[Fire kills 39 people in China's Spring Festival holiday](#)

A total of 13,796 fires occurred during China's week-long Spring Festival holiday that ends Thursday, killing 39 people and forcing the evacuation of 10,523 others, the Ministry of Public Security said.

The fires resulted in direct economic losses of 44.63 million yuan (about 6.49 million U.S. dollars), marking a 54.1 percent drop compared with the same period last year, the ministry said in a statement.

The number of fires and fire casualties decreased by 11.8 percent and 26.4 percent respectively year on year, it said.

No fire claimed more than five lives during the holiday, it noted.

Fires are usually caused by setting off fireworks and firecrackers during the holiday as the Chinese believed the noise will drive away bad spirits and bring good luck.

However, sales of fireworks have dropped in recent years in cities amid pollution concerns and government restrictions. Nationwide, 444 cities have banned fireworks and 764 other cities imposed restrictions on setting off fireworks, according to the ministry.