

FIRE STATISTICS MONITOR

Revised data for 2008-09 and first data for
April to September 2009

Issue No. 02/10

14 May 2010

Data contained in this publication

Section A contains analysis of the numbers of fatalities in England for the period April to September 2009. This is the only analysis of data after March 2009 because, at the time of writing:

- UK totals for all data (incidents and fatalities and non-fatal casualty data) were available only up to March 2009.
- Other than for numbers of fatal casualties, England data were only complete up to March 2009.

The commentary in the remainder of this publication (Sections B1, B2 and B3) therefore provides the full established analysis of revised data for the financial year 2008/09 for both England and for the UK.

The accompanying spreadsheet annex tables include data for the periods of April to June 2009 and July to September 2009.

Annex tables

The tables referred to in this document are available as separately downloadable files at www.communities.gov.uk/fire/researchandstatistics/firestatistics/firestatisticsmonitors/

In response to a number of queries, further new tables have been added as follows:

New tables	New content
1c, 1d, 2c, and 2d	Replicas of tables 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b, but of the subset of non-deliberate fires
3b ii, iii, iv	Dwelling fires, other building fires and road vehicle fires for each Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) area
3b v	Fires in Commercial Properties for each FRA area
4d	Non-fatal casualties excluding pre-cautionary checks for each FRA area
6c	Non-fatal casualties historic long data series
6d	Deliberate fires long data series

The intention is to continue to develop this range of data tables. Feedback and requests are welcome.

Revisions in this publication

Data for 2008-09 include final amendments received from fire and rescue services from information arising. However fatal casualty records for 2008-09 have yet to be cross-checked against death certificate data for England, as these have not yet been received. In the past, this cross-checking has consistently resulted in a small net reduction in the number of fatalities caused by fire.

Next Fire Statistics Monitor

The publication of the next Fire Statistics Monitor has been pre-announced for August. It will contain data for incidents up to the end of March 2010.

It is planned that the commentary in this publication will continue to focus on financial year periods in the future in order to avoid confusion that has arisen in the past from the use of latest four quarter rolling averages.

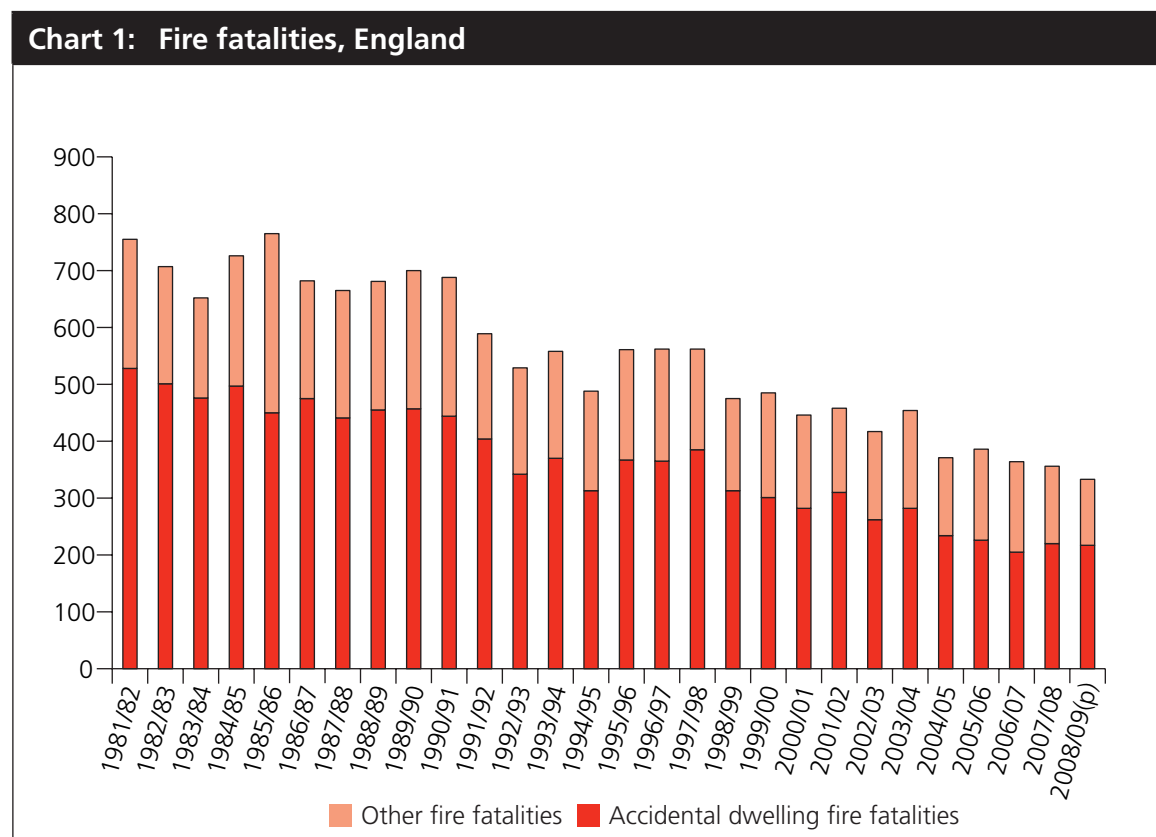


A – Fire fatalities to September 2009, England

(see Tables 2b & 4 and Chart 1)

As explained in the introduction, this section analyses fire fatalities data for England up to September 2009. Other sections of this publication therefore contain analysis of updated 2008-09 data. All available data by Fire and Rescue Service can be found in the spreadsheet appendix tables published alongside this monitor.

- Provisional figures (to be treated with caution, as the data are subject to revision – see Definition 3 for further explanation) of the total number of fire fatalities in England show:
 - In 2008-09 there were 322 fire fatalities, 36 fewer than in 2007-08. Chart 1 shows the long term downward trend in fire fatalities.
 - Between April and September 2009 there were 162 fatalities, 43 more than in the same six months of 2008.
 - Of the 162 fatalities between April and September 2009, almost two-thirds (101) occurred in accidental dwelling fires. Most of the overall increase of 43 fatalities was in accidental dwelling fires, in which there were 31 more fatalities than in April to September 2008.
 - Summary tables 1 and 2 show that the increase for the April to September period is largely the result of the higher numbers of fatalities in the April to June 2009 quarter.



