



Fire Statistics Monitor: England

April 2014 to March 2015



Fire & Rescue *Statistical Release*

20 August 2015

- There were 258 fire fatalities in England in 2014-15. This was 16 fewer (six per cent) than in previous year and 30 per cent lower than ten years ago. The 2014-15 figure is the lowest number recorded to date. ([Chart 3a](#))
- 63 per cent of all fire fatalities were in accidental dwelling fires - 163 in 2014-15. This was 19 fewer (ten per cent) than in the previous year, 30 per cent lower than ten years ago, and also the lowest number recorded to date. ([Chart 3a](#))
- In 2014-15, there were 3,235 non-fatal fire hospital casualties. This was six per cent and 55 per cent lower than one year and ten years earlier respectively. ([Section 3](#))
- Local authority fire and rescue services attended around 154,700 fires in England in 2014-15. This is the second lowest number of fire incidents recorded. The record low number of fires in 2012-13 was the result of fewer outdoor fires, due to above average rainfall that year. ([Section 4](#))
- 44 per cent of all incidents attended by local authority fire and rescue services were fire false alarms. This was one percentage point greater than in the previous year. Fire and rescue services attended more false alarms than fires in 2014-15, as has been the case every year since 2004-05. ([Section 5](#))
- There were 28,200 accidental dwelling fires in 2014-15. This figure was one per cent lower than the previous year and 26 per cent lower than ten years ago. ([Chart 4c](#))

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Date of next annual publication:
Summer 2016

1. Introduction

This Fire Statistics Monitor focuses on analyses of fire and rescue incident and fire casualty data for England for the financial year 2014-15 (April 2014 to March 2015). Its source is records of all incidents attended by local authority fire and rescue services in England – the Incident Recording System (IRS): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/incident-recording-system-for-fire-and-rescue-authorities>).

It should be noted that because incident records are being added and edited constantly that revisions to previous years' figures occur regularly and figures for 2014-15 in this release are deemed provisional.

This publication is accompanied by around 40 reference data tables, many of the tables contain data at fire and rescue service level. These are published alongside this publication as downloadable spreadsheets.

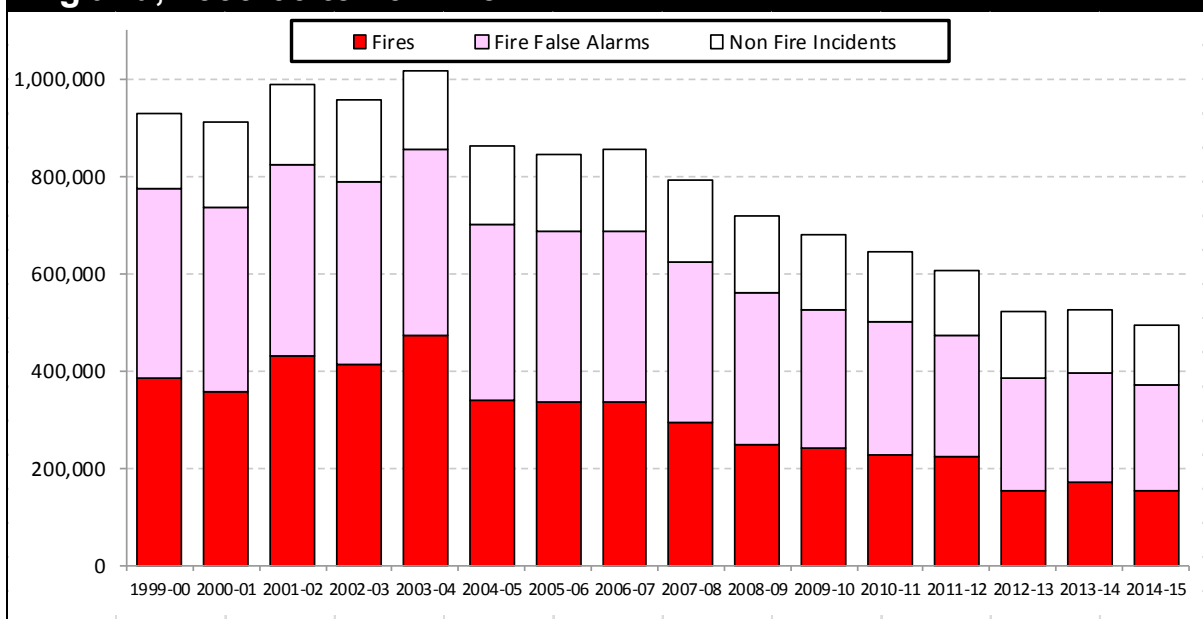
More detailed analyses, such as on the causes of fire can be found in the publication *Fire Statistics Great Britain*: (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/fire-statistics-great-britain).

