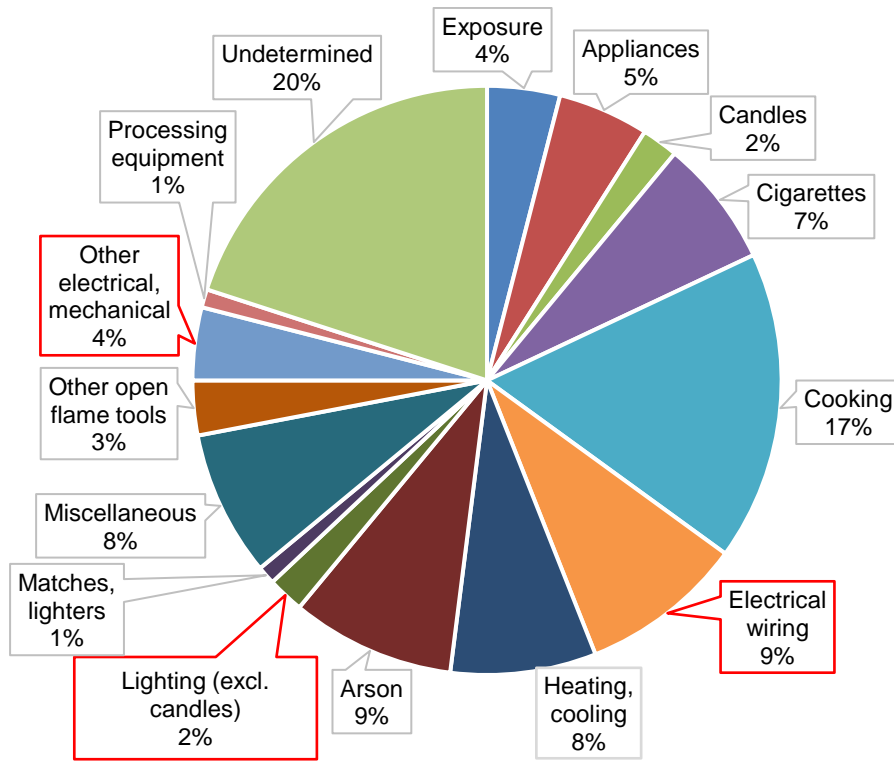


Figure 1: Statistics on the fires causes during 2005-2014 in Canada [3]

However, the statistics of the causes of fires in Great Britain (Table 1) [4] allow us to assess the sources of ignition at industrial enterprises and critical infrastructure facilities. And in this case, the number of electric ignition sources increases to 27%.

Table 1. Average year fire statistics 2010-2020 in England (including Critical Infrastructure Facilities) [4]

Year	Total	Source of ignition										
		Smo- kers' mate- rials	Ciga- retts, ligh- ters	Mat- ches	Coo- king appli- ances	Space heating appli- ances	Central and water heating appli- ances	Blow- lamps, weldin- g and cutting equip- ment	Electri- cal distrib- ution	Other electrical applian- ces	Cand- les	Other/ Unspeci- fied
2010/11	20755	1079	726	1295	2742	696	120	380	2613	2720	145	8239
2011/12	20321	1152	737	1321	2491	571	104	401	2432	2585	125	8402
2012/13	16506	852	653	834	2298	547	125	319	2464	2393	142	5879
2013/14	16527	878	619	834	2123	464	135	342	2462	2248	123	6299
2014/15	15562	802	711	762	2136	448	105	334	2288	2177	105	5694
2015/16	16026	949	853	860	2045	415	101	310	2255	2061	113	6064
2016/17	15868	851	919	782	1970	434	104	292	2359	1823	106	6228
2017/18	15616	883	823	703	1943	440	115	267	2186	1820	103	6333
2018/19	15032	922	519	526	1847	379	90	273	2232	1669	90	6485
2019/20	14334	853	517	486	1713	431	98	241	2 223	1628	85	6059
2020/21	11916	735	368	346	1273	376	71	204	1 703	1164	59	5617
Total	178463	9956	7445	8749	22581	5201	1168	3363	25217	2 288	1196	71299
Percent		5,58	4,17	4,90	12,65	2,91	0,65	1,88	14,13	12,49	0,67	39,95

The analysis of the given data shows that the number of ignition sources of electrical origin, depending on the method of statistical data collection, can vary within 15-27%. Thus, determining the danger of electrical origin ignition sources is an urgent task.