Summary table 1 – All fire fatalities, England							
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Difference 2008/09 to 2009/10
April-June	93	81	100	81	60	94	+34
July-September	79	86	80	66	59	68	+9
October-December	73	93	94	102	110	–	–
January-March	126	126	90	109	93	–	–
April-March (12 months)	371	386	364	358	322	–	–
April-September (6 months)	172	167	180	147	119	162	+43

Summary table 2 – Fatalities in accidental dwelling fires, England							
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Difference 2008/09 to 2009/10
April-June	54	52	62	44	36	61	+25
July-September	44	40	37	37	34	40	+6
October-December	46	50	51	64	67	–	–
January-March	90	83	55	76	72	–	–
April-March (12 months)	234	225	205	221	209	–	–
April-September (6 months)	98	92	99	81	70	101	+31

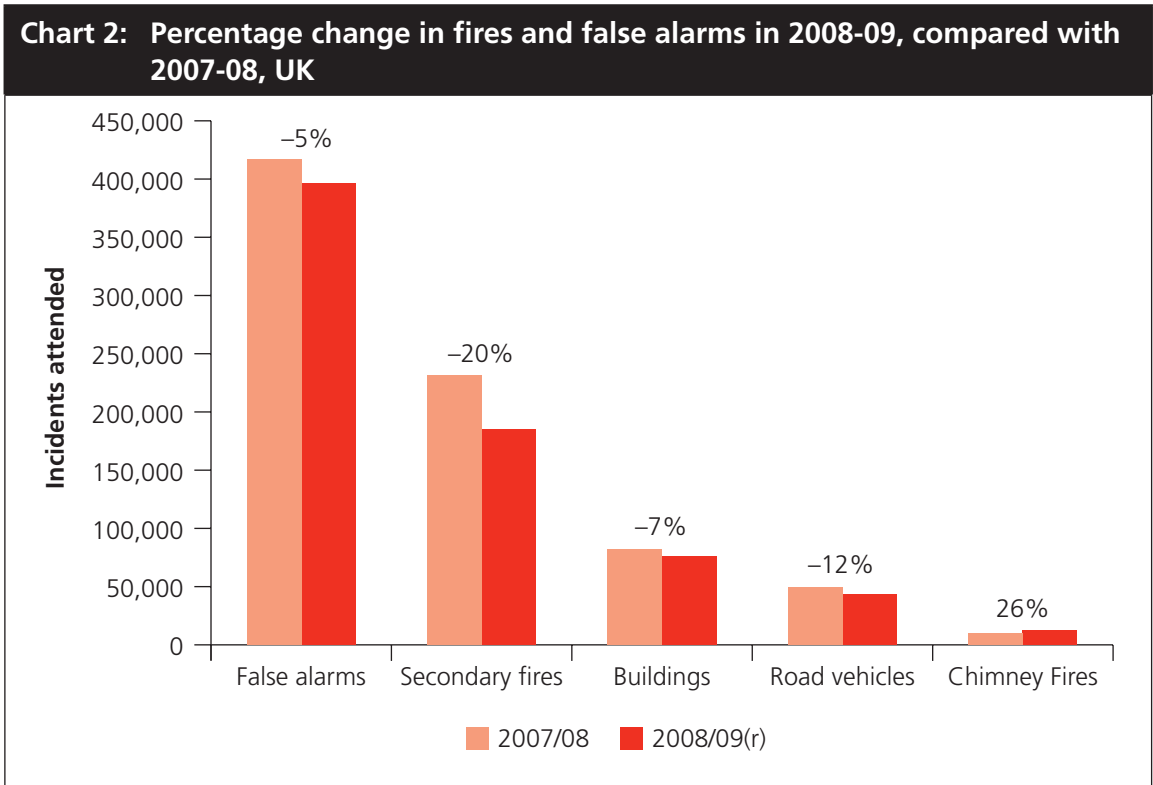
B1 – Key points on updated 2008-09 data

Fires and false alarms (Chart 2)

- In 2008-2009, fire and rescue services in the United Kingdom attended 722,000 fires or false alarms, a 10 per cent decrease compared to 2007-08. In England, there was a 10 per cent decrease, with a total of 562,000 fires or false alarms attended in the same period.
- Within the total number of fires (326,000 in the UK), building fires fell by 7 per cent to 76,000. In England, building fires also fell by 8 per cent, to 61,000.
- The total number of fire false alarms attended in the UK fell by 5 per cent to 397,000. In England, fire false alarms fell by 6 per cent to 313,000.
- In the UK, there were 44,000 road vehicle fires (down 12%). In England, there were 36,000 road vehicle fires (down 12%).

Fatalities and non-fatal casualties (2008-09)

- The **provisional** (see definition 3) number of dwelling fire fatalities in the UK in 2008-09 was 334. This is 37 fewer than in 2007-08. In England, the provisional number of dwelling fire fatalities, recorded in 2008-09 was 254, 21 fewer than in 2007-08.
- In 2008-09, the number of non fatal casualties in fires in the UK fell by 9 per cent to 12,000 from 13,100 during 2007-08. In England, 9,200 injuries (down by 11%) were recorded.

