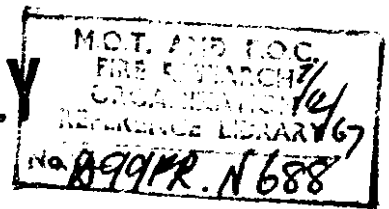


LIBRARY REFERENCE ONLY



Fire Research Note No. 688

THE RANKING OF FIRE PREVENTION RULES BY
ENTRANTS TO A NEWSPAPER COMPETITION

by

E. D. CHAMBERS

November 1967

FIRE RESEARCH STATION

**Fire Research Station,
Borehamwood,
Herts.
Tel. 01-953-6177**

F.R. Note No.688.
November, 1967.

THE RANKING OF FIRE PREVENTION RULES BY
ENTRANTS TO A NEWSPAPER COMPETITION

by

E. D. Chambers

Crown copyright

This report has not been published and should be considered as confidential advance information. No reference should be made to it in any publication without the written consent of the Director of Fire Research.

MINISTRY OF TECHNOLOGY AND FIRE OFFICES' COMMITTEE
JOINT FIRE RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

THE RANKING OF FIRE PREVENTION RULES BY
ENTRANTS TO A NEWSPAPER COMPETITION

by

E. D. Chambers

INTRODUCTION

During the 1967 "Make Leicester Fire-safe" campaign, a competition was organised by the weekly "Illustrated Chronicle", in association with Lewis's Ltd., a departmental store in the city.

Entitled "Rate the Risk", the competition required entrants to put ten stated fire prevention rules in order of importance.

It was felt that the order in which the rules were placed by the competitors would provide an indication of the appreciation of specific fire hazards by the general public. Accordingly, after the competition, a random sample of 100 of the entry forms was analysed, out of the total of about 1200 received.

THE ENTRANTS

Since the prizes in the competition were all of specifically feminine interest - "Win a £40 fashion outfit" was a main heading - it is not surprising that the majority of the entrants did in fact appear to be housewives.

Table 1

Titles by which entrants described themselves

"Mrs."	84
"Miss"	5
Female forename only (children?)	2
Initials only (men??)	8
"Mr."	1
	<hr/>
	100

THE COMPETITION

After advance notice had been given in the issue of 22nd September 1967, the competition itself appeared in the Illustrated Chronicle for 29th September and 6th October. The closing date was 10th October.

"Housewives" were referred to twice in the introductory remarks, although the only persons actually excluded from entering were employees of the printers and their immediate families.

The "Make Leicester Fire-safe" campaign started on 25th September, and ran for four weeks. During this period the citizens of Leicester were subjected to

fire prevention advice through an exceptional variety of media, which doubtless had at least some effect on the competition entrants.

FIRE PREVENTION RULES GIVEN IN COMPETITION

- A. Never allow Christmas trimmings, etc., to come into contact with light bulbs or other source of heat.
- B. Always keep matches out of the reach of children.
- C. Never leave children alone with an unguarded fire.
- D. Avoid do-it-yourself maintenance of electrical equipment.
- E. Never stand oil or paraffin heaters in draughts.
- F. Never overload electrical circuits.
- G. Do not smoke in bed.
- H. Always have an adult in charge of firework displays and bonfires.
- I. Always turn off naked lights and heaters when laying tiles using an inflammable adhesive, and keep the room ventilated.
- J. Never keep aerosol sprays near naked light or heat.

RANKING OF FIRE PREVENTION RULES BY ENTRANTS

Table 2
 Frequencies with which entrants gave the fire prevention rules the stated ranks

Rank	Fire prevention rules									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	1	20	62	3	8	0	4	1	1	0
2	3	47	13	3	13	8	5	6	2	0
3	4	15	12	7	19	14	15	10	3	1
4	13	8	4	6	17	11	15	15	6	5
5	17	3	4	8	15	12	16	9	9	7
6	9	1	1	21	15	14	16	7	6	10
7	13	3	1	11	0	15	8	16	22	11
8	8	3	0	14	6	12	10	14	20	13
9	17	0	2	17	5	7	7	11	17	17
10	15	0	1	10	2	7	4	11	14	36

A graphical representation of Table 2 is given in Figure 1. The ranks given are grouped in pairs, to give a clearer indication of the shape of the distributions, and the distributions appear in the order of average ranks given by the competition entrants (see below).

DISCUSSION

When the rank given to each rule by the judges is compared with the average rank given by entrants, in two instances it differs by as much as 3.

Table 3

Ranks awarded by judges and entrants

Rule	Judges' rank	Average of entrants' ranks	Average of entrants' ranks, ranked
A	10	6.68	8
B	1	2.57	2
C	2	2.01	1
D	4	6.62	7
E	6	4.37	3
F	5	5.80	5
G	3	5.34	4
H	7	6.23	6
I	8	7.26	9
J	9	8.12	10

The dangers of placing oil or paraffin heaters in draughts seemed to be well appreciated by the entrants. Perhaps this is because of the publicity the subject has received in the last few years.

On the other hand, entrants seemed to be relatively unconcerned at the hazards of do-it-yourself maintenance of electrical equipment. It is interesting to speculate on whether this could be because the phrase "do-it-yourself maintenance", in the rule as stated, sounds less undesirable than, for example, "unqualified interference"; or whether perhaps women as a group still lack adequate technical education.