We welcome feedback. Contact details can be found at the end of this publication.

2. Incidents Attended

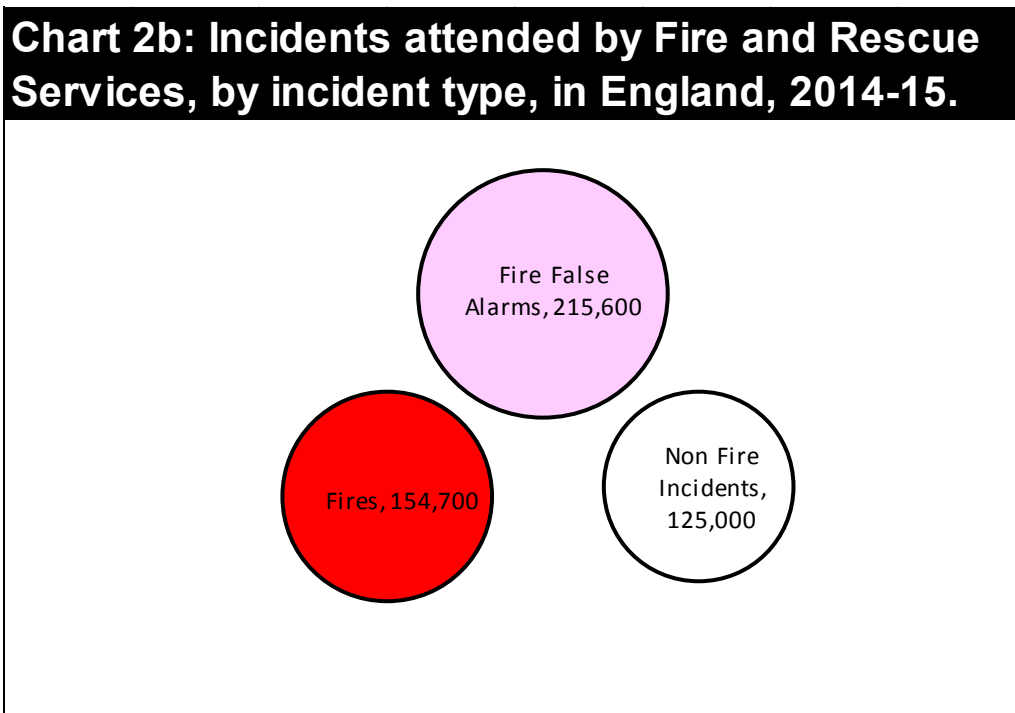
- Local authority fire and rescue services attended around 495,400 incidents in England during 2014-15. This figure shows a six per cent decrease compared to the previous year and a decrease of 42 per cent compared to ten years ago.
- Local authority fire and rescue services attended around 154,700 fires in England during 2014-15. This figure shows a 10 per cent decrease compared to the previous year.
- 31 per cent of all incidents attended by local authority fire and rescue services were fires. This was two percentage points less than in the previous year.
- Local authority fire and rescue services attended around 125,000 non-fire incidents in England during 2014-15. This figure shows a five per cent decrease compared to the previous year.
- 25 per cent of all incidents attended by local authority fire and rescue services were non-fire incidents. This proportion was unchanged compared to the previous year.
- Local authority fire and rescue services attended around 215,600 fire false alarms in England during 2014-15. This figure shows a four per cent decrease compared to the previous year.
- 44 per cent of all incidents attended by local authority fire and rescue services were fire false alarms. This was one percentage point greater than in the previous year.

Chart 2a: Incidents attended by Fire and Rescue Services, in England, 1999-00 to 2014-15.



The number of incidents attended by local authority fire and rescue services has been on a downward trend since 2003-04, as shown in chart 2a, when over one million incidents were attended. Only in one year since then (2013-14) has the number of incidents increased. This may be explained by the high rainfall in 2012-13 (which resulted, particularly, in a low number of secondary fires).