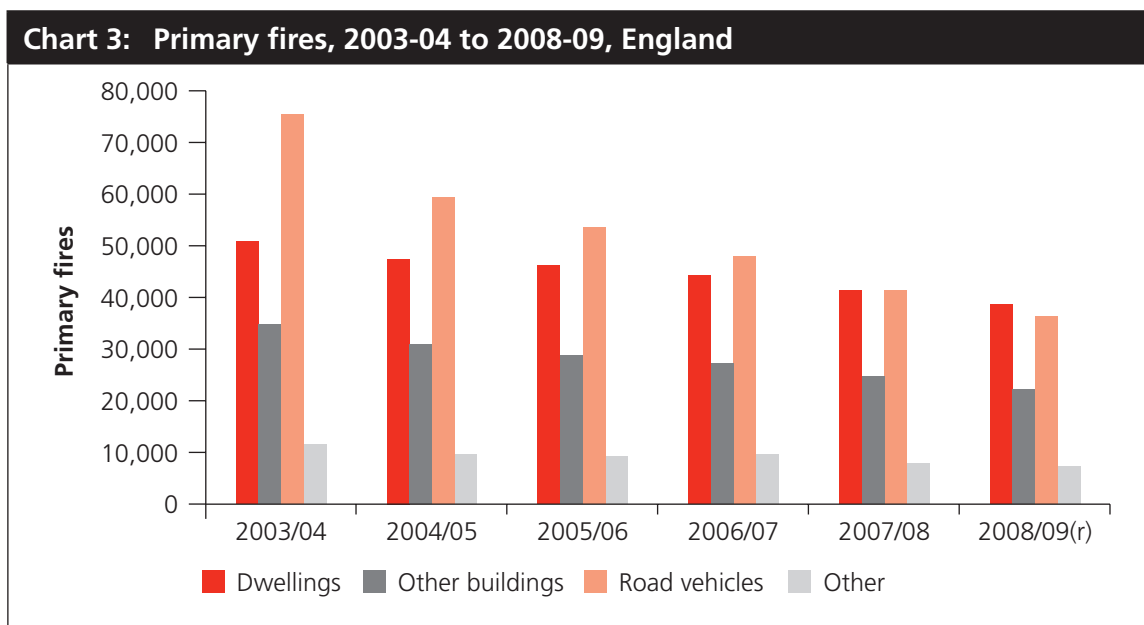


B2 – Further detail for England (updated 2008-09 data)

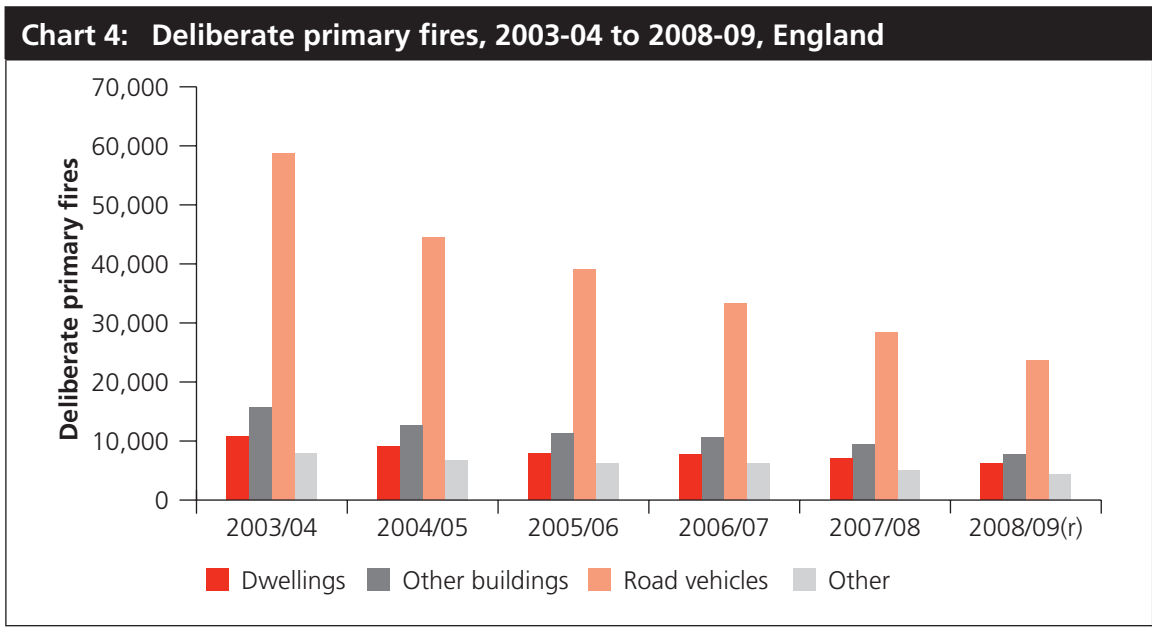
Fires (see Tables 1b, 3, 4 & 5 and Charts 3 – 6)

2. A total of 249,000 fires were attended in England in 2008-09 – a 15 per cent decrease compared with the previous 12 months. Within the total number of fires, there was a 9 per cent fall in primary fires to 104,000. Secondary fires fell by 21 per cent to 137,000 and chimney fires rose by 28 per cent to 8,100.

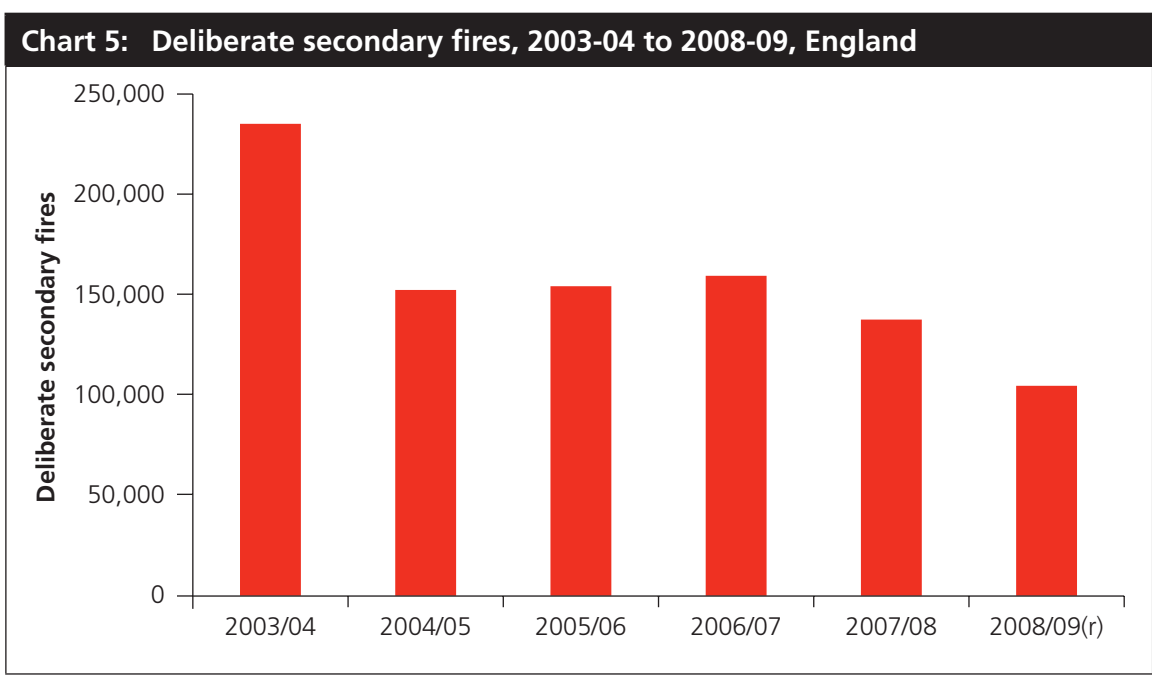
Summary table 3: Incidents and false alarms attended, England		
	2008-09⁴	change 2007-08 to 2008-09
Primary fires (A)	104,000	-9%
Building fires (A1)	61,000	-8%
Dwelling fires (A1i)	39,000	-7%
of which accidental	32,000	-5%
Other buildings ¹ (A1ii)	22,000	-10%
Road vehicles	36,000	-12%
Other ²	7,200	-8%
Secondary fires ³ (B)	137,000	-21%
Chimney fires (C)	8,100	+28%
Total fires attended (A+B+C)	249,000	-15%
False Alarms	313,000	-6%
Total	562,000	-10%
¹ Typically commercial buildings and schools ² Typically outdoor fires that are 'primary' because of a casualty or casualties, or attendance by five or more appliances ³ Typically outdoor fires not including property ⁴ Totals may not match summing components due to rounding		