2. CLASSIFICATION OF THE ELECTRICAL ORIGIN IGNITION SOURCES

Literature analysis shows three groups of electrical origin ignition sources [5, 6, 7]:

1. Electric spark (arc). There are sparks and arcs arising as a result of the thermal action of short-circuit, electric sparks (drops of metal) created during electric welding, arising from the destruction of the bulbs of electric incandescent lamps or as a result of the static electricity charges.
2. Heating of substances, nodes and surfaces of technological equipment.
3. Discharges of atmospheric electricity. There is a difference between a direct lightning strike and secondary lightning strikes.

Also, the power lines heating in case of overvoltage and leakage currents should be attributed to the heat features of electrical energy.

At the same time, a short circuit, as a cause of fires, reaches up to 50% of the total number of electrical ones.

2.1 Thermal action of short-circuit

The danger of short circuits is explained by the thermal effect of electric current, which is quantitatively expressed by the Joule-Lenz law.

According to Ohm's law, as the resistance R decreases, the current I increases in square, so the amount of heat Q released in the conductor when a short-circuit current occurs increases sharply.

A short-circuit, the effect of which is not limited in time, leads to the melting of conductors and the occurrence of sparks and arcs, so it can be a cause of fires of nearest combustible materials.

2.2 Electric sparks (drops of metal)

When a short circuit occurs, sparks occur in 100% of cases. Electric sparks and arcs occur when an electric current passes through the air. Electric sparks (drops of metal) are formed, in the case of short circuits of electrical conductors. The size of the hot particles of metal at short circuit of electric wiring can reach 3 mm. At the same time, when they expand, they are in a molten state, which increases their danger. However, when released into the environment, they gradually cool down.

With a short circuit, sparks fly in all directions, and their speed does not exceed 10 m/s. The area of particle flight in the event of a short-circuit depends on the height of the wire, the initial speed of the particle flight, the angle of departure and is probabilistic in nature (Fig. 2).

For the height of the location of the wire 10 m the probability of hitting particles at a distance 9 m is 0.06; 7 m – 0.45; 5 m – 0.92; for the height of the location 3 m the probability of hitting particles at a distance 8 m is 0.01; 6 m – 0.29; 4 m – 0.96; and for the heights 1 m the probability of scattering of particles on 6 m - 0.06; 5 m - 0.24; 4 m – 0.66 and 3 m – 0.99.

It should be noted that during a short-circuit, electric sparks, as a rule, have time to form before the protection devices are triggered, and therefore the probability of ignition of flammable substances and materials during a short-circuit is sufficient.

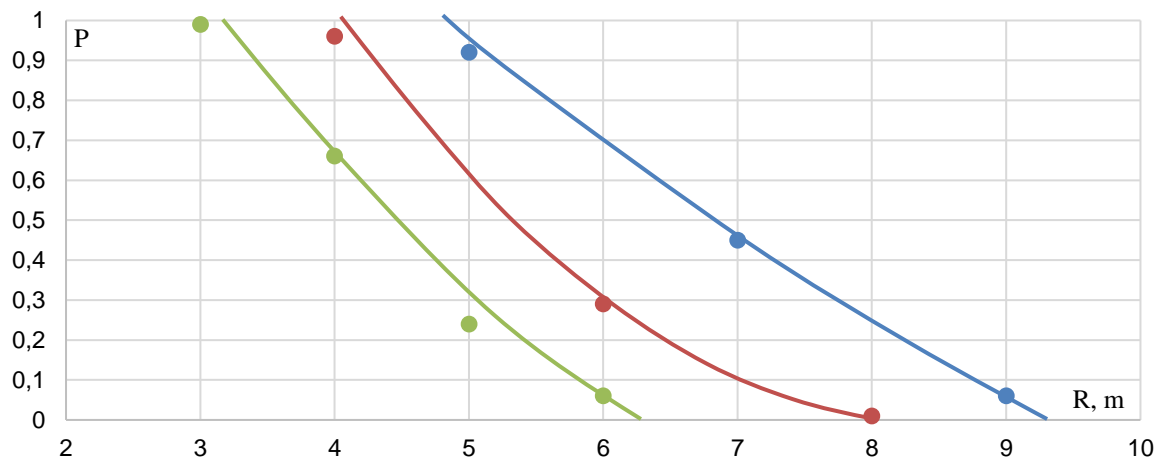


Figure 2. The probability (P) of hitting metal particles depending on the height of their formation and distance to the object (R, m)