In every year since 2004-05 the most frequent type of incident has been fire false alarms ranging between 41 and 44 per cent of all incidents in any particular year. The proportion of fire incidents has shown a downward trend from 40 per cent ten years ago to 31 per cent in 2014-15.

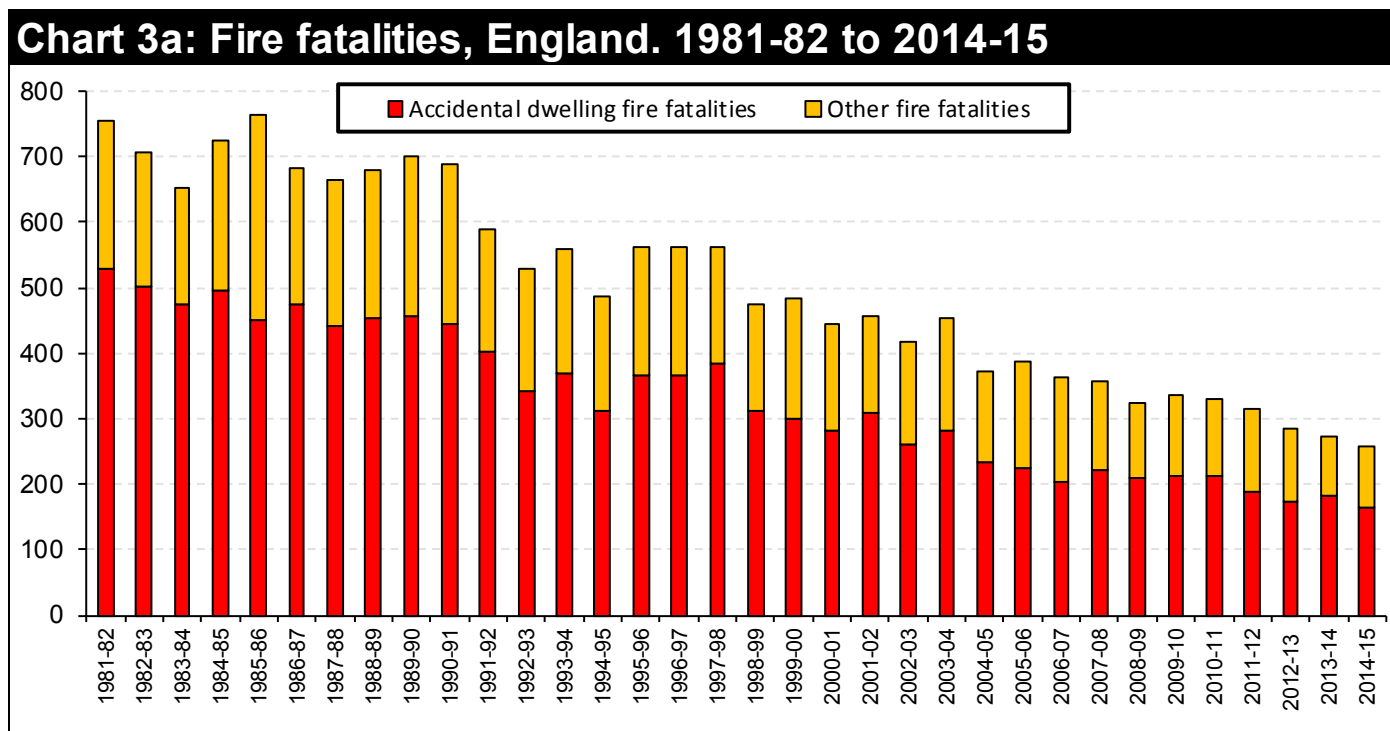


Further detail on these figures can be found in Fire Statistics Monitor Tables 1a and 1b. They can be found here-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-monitor-april-2014-to-march-2015>

3. Fire Fatalities and Casualties

- There has been a long term downward trend in fire fatalities and casualties.
- There were 258 fire fatalities in England in 2014-15. This was 16 fewer (six per cent) than in the previous year and 30 per cent lower than ten years ago in 2004-05.
- 163 fire fatalities were in accidental dwelling fires in 2014-15, 63 per cent of all fatalities. The number of fatalities from accidental dwelling fires decreased by ten per cent compared to the previous year and 30 per cent compared to ten years previously.