3. Within the primary fires category, there was a fall of 8 per cent in the total number of building fires – down to 61,000. This fall includes a 7 per cent decrease in dwelling fires to 39,000 and a 10 per cent decrease in other building fires (i.e. commercial premises, schools etc.) to 22,000. The number of road vehicle fires fell by 12 per cent to 36,000.
4. There were 32,000 accidental dwelling fires in 2008-09 (down 5% on 2007-08), continuing the decline seen since 2000-01.
5. Deliberate primary fires in England totalled 42,000, down 16 per cent from 2007-08. Deliberate primary road vehicle fires fell by 17 per cent – down to 24,000.



6. In England, secondary fires fell by 21 per cent to 137,000 and deliberate secondary fires fell by 24 per cent to 104,000 in 2008-09.



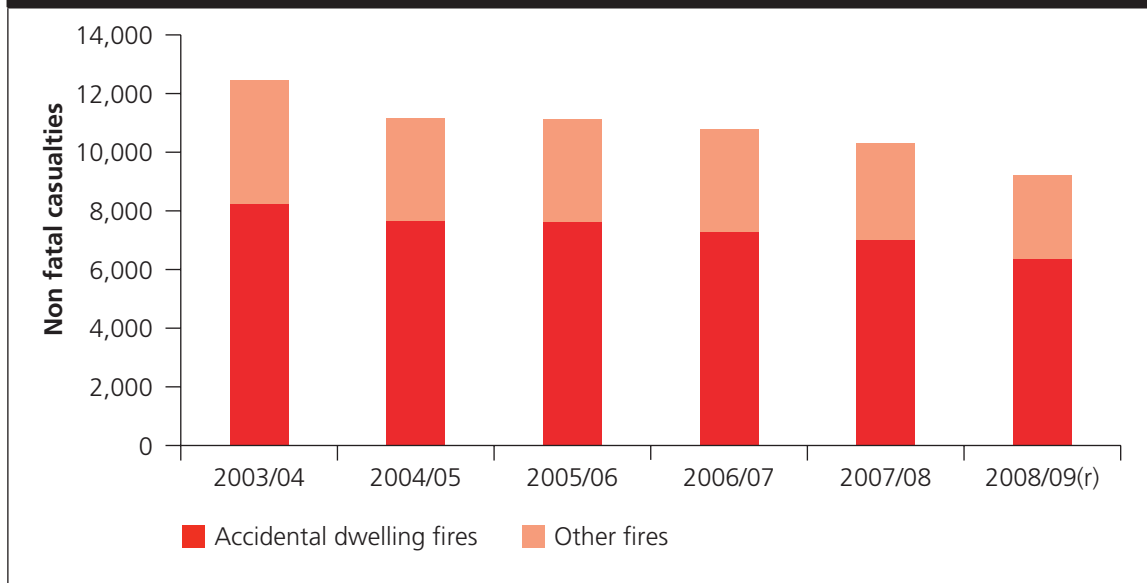
Summary table 4: Deliberate primary and secondary fires, England			
	2007-08	2008-09	change 2007-08 to 2008-09
Deliberate primary fires	50,000	42,000	-16%
Dwelling fires	7,000	6,000	-14%
Other building fires	9,000	8,000	-11%
Road vehicle fires	28,000	24,000	-17%
Other	5,000	4,000	-20%
Deliberate secondary fires	137,000	104,000	-24%

False alarms (see Tables 1b & 3)

7. In 2008-09, the number of false alarms attended in England fell by 6 per cent to 313,000. Within this category, the number of malicious false alarms fell by 20 per cent to 17,000. False alarms due to apparatus were down by 4 per cent to 207,000; these incidents constituted around two-thirds of all false fire alarms during this period.

Fire non-fatal casualties (see Tables 2b & 4 and Chart 11)

8. In 2008-09, the number of non-fatal casualties in fires in England fell by 11 per cent to 9,200. This decrease continues the downward trend in injuries in fires and represents the lowest figure recorded since before revised fire statistics collection was introduced in 1994. Of the non-fatal casualties recorded, 4,200 were precautionary checks (see definition 4).
9. There were 7,500 non-fatal casualties (including precautionary checks) in dwelling fires, a fall of 12 per cent from 2007-08.