Thus, if there is a probability of a drop of metal hitting the surface of a combustible substance, its ignition is possible. Therefore, there is a need to determine the ignition capacity of such a drop depending on the external conditions and physical and chemical properties of the materials of the drop and the combustible substance.

2.3 Calculation of igniting ability of a metal drop

The temperature of the heated particles depends on the type of metal and cannot be lower than its melting temperature. Thus, the temperature of aluminum particles during a short circuit reaches +2500 °C [8, 9].

The amount of heat that a particle (drop) of metal can give to a combustible environment before reaching its self-ignition temperature is calculated in the following sequence.

The average flight speed of a drop of metal in free fall is calculated by the formula:

$$\omega_{dr} = 0,5 \cdot \sqrt{2 \cdot g \cdot H}, [m/s], \quad (1)$$

where $g=9.81$ – Is the acceleration of free fall;
 H – Is the height of the drop.

The volume of a drop of metal is calculated by the formula:

$$V_{dr} = \frac{\pi \cdot d_{dr}^3}{6} = 0,524 \cdot d_{dr}^3, [m^3], \quad (2)$$

where d_{dr} – is the diameter of the drop, [m].

The mass of the drop is calculated according to the formula:

$$m_{kd} = V_{dr} \cdot \rho_{dr}, [kg] \quad (3)$$

where ρ_{dr} – Is density of metal, [kg/m³].

Further calculations will be made for three metals used in electrical products (including cable products): steel, aluminum and copper [10]. Fig. 3 shows the dependence of the drop mass depending on its diameter and the metal of which it is composed.

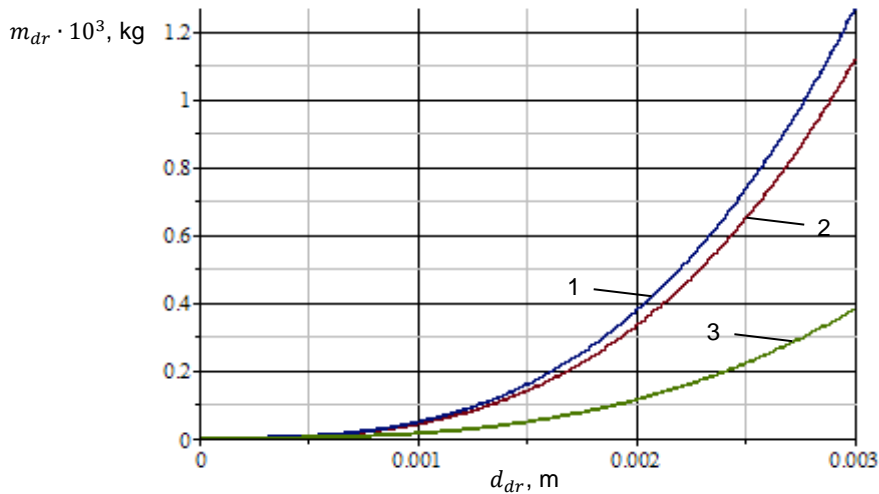


Figure 3. Dependence of the drop mass depending on its diameter and the metal of which it is composed.
1 – copper, 2 – steel, 3 – aluminum.

Depending on the duration of the drop's flight, three states of its aggregate are possible: liquid, crystallization state, and solid.

The flight time of a drop in a liquid state is calculated by the formula:

$$\tau_{liq} = \frac{C_p \cdot m_{dr}}{\alpha \cdot S_{dr}} \cdot \ln \frac{T_{start} - T_0}{T_{melt} - T_0}, [s] \quad (4)$$

where C_p – specific heat capacity of the metal melt, [J/(kg·K)]; S_{dr} – surface area of the drop, [m²]; T_{start} – temperature of the drop at the beginning of the flight, [K]; T_{melt} – metal melting point temperature, [K]; T_0 – ambient temperature, [K]; α – heat transfer coefficient, [W/(m²·K)].