Short term fluctuations are common in fire fatalities data because of the relatively small numbers involved, but chart 3a shows the long term downward trend in fire fatalities since the mid-1980s. The number of fire fatalities is now just over a third of what it was in the early 1980s. Since 1981-82 the proportion of fire fatalities that were from accidental dwelling fires has varied between 56 and 73 per cent.

- There were 7,546 non-fatal casualties in England in 2014-15. This was three per cent lower than in the previous year and 32 per cent lower than ten years ago.
- In 2014-15, there were 3,235 non-fatal fire hospital casualties. This was six per cent and 55 per cent lower than one year and ten years earlier respectively.

Non-fatal fire fatalities have been split into four categories (Hospital severe injury, Hospital slight injury, First aid given and Precautionary checks carried out) since 1st April 2009, when the IRS was completed online. Like fire fatality figures care should be taken when using figures for one

year however the figures for 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12 are higher than those for 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15. This decrease is across the board as Chart 3b shows.

Chart 3b: Non-fatal fire casualties, England. 2009-10 to 2014-15

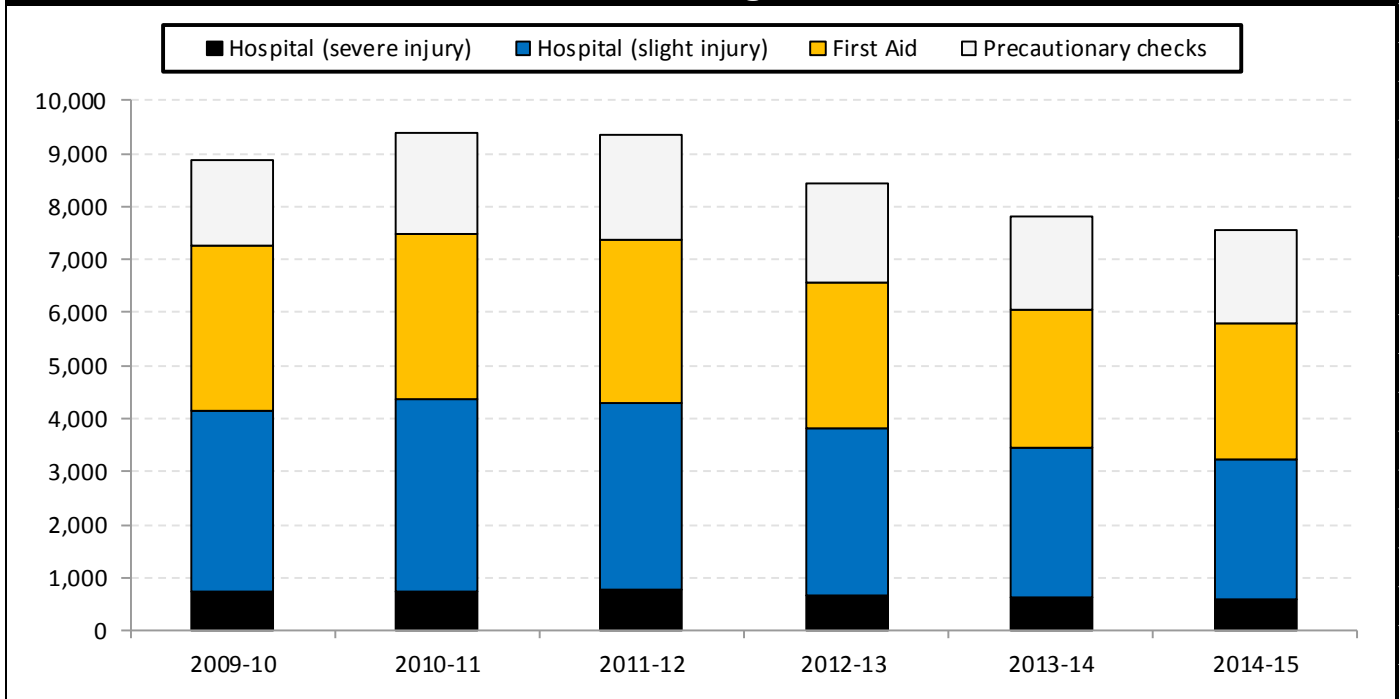
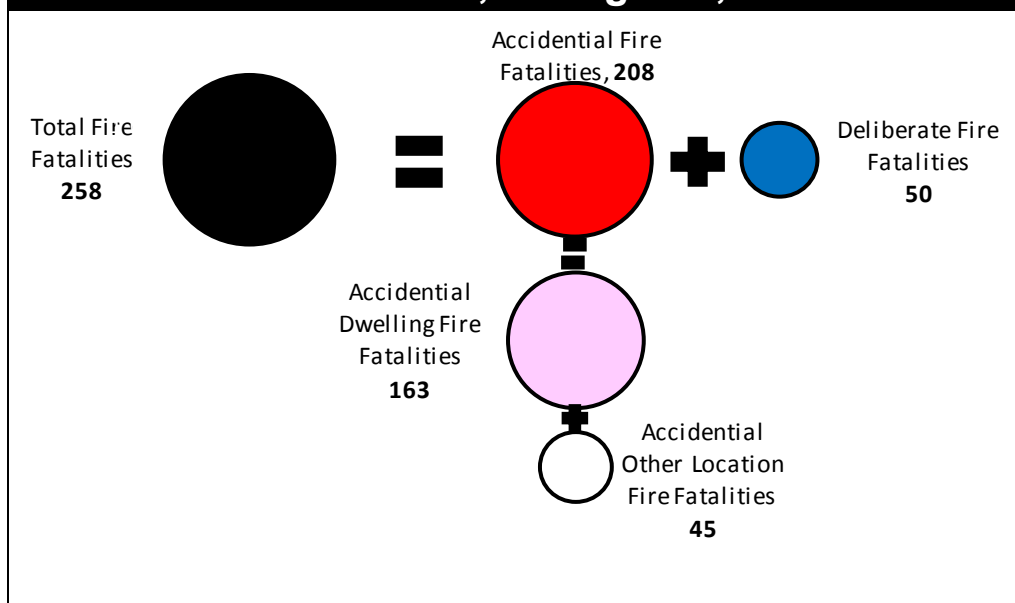