Chart 6: Fire non-fatal casualties, 2003-04 to 2008-09, England**Summary table 5: Non-fatal casualties, England, 2008-09**

	2007-08	2008-09	change 2007-08 to 2008-09
Non- fatal casualties including precautionary checks ¹	10,300	9,200	-11%
of which in dwelling fires	8,400	7,500	-12%
of which in accidental dwelling fires	7,000	6,400	-9%
Precautionary checks ¹	4,600	4,200	-8%
of which in dwelling fires	4,000	3,600	-9%
of which in accidental dwelling fires	3,400	3,100	-8%

¹ A precautionary check is when an individual is sent to hospital or advised to see a doctor as a precaution, having no obvious injury or distress

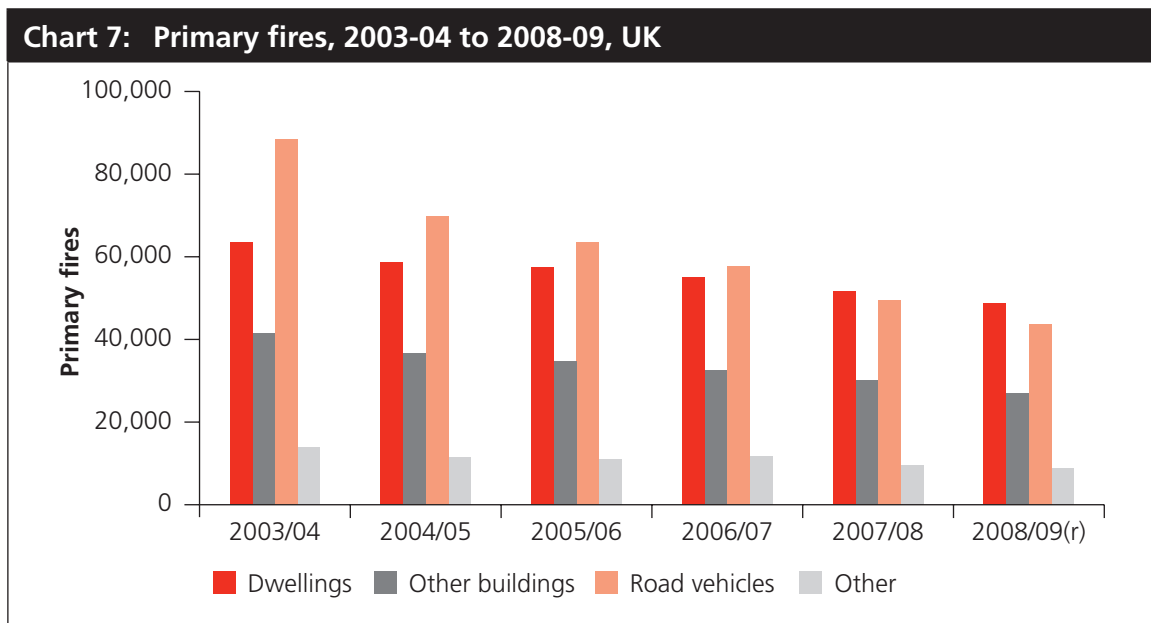
B3 – Further detail for the UK (updated 2008-09 data)

Fires and false alarms (Tables 1a, 3, 4 & 5 and Charts 7-11)

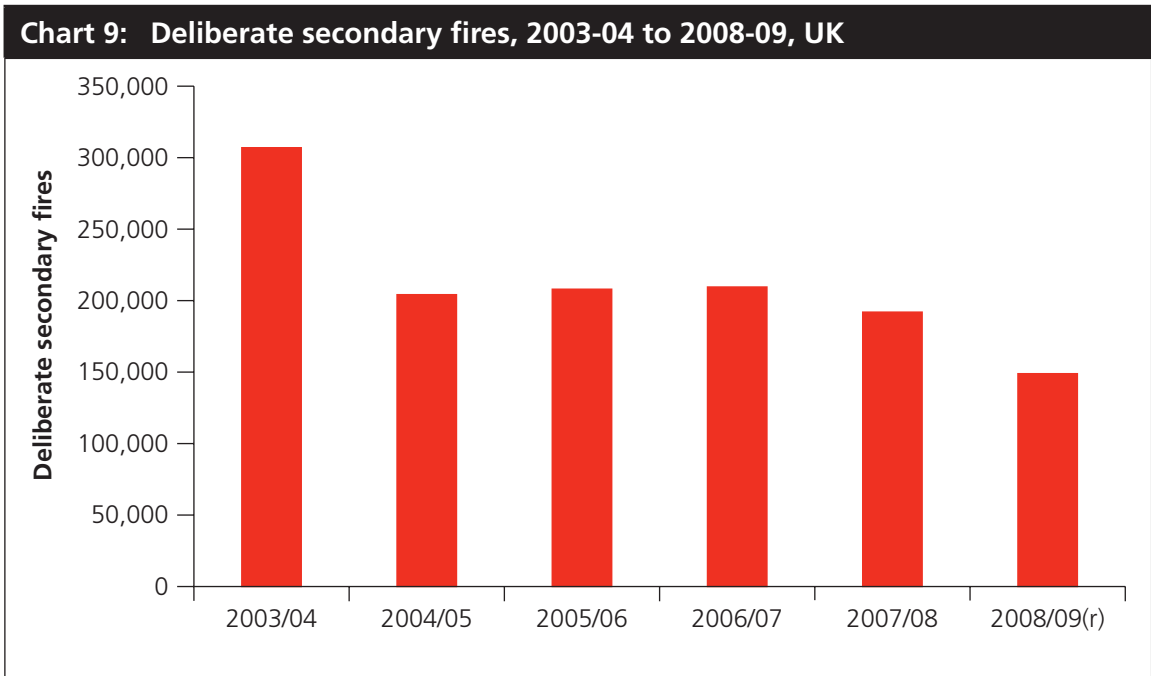
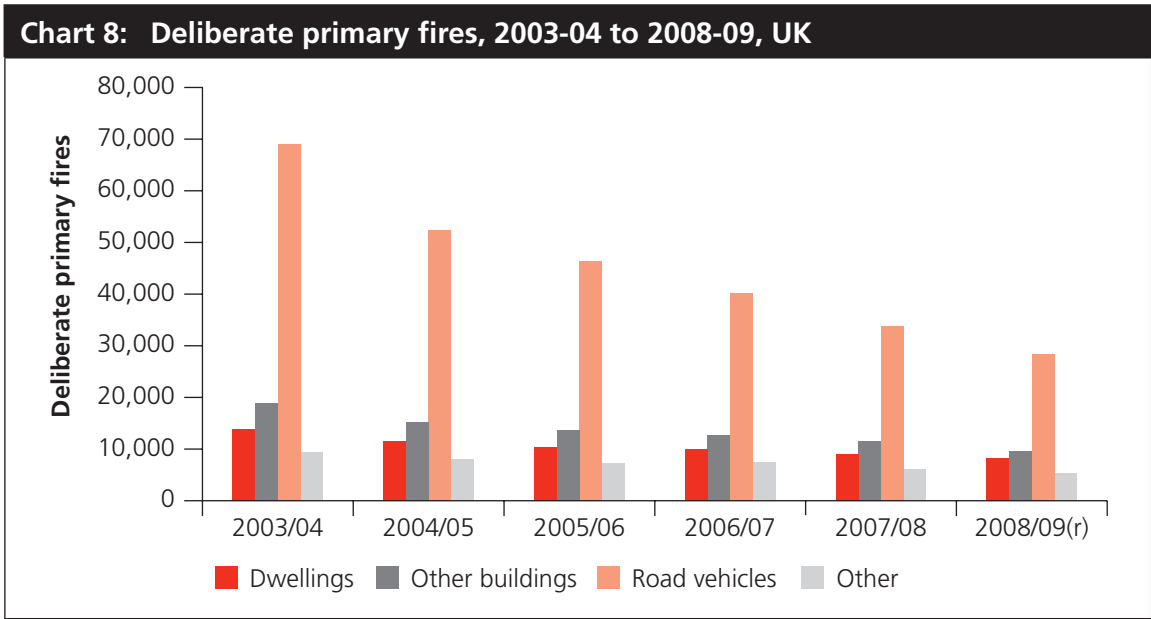
10. The numbers of fires and false alarms attended by fire and rescue services in 2008-09 are shown in the table:

Summary table 6: Incidents and false alarms attended UK		
	2008-09⁴	change 2007-08 to 2008-09
Primary fires (A)	128,000	-9%
Building fires (A1)	76,000	-7%
Dwelling fires (A1i)	49,000	-6%
of which accidental	41,000	-5%
Other buildings ¹ (A1ii)	27,000	-10%
Road vehicles	44,000	-12%
Other ²	9,000	-8%
Secondary fires ³ (B)	185,000	-20%
Chimney fires (C)	12,000	+26%
Total fires attended (A+B+C)	326,000	-15%
False Alarms	397,000	-5%
Total	722,000	-10%
¹ Typically commercial buildings and schools ² Typically outdoor fires that are 'primary' because of a casualty or casualties, or attendance by five or more appliances ³ Typically outdoor fires not including property ⁴ Totals may not match summing components due to rounding		

11. A total of 326,000 fires were attended in the UK in 2008-09 – a 15 per cent decrease compared with 2007-08. Within the total number of fires, there was a 9 per cent fall in primary fires to 128,000. Secondary fires (i.e. outdoor fires not involving property) fell to 185,000 in 2008-09 from 231,000 in the previous year (a decrease of 20%). Chimney fires rose by 26 per cent to 12,300.



12. Within the primary fires category, there was a fall of 7 per cent in the total number of building fires to 76,000. This fall comprises a 6 per cent decrease in dwelling fires to 49,000 and a 10 per cent decrease in other building fires (i.e. commercial premises, schools etc) to 27,000. The number of road vehicle fires fell by 12 per cent to 44,000, the lowest figure since 1984.
13. There were 41,000 accidental dwelling fires in 2008-09 (5% less than the previous year).
14. Deliberate primary fires fell by 15 per cent to 52,000 in 2008-09, continuing the downward trend since the peak in 2001-02 of 125,000. Meanwhile deliberate secondary fires fell by 23 per cent to 148,000 in 2008-09.



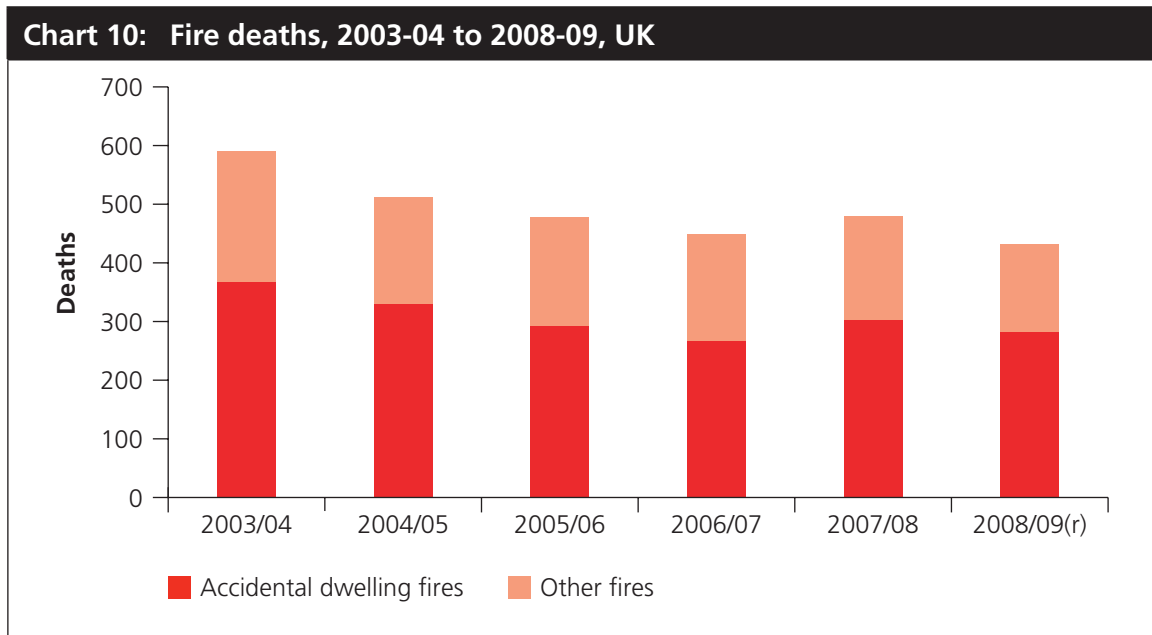
Summary table 7: Deliberate primary and secondary fires, UK			
	2007-08	2008-09	change 2007-08 to 2008-09
Deliberate primary fires	61,000	52,000	-15%
Dwelling fires	9,000	8,000	-11%
Other building fires	12,000	10,000	-17%
Road vehicle fires	34,000	28,000	-16%
Other	6,000	5,000	-17%
Deliberate secondary fires	191,000	148,000	-23%

