

Has there ever been a major fire in Saugatuck or Douglas?

Although individual buildings have burned over the years, there has never been a village-wide fire in either Saugatuck or Douglas. A fire department, organized [IN SAUGATUCK IN 1870](#), is credited with saving the village from destruction during the fires of October 1871 which burned Chicago, Fennville and Holland. Nevertheless, there have been many big fires, for the



On February 8, 1934, the Douglas House, the first hotel which had been constructed in the village, caught fire. Firemen were hampered by extremely cold temperatures, but managed to save most of the structure below the second story floor.

villages are largely constructed with wood. One of Douglas's first major fires was when the fire station, with the engine inside, burned to the ground in 1902.

The most dramatic fire in Douglas was the

burning of the basket factory in 1927 when a warehouse of baskets produced flames that were seen in Muskegon. [THE LARGEST FIRE IN SAUGATUCK](#) was the burning of the Big Pavilion on May 6, 1960, which drew 16 trucks from 12 west Michigan fire departments.



Until about 1980 both villages had a fire siren to call the volunteer firemen. For those who arrived at the fire barn too late to go out with the trucks, the location of the fire would be written on a blackboard. Residents could gauge the size and importance of a fire by listening to the sirens. If one village fire siren was followed rapidly by the siren in the second village, it was probably a big fire. The two village fire departments were discontinued in favor of a township-wide department in 1976 and radio communication was established with each individual fireman.



The Tara restaurant on the hill in Douglas burned in February of 1973. Elementary school children, just arriving at school, rushed to the scene. After attendance was taken and showed a shortage, the principal visited the fire scene to collect them.



Wooden structures still burn. About 2008 this building at the corner of Center and Main streets in Douglas caught fire from burning trash. A second floor resident fled the building by sliding down the first floor awning.