The drop heat transfer coefficient is calculated in the following sequence:

a) calculate the Reynolds number (the Reynolds number is a dimensionless quantity, is one of the characteristics of the movement of a viscous liquid and determines the ratio of inertial forces to viscous forces) according to the formula:

$$Re = \frac{\omega_{kp} \cdot d_{kp}}{r}, \quad (5)$$

where $r = 15.1 \cdot 10^{-6} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ – coefficient of kinematic viscosity of air at a temperature of +20 °C;

b) calculate the Nusselt criterion (the Nusselt criterion characterizes the average intensity of convective heat exchange between the surface of the body and the free or forced flow of liquid or gas) according to the formula:

$$Nu = 0,62 \cdot \sqrt{Re}, \quad (6)$$

c) calculate the heat transfer coefficient according to the formula:

$$\alpha = \frac{Nu \cdot \lambda_{air}}{d_{dr}}, [W/(m^2 \cdot K)], \quad (7)$$

where $\lambda_{air} = 0,022 \text{ W}/(\text{m} \cdot \text{K})$ – air thermal conductivity coefficient.

If $\tau \leq \tau_{liq}$, then the final temperature of the drop is calculated by the formula:

$$T_{final} = T_0 + (T_{start} - T_0) \cdot \exp\left(-\frac{\alpha \cdot S_{dr}}{C_p \cdot m_{dr}}\right), [K]. \quad (8)$$

The drop flight time, during which its crystallization occurs, is determined by the formula:

$$\tau_{cryst} = \frac{m_{dr} \cdot C_{cryst}}{\alpha \cdot S_{dr} \cdot (T_{liq} - T_0)}, [s], \quad (9)$$

where C_{cryst} – the specific metal crystallization heat, [J/kg].

With the help of the above formulas, the time of flight of a molten metal drop was calculated depending on external conditions. Graphical interpretation of calculations is shown in Figure 4.

If , then the final temperature of the drop is calculated by the formula: $\tau_{liq} < \tau \leq (\tau_{liq} + \tau_{cryst})$

$$T_{final} = T_{liq}, [K], \quad (9)$$

To assess the degree of danger in work, the flight time of a drop of metal in a molten state was calculated (Fig. 5) .