Chart 3c: Fire Fatalities, in England, 2014-15.



Further detail on these figures can be found in Fire Statistics Monitor Tables 2a, 2b, 3e, 3f, 3g, 3h(i), 3h(ii), 3h(iii), 3h(iv), 4b, 4c, 4d. They can be found here-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-monitor-april-2014-to-march-2015>

4. Fire Incidents

- Local authority fire and rescue services attended around 154,700 fires in England during 2014-15. This figure shows a 10 per cent decrease compared to the previous year and under half of the figure of ten years ago.
- 31 per cent of all incidents attended by local authority fire and rescue services were fires. This was two percentage points less than in the previous year.
- Of these 154,700 fires, approximately 28,200 were accidental dwelling fires. This figure was one per cent lower than the previous year and 26 per cent lower than ten years ago.
- Secondary fires (mainly outdoor fires) made up over half of all fires attended by local authority fire and rescue services in 2014-15.
- There were 68,400 deliberate fires in 2014-15, 12 per cent lower than in the previous year and less than a third of the number of ten years ago.
- Deliberate fires accounted for 44 per cent of the fires attended in 2014-15.
- Of these 68,400 deliberate fires, 51,100 (75 per cent) were deliberate secondary fires.

Chart 4a: Fire Incidents by type, England. 2011-12 to 2014-15

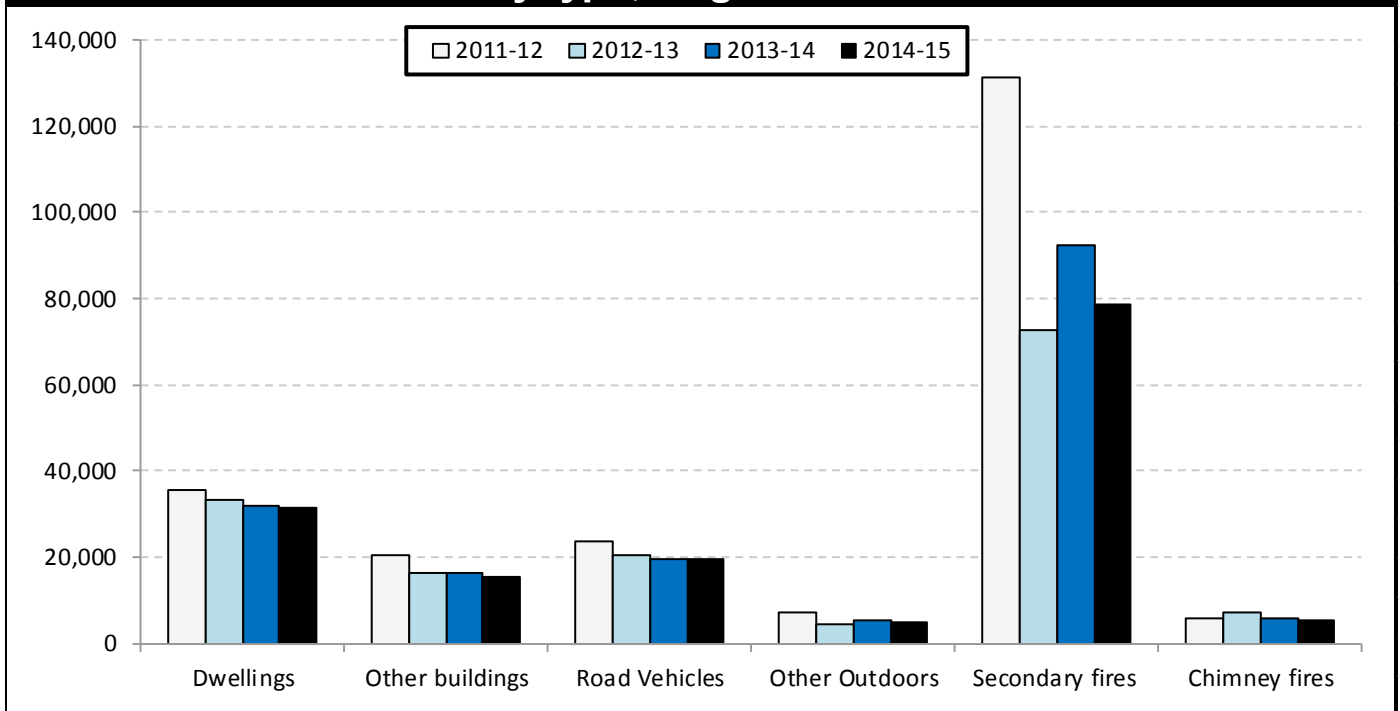


Chart 4b: Deliberate Fires by type, England. 1999-00 to 2014-15

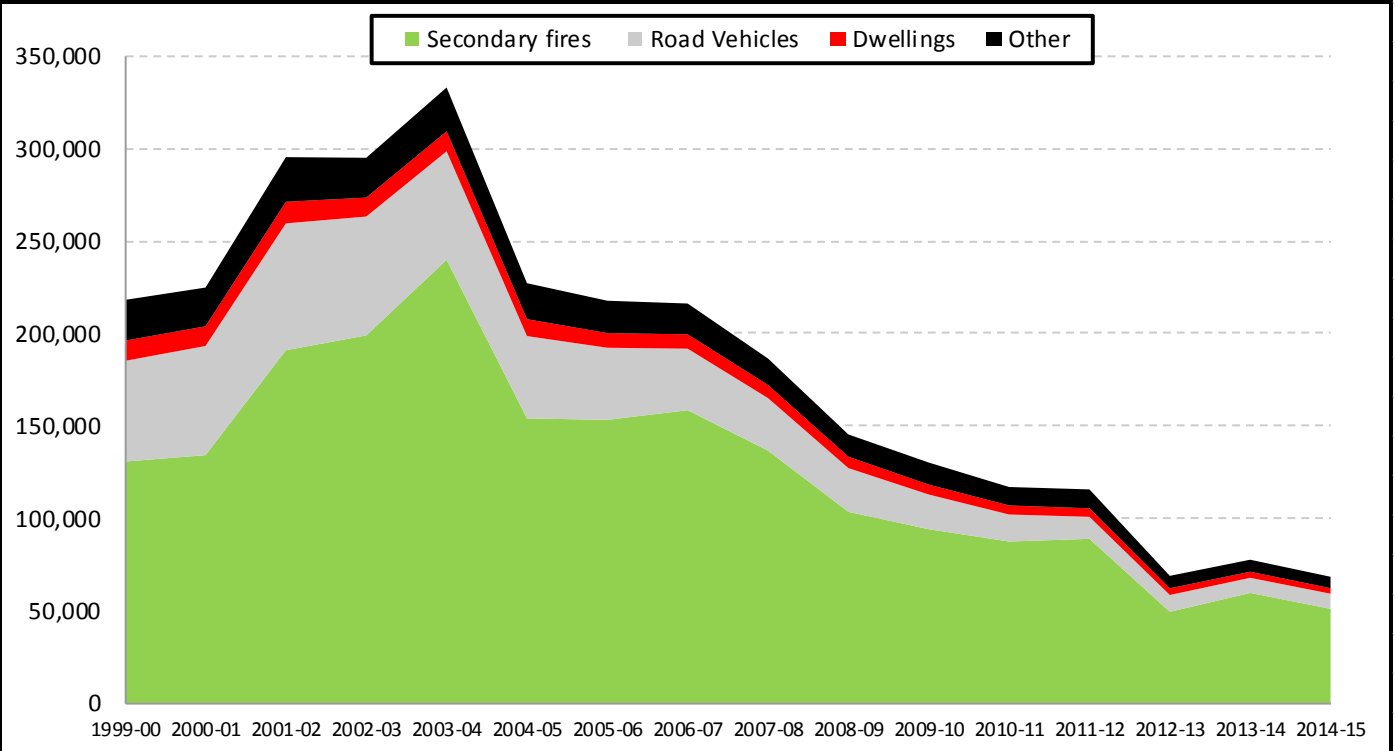
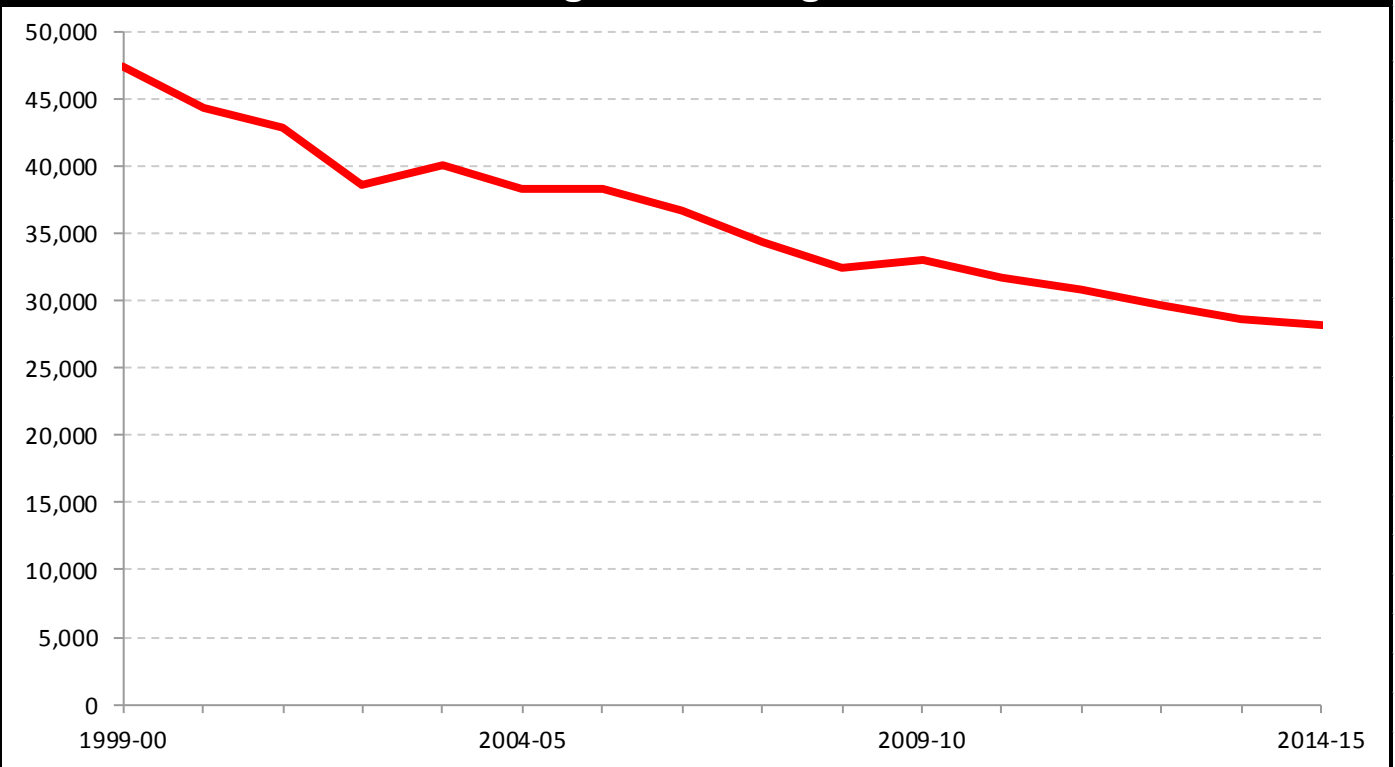