There is in Figure 1 an indication of a bimodal distribution of the ranks for some of the rules. The meaning, if any, to be attached to this is not obvious.

CONCLUSIONS

Ten rules for fire prevention tended to be put in the following order by entrants (mainly housewives) for a newspaper competition:-

1. Never leave children alone with an unguarded fire.
2. Always keep matches out of the reach of children.
3. Never stand oil or paraffin heaters in draughts.
4. Do not smoke in bed.
5. Never overload electrical circuits.
6. Always have an adult in charge of firework displays and bonfires.
7. Avoid do-it-yourself maintenance of electrical equipment.
8. Never allow Christmas trimmings, etc., to come into contact with light bulbs or other sources of heat.
9. Always turn off naked lights and heaters when laying tiles using an inflammable adhesive, and keep the room ventilated.
10. Never keep aerosol sprays near naked light or heat.

Compared with the order selected by the panel of judges, the rule about not standing oil and paraffin heaters in draughts tended to be put three places higher, and that about avoiding do-it-yourself maintenance of electrical equipment three places lower.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work described in this paper forms part of the programme of the Joint Fire Research Organization of the Ministry of Technology and the Fire Offices' Committee; the paper is published by permission of the Director of Fire Research.

Thanks are due to the Editor, Illustrated Chronicle, for making the competition entry forms available for analysis; and to Mr. J. L. Elgar, Public Relations Branch, Home Office, for making the necessary arrangements.

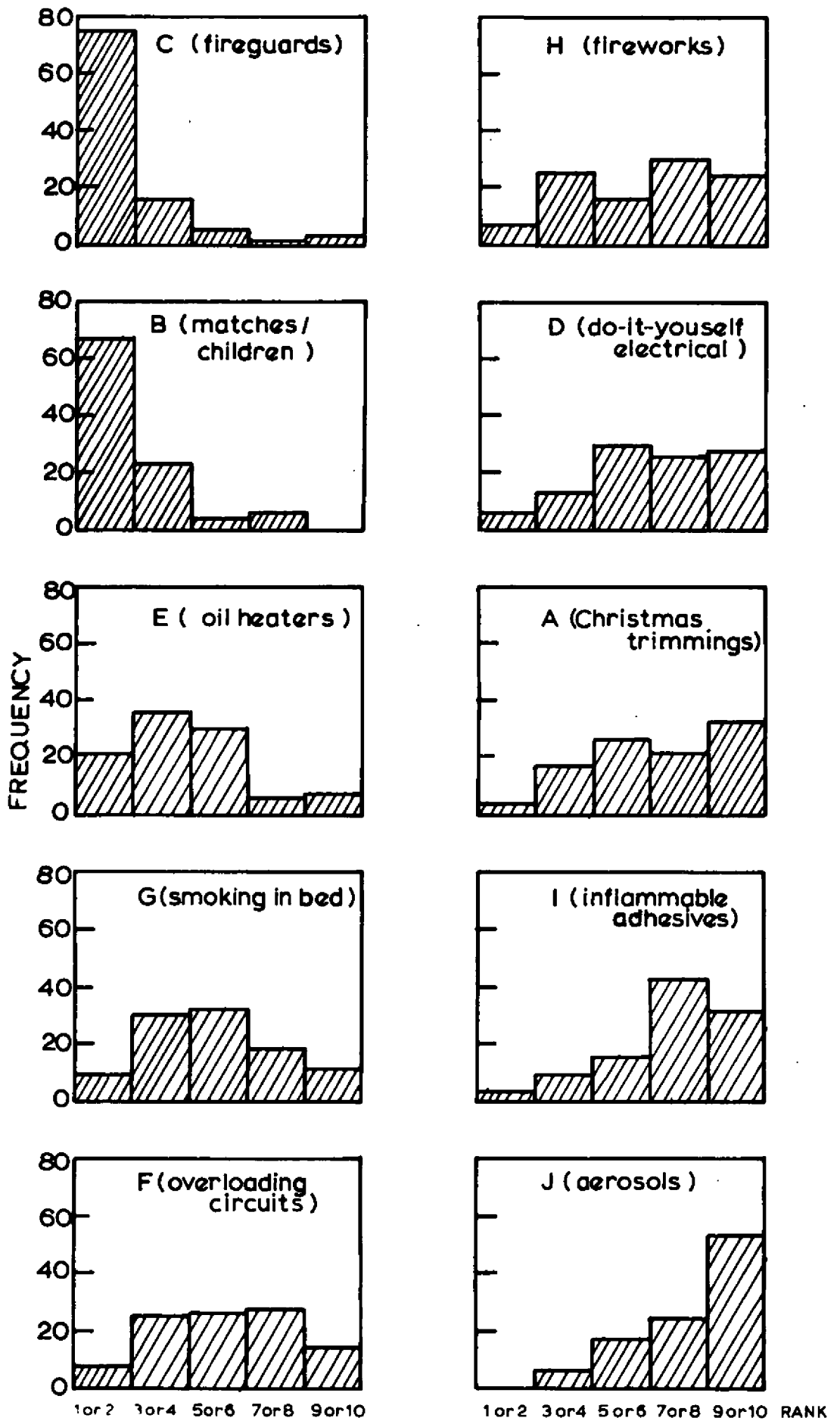


FIG. 1. RANKING OF 10 FIRE PREVENTION RULES BY 100 COMPETITION ENTRANTS