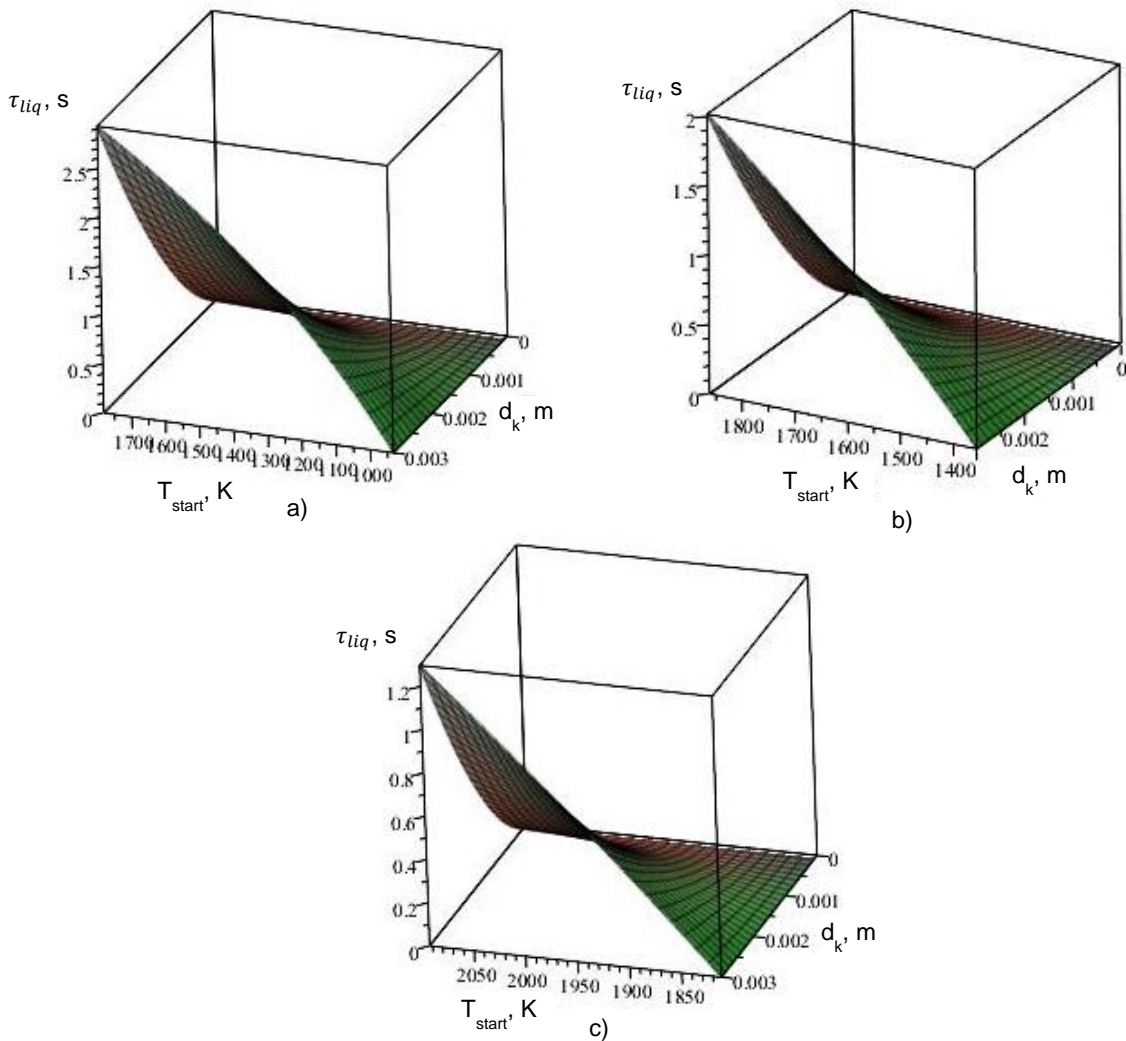


Figure 4. Dependences of the flight time of a metal drop in a molten state on the initial temperature and drop diameter: a) Aluminum; b) Copper; c) Steel.

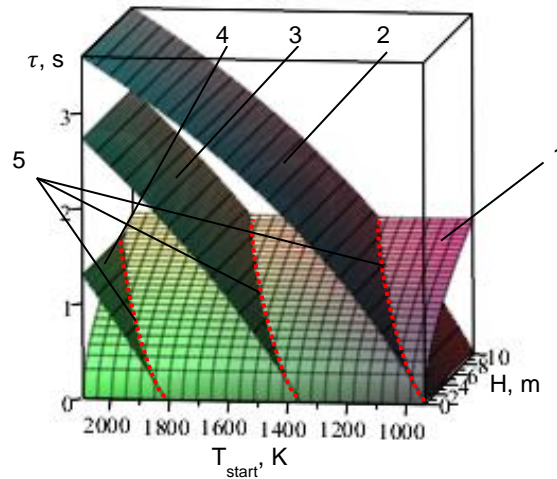


Figure 5. Dependences of the flight time of a metal drop in a molten state on the initial temperature, flight height, and average flight time. 1 – average flight time; 2 – aluminum; 3 – copper; 4 – steel; 5 – the time of the drop falling in the molten state.

Analysis of Fig. 5 shows a comparison of the time the drop remains in the molten state with the flight time of the drop from a certain height. In accordance with the received calculation data, it can be concluded that when falling from a height of up to 8 m, drops of all metals will be in a molten state.

If $\tau > (\tau_{liq} + \tau_{cryst})$, then the final temperature of the drop in the solid state is calculated by the formula:

$$T_{final} = T_0 + (T_{fuse} - T_0) \cdot \exp\left\{-\frac{\alpha \cdot S_{dr}}{C_{dr} \cdot m_{dr}} \cdot [\tau - (\tau_{liq} + \tau_{cryst})]\right\}, [K], \quad (9)$$

where C_{dr} – the specific heat capacity of the metal, [J/(kg·K)].