False alarms (see Tables 1a & 3)

15. In 2008-09, the number of fire false alarms attended in the UK decreased by 5 per cent to 397,000 (continuing the downward trend since 2001-02). Within this category the number of malicious false alarms fell by 19 per cent to 23,000 following the general long-term trend. False alarms due to apparatus decreased by 2 per cent to 264,000; these incidents constituted around two thirds of all fire false alarms during 2008-09.

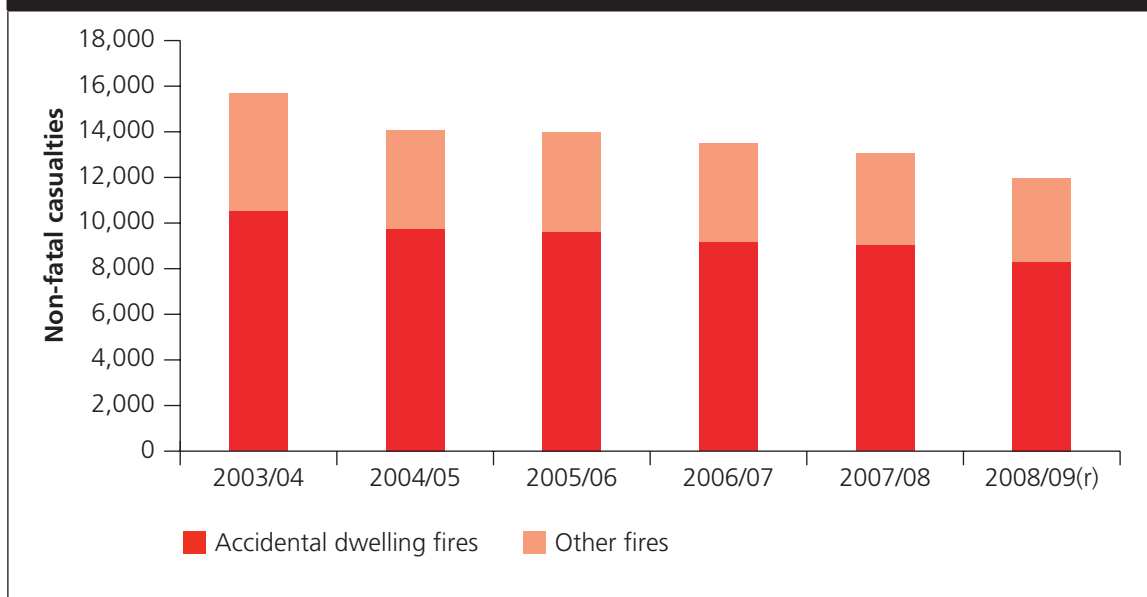
Fire deaths (see Tables 2a & 4 and Chart 5)

16. **Provisional** figures (see definition 3) for 2008-09 show that the total number of fire deaths in the UK decreased by 58 to 420 fatalities from 478 (in 2007-08). The figures for fire deaths should be treated with caution, as the data are provisional – see definition 3 for further explanation.
17. Within the total number of deaths in the year ending 2008-09, 334 occurred in dwelling fires. This total is 37 fewer than 2007-08. Fatalities in other buildings decreased from 36 to 17.
18. In 2008-09, there were 281 deaths in accidental dwelling fires recorded, 20 fewer than in 2007-08.



Fire non-fatal casualties (see Tables 2a & 4 and Chart 6)

19. In 2008-09, the number of non-fatal casualties from fires in the UK fell by 9 per cent to 12,000 from 13,100 during 2007-08. This decrease continues the downward trend in injuries in fires and represents the lowest figure recorded since 1985. Of the non-fatal casualties recorded, 5,400 were precautionary checks (see definition 4).
20. There were 10,000 non-fatal casualties (including precautionary checks) in dwelling fires, a fall of 9 per cent from the previous year.

Chart 11: Non-fatal fire casualties, 2003-04 to 2008-09, UK**Summary table 8: Non-fatal casualties, UK**

	2007-08	2008-09	change 2007-08 to 2008-09
Non-fatal casualties including precautionary checks ¹	13,076	11,951	-9%
of which in dwelling fires	10,847	9,819	-9%
of which in accidental dwelling fires	9,003	8,298	-8%
Precautionary checks ²	5,769	5,390	-7%
of which in dwelling fires	5,081	4,714	-7%
of which in accidental dwelling fires	4,320	4,026	-7%

¹ A precautionary check is when an individual is sent to hospital or advised to see a doctor as a precaution, having no obvious injury or distress

Definitions

1. Details of the questions and categories used in the recording of details of incidents under the new Incident Recording System (IRS) are available in the document IRS Questions and Lists. This can be downloaded from www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/irsquestionslists.

Categories of fire incident

2. **Primary** fires include all fires in non-derelect buildings and outdoor structures, non-abandoned vehicles or any fires involving casualties or rescues or any fires attended by five or more appliances. **Secondary** fires are the majority of outdoor fires including grassland and refuse fires unless they involve casualties or rescues, property loss or five or more appliances attend. They include fires in derelect buildings.

Fatalities

3. A person whose death is attributed to a fire is counted as a fatality even if the death occurred later. However, it sometime transpires later that fire was not the cause of death. The figures for fatalities are thus subject to revision, following cross-checking of the information supplied by fire and rescue services against the cause of death that appears on the death certificate. Uncertainty as to whether fire was the cause of death is most common in road accident fatalities. This monitor contains finalised death figures up to March 2008 and provisional figures for subsequent periods.