The next stage of the work was to analyze the possibility of ignition from a metal drop in a molten state of various solid combustible materials, such as plastic, wood, textiles and rubber.

The amount of heat that a drop of metal gives off to the solid material on which it fell is calculated by the simplified formula [11, 12, 13]:

$$W = V_{dr} \cdot \rho_{dr} \cdot C_{dr} \cdot (T_{final} - T_{SI}) \cdot K, [J], \quad (10)$$

where T_{SI} – the self-ignition temperature of the combustible material, [K]; K – coefficient equal to the ratio of the heat given off to the combustible material to the energy stored in the drop. It is allowed to take $K=1$.

Some characteristics of the fire hazard of solid combustible materials are given in the table 3.

Table 3. Some fire hazard characteristics of solid combustible materials [14, 15, 16]

Name of the material	Self-ignition temperature of the substance (T_{SI}), [K]	Minimum ignition energy (W_{Ign}), [mJ]
Polyethylene	690	70
Rubber	613	30
Textile	633	25
Wood	603	40-60

Calculations of the energy transferred by metal drops to combustible materials were carried out according to the above formulas (Fig. 6).

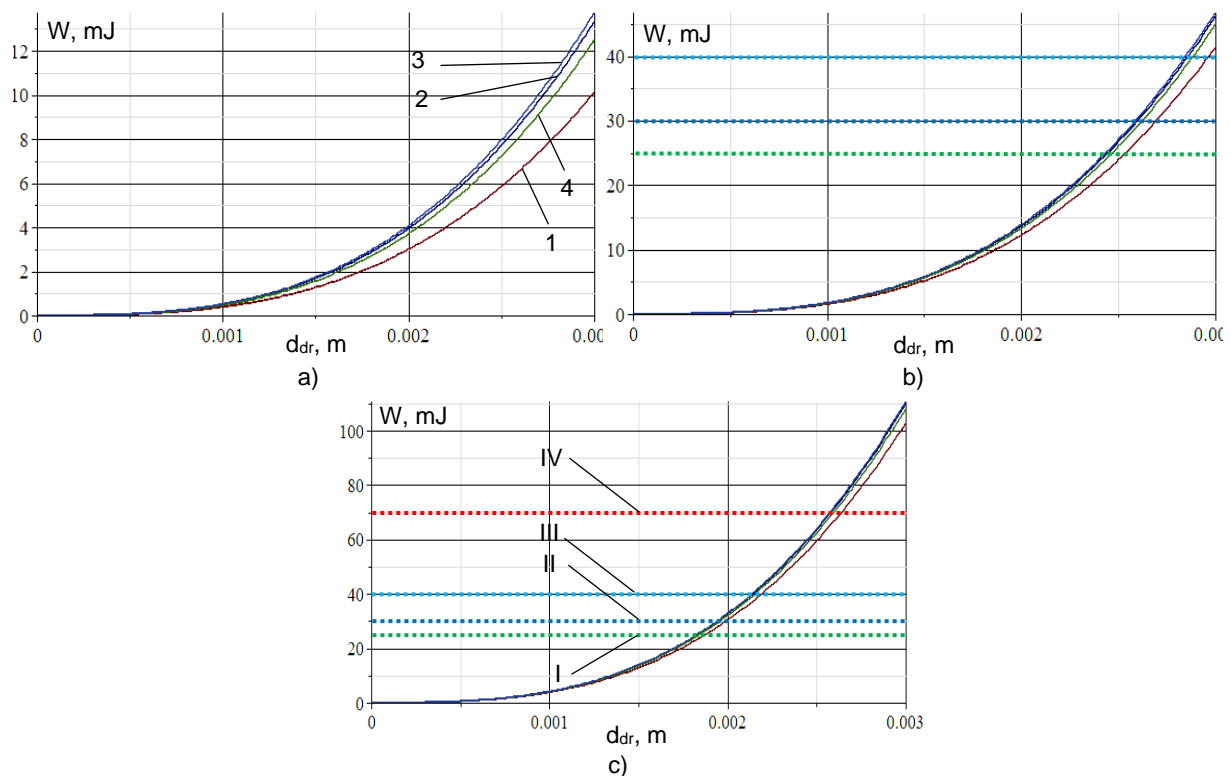


Figure 6. Calculated energies of a metal drop in the molten state depending on the diameter of the drop for: a) aluminum, b) copper, c) steel. Transmitted energy: 1 – polyethylene; 2 – rubber; 3 – textiles; 4 - tree. Minimal ignition energy: I – textile; II – rubber; III – wood; IV – polyethylene.

Analysis of the data shown in Fig. 6 allows us to conclude that when drops of molten aluminum fall on combustible materials, ignition will not occur.

At the same time, a drop of molten copper will be a source of ignition for textiles, rubber and fabric with dimensions greater than 2.9 mm.

And a drop of molten steel will be the source of ignition for all listed solid combustible materials with dimensions greater than 2.6 mm.

3. CONCLUSIONS

1. The work examines the statistics of fires in several countries, highlights the peculiarities of statistical data collection. It has been established that the share of electrical ignition sources can be up to 27% at industrial facilities and critical infrastructure facilities.

2. The nature of a short circuit as a source of ignition has been studied. It was established that in the case of a short circuit, drops of molten metal are splashed, which can cause ignition of various materials.

3. The method of calculating the parameters of metal drops when they occur during a short circuit is considered. It has been established that when drops of molten aluminum fall on combustible materials, ignition will not occur. At the same time, a drop of molten copper will be a source of ignition for textiles, rubber and fabric with dimensions larger than 2.9 mm. A drop of molten steel will be the source of ignition for all listed solid combustible materials with dimensions larger than 2.6 mm.

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Author Index

Abbie B. Liel, 734
Abdelhamid Bouchaïr, 304, 350, 392
Adamantia Athanasopoulou, 596
Ahmed M. E. M. Alhadad, 664
Aixiao Fu, 642
Albert Noumowe, 436
Aldina Santiago, 121, 260
Alessandro Simas Franchetto, 711
Alex P. Duffy, 564
Alex S. C. Souza, 527
Alexandre Landermann, 64
Alexandre Landesmann, 170, 644
Ali Nadjai, 272
Aline L. Camargo, 147, 237, 588
Alio E. Kimura, 424
Amanda L. D. Aguiar, 170
Amy J. Metz, 734
Ana Carolina Castanheira Pereira, 229
Ana Clara Mourão Moura, 183
Ana Júlia Smolinski Gouveia, 711
Ana Lucia S. Ventapane, 64
Andre R. Barbosa, 330
Andreas Taras, 378
André Luiz Gonçalves Scabbia, 85, 241
Angela Solarte, 564
Anthony Edward Pacheco Brown, 241
Antoine Béreyziata, 392
Antonio Bilotta, 402
Antonio F. Berto, 554
Arijit Sinha, 330
Armando L. Moreno Jr., 541
Armita Obaie, 436

Bin Zhao, 350
Bruno C. L. de A. Matos, 72
Bruno Dal Lago, 414
Bruno M. C. Gomes, 170
Bruno M. Siciliano, 318

Caio Cesar Moreira, 85

Carla N. Costa, 20, 482
Caroline A. Ferreira, 472
Caroline C. de Faria, 703
Cassio R. Armani, 203
Chris D. McDonald, 564
Christian Paglia, 635
Christophe Renaud, 350
Cristina Mosca, 635

Dalilah Pires, 472
Dashnor Hoxha, 436
Deives J. de Paula, 147, 588
Dhionis Dhima, 4, 304, 392
Di ZHANG, 40
Donatella de Silva, 402
Dravesh Yadav, 8
Duc Toan Pham, 436

Elodie Donval, 436
Emidio Nigro, 402
Enrico Maria Gastaldo Brac, 664
Erica C. Fischer, 330, 734
Erika Esteves Lasmar, 183
Evandro C. Medeiros, 725
Everton F. C. Souza, 541

F. Bolina, 686
Fangxia Lu, 378
Felipe R. Centeno, 578
Fernando L. da S. Ferreira, 72
Filip Ljubinković, 260
Francesca Sciarretta, 596
Francesco Lo Monte, 249, 414, 664

G. Poleto, 686
Gabriela B. M. L. Albuquerque, 424
Gaurav Srivastava, 8
George C. B. Braga, 72
George V. Hadjisophocleous, 460
Gisleiva C. S. Ferreira, 541
Guo-Qiang LI, 517