Precautionary checks

4. A precautionary check is when an individual is sent to hospital or advised to see a doctor as a precaution, having no obvious injury or distress.

Data and data quality

5. Commentary is on the statistics is for the latest financial year period. Although quarterly data are shown in the tables, there is considerable seasonality and other fluctuation which can make interpretation difficult. The hot dry summer of 2003 is a particularly acute example.

Comparability of data under the new incident recording system (IRS) and its predecessor, the fire data report (FDR) system

6. Quality assurance of the data on which this monitor is based has identified the following two areas of discontinuity arising from the switchover from the old largely paper-based fire data report (FDR) system to the new incident recording system (IRS) questions.
7. Within the data of a handful of Fire and Rescue Services, slight increases in the numbers of certain incident types are evident, typically in numbers of outdoor fires. It may be that these are not real increases, but rather the result of a small proportion of incidents in the past being incorrectly reported as being 'secondary fires' rather than 'primary fires'. The emerging conclusions are as follows:
 - that if these differences are due to changes of reporting rather than being real world changes, it is most likely that the difference follows from incorrect reporting under the old FDR system
 - the effect on national totals appears to be slight
 - there is no suggestion of difference in completeness of recording of fatal and non-fatal casualties.
8. There is an unrelated possibility of discontinuity in the numbers of non-fatal casualties, and these will be subject to further scrutiny, with findings noted in subsequent monitor publications. Two potential issues have been identified, the first being patterns of non-fatal casualties being marked as 'not fire-related'. These have not been excluded in order to prevent a large discontinuity compared to data from before the introduction of the new Incident Recording System. The second area where a potential issue may exist arises since the incident recording system collects details in two questions, the first categorising the casualty as one of: '*severe injury (hospital)*', or '*slight injury*', or '*first aid*' or '*precautionary check advised*', while the second question records the type of injury. This contrasts with the FDR system where a single question was used. In particular the FDR system had no category for 'first aid'. It is unclear how equivalent casualty cases which would now under IRS be recorded as 'first aid' would have been recorded in the past, and how consistent practice may have been in recording or not recording such cases.
9. Tables 1 and 2 contain data for 2002 and 2003 which include estimates for November 2002 and January and February 2003 to account for the lack of information recorded during fifteen days of national industrial action. These estimates have been produced using comparable data for the same month of the previous year – a daily rate is calculated then multiplied by the number of strike days. Information on the actual number of fatal casualties which occurred during the strike periods has been obtained from the MOD and media and is included in this monitor in Tables 1 and 2.

Revisions policy

10. It is proposed that revisions will be published in tables every quarter until the relevant time period is deemed to be 'closed'. Closure occurs after completion of the death certificates reconciliation exercise, which is currently carried out annually, and thus typically one to two years after the date of any incident.

Index of appendix data tables

Tables referred to in this document are available as separate downloadable files on the Communities and Local Government website:

www.communities.gov.uk/fire/researchandstatistics/firestatistics/firestatisticsmonitors/

Workbook 1 & 2

- Table 1a: Fires by location and false alarms, UK, 1999 – 2009 Qtr 1
- Table 1b: Fires by location and false alarms, England, 1999 – 2009 Qtr 1
- Table 1c: Fires by location and false alarms (non-deliberate), UK, 1999 – 2009 Qtr 1
- Table 1d: Fires by location and false alarms (non-deliberate), England, 1999 – 2009 Qtr 1
- Table 2a: Casualties from fires, UK, 1999 – 2009 Qtr 1
- Table 2b: Casualties from fires, England, 1999 – 2009 Qtr 3
- Table 2c: Casualties from non-deliberate fires, UK, 1999 – 2009 Qtr 1
- Table 2d: Casualties from non-deliberate fires, England, 1999 – 2009 Qtr 3

Workbook 3 (*tables by fire and rescue service, 2001-02 – 2008/09 and 2007Q2 – 2009Q3*)

- Table 3a: All fires, including chimney fires,
- Table 3b (i): Primary fires
- Table 3b (ii): Dwelling fires
- Table 3b (iii): Other building fires
- Table 3b (iv): Road vehicle fires
- Table 3b (v): Fires in Commercial Properties
- Table 3c: Secondary fires
- Table 3d (i): False alarms
- Table 3d (ii): Malicious false alarms
- Table 3d (iii): False alarms due to apparatus
- Table 3d (iv): False alarms made with good intent
- Table 3e: Fatal casualties
- Table 3f: Non-fatal casualties
- Table 3g: Non-fatal casualties (excluding precautionary checks)

Workbook 4 (*tables by fire and rescue service, 2001-02 – 2008-09 and 2007Q2 – 2009Q3*)

Table 4a: Accidental dwelling fires

Table 4b: Fatal casualties in accidental dwelling fires

Table 4c: Non-fatal casualties in accidental dwelling fires

Table 4d: Non-fatal casualties excluding pre-cautionary checks

Workbook 5 (*tables by fire and rescue service, 2001-02 – 2008-09 and 2007Q2 – 2009Q3*)

Table 5a: Deliberate primary fires

Table 5b: Deliberate road vehicle primary fires

Table 5c: Deliberate primary fires in locations other than road vehicles

Table 5d: Deliberate secondary fires

Workbook 6 (*incidents and fatalities long time series*)

Table 6a: Primary fires, dwelling fires, accidental dwelling fires

Table 6b: Fatalities in i) all fires and in ii) accidental dwelling fires

Table 6c: Non-fatal casualties historic long data series

Table 6d: Deliberate fires by main types long data series

Population workbook – Population by Fire Authority area

Further information on fire statistics can be obtained from:

<p>Jon Gamble Communities & Local Government Fire Statistics and Research Division Hempstead House, 1st Floor 2 Selden Hill Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP2 4XN</p> <p>Tel: 0303 444 2923 Email: Jon.Gamble@communities.gsi.gov.uk</p>	<p>Gavin Sayer Communities & Local Government Fire and Resilience Directorate Eland House, 3rd Floor Bressenden Place London SW1E 5DU</p> <p>Tel: 0303 444 2818 Email: Gavin.Sayer@communities.gsi.gov.uk</p>
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