Hafeez Ahmadi, 642
Hao Wu, 642
Henrique Pimenta, 217
Hermes Carvalho, 703

Ian Chamberlain, 378
Igor Charlles Siqueira Leite, 292

Jackson S. Rocha Segundo, 472

Jaete C. Junior, 608
 Javad Eslami, 436
 Jessyca P. A. N. Fernandes, 283
 Jiaxin LIANG, 40
 Jingdong WANG, 40
 Jinyu LI, 517
 Jochen Zehfuß, 507
 Johnny A. B. Fontana, 424
 José J. R. Silva, 283
 José Luiz Gavião de Almeida, 85, 241
 João Paulo C. Rodrigues, 72, 93, 133, 147, 237, 482, 496, 588, 703
 João Victor F. Dias, 318, 608
 Julie Liu, 330
 Justus Frenz, 507

Katarína Košútova, 160
 Kim Dam-Johansen, 642
 Kostiantyn A. Afanasenko, 54

Lavínia L. M. Damasceno, 472
 Liberato Ferrara, 664
 Linda M. Osvaldová, 160
 Liuá Hauser, 578
 Luana O. Gonçalves, 194
 Luís Cordeiro, 260
 Luís Laim, 121, 260
 Luís Simões da Silva, 260

Macksuel S. Azevedo, 608
 Manfred Korzen, 340
 Marco Lamperti Tornaghi, 340
 Marcos V. M. Sylverio, 554
 Marcus César Q. Araújo, 496
 Marek Stankiewicz, 621
 Margherita Autiero, 402
 Maria Luisa Sousa, 596
 Maria Luiza C. Moreira, 133
 Maria-Mirabela Firan, 507
 Marina R. Abrantes, 194
 Marion Charlier, 272
 Mariusz Maslak, 621
 Markus Knobloch, 364, 652
 Martin Mensinger, 507
 Matheus V. R. de Castro, 482
 Maxime Audebert, 304, 392
 Mehmed Numanović, 364
 Michal Pazdanowski, 621
 Monique A. F. Rocha, 170
 Mônica Regina Garcez, 711

Naveed Alam, 272

Nele De Belie, 664
Nicola Tondini, 340
Nicolas Pinoteau, 304
Nicole P. Hasparyk, 170
Niranjana Prabhu Kannikachalam, 664
Nuno Cândido, 121

Olivier Vassart, 272
Oluwamuyiwa A. Okunroumu, 460
Osama (Sam) Salem, 460

Patrick Bamonte, 249
Patrick Covi, 340
Paulina Zajdel, 621
Paulo Gustavo von Krüger, 183, 194, 229
Paulo I. B. Perin, 674
Paulo Palmeira Machado, 20
Pegah Aghabozorgi, 121
Pierre Pimienta, 436
Priscila T.T. Araujo, 644

Rafael C. Barros, 472
Rafaela O. Amaral, 541
Regina S. V. Nascimento, 64
Renato S. Nicoletti, 527
Ricardo A. M. Silveira, 472
Ricardo H. Fakury, 703
Roberto Rosignoli, 664
Rodolfo P. Helfenstein, 578
Rodrigo A. Freitas, 93
Rodrigo B. Caldas, 72, 318
Romildo D. Toledo Filho, 170
Rúben F. R. Lopes, 147, 588

Sara Uszball, 652
Saulo J. C. Almeida, 527
Sebastian Gelfert, 29
Shaojun ZHU, 517
Silvia Dimova, 596
Simone P. da S. Ribeiro, 64, 644
Siva K Bathina, 108
Sudheer Siddapureddy, 108
Sébastien Durif, 350, 392
Sérgio Colin, 203

Thi Thuy Mai, 350
Thiago C. Assis, 472
Tiago A. C. Pires, 283

Umesh K. Sharma, 450
Valdir P. Silva, 424

Valdir Pignatta Silva, 292

Valentino Vigneri, 378

Victor S. Moraes, 203

Waibhaw Kumar, 450

Yibing Xin, 2

Yuanhua HE, 40

Zitong LI, 40

Ângela G. Graeff, 674, 711, 725

Ígor J. M. Lemes, 472

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