Chart 4c: Accidental Dwellings Fires, England. 1999-00 to 2014-15

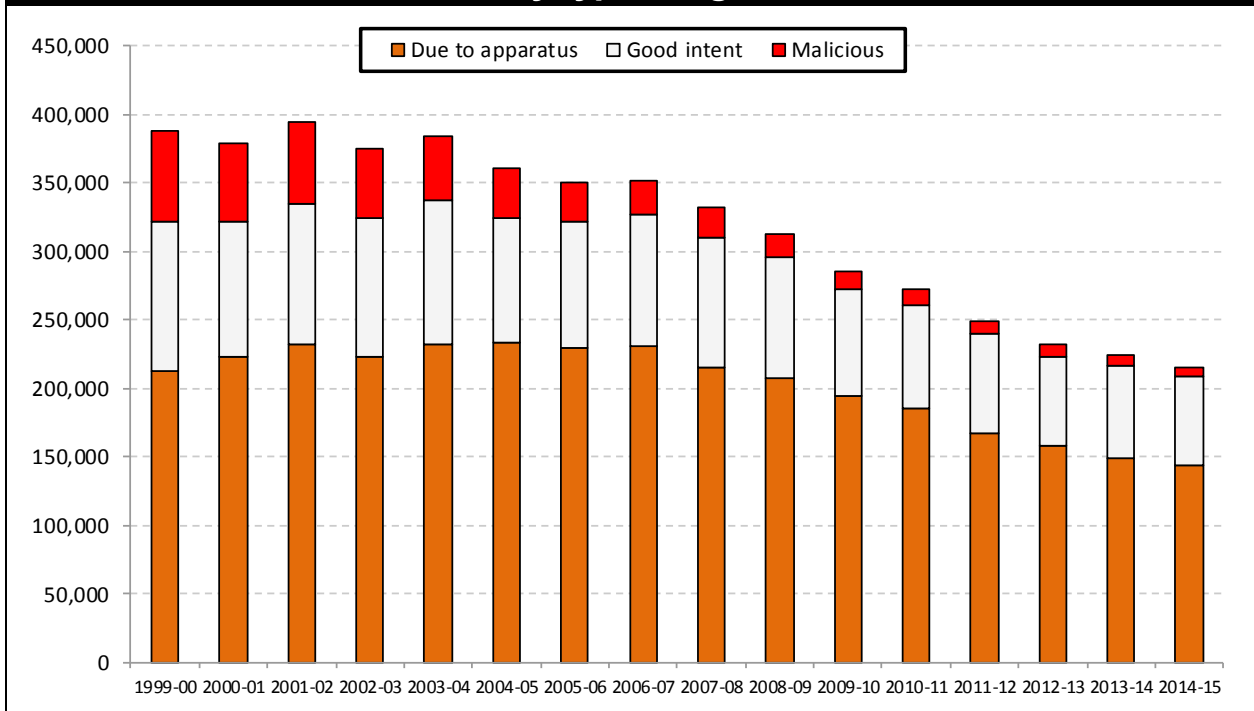


Further detail on these figures can be found in Fire Statistics Monitor Tables 1a, 1b, 3a, 3b (i), 3b (ii), 3b (iii), 3b (iv), 3b (v), 3c, 4a, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d. They can be found here- <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-monitor-april-2014-to-march-2015>.

5. Fire False Alarms

- Local authority fire and rescue services attended around 215,600 fire false alarms in England during 2014-15. This figure shows a four per cent decrease compared to the previous year and 40 per cent lower than ten years previously.
- 44 per cent of all incidents attended by local authority fire and rescue services were fire false alarms. This was one percentage point greater than in the previous year. Fire and rescue services attended more false alarms than fires in 2014-15, as has been the case every year since 2004-05.
- In 2014-15, false alarms caused by apparatus issues made up two thirds of all false alarms, but were down by 4 per cent to 143,500 compared to the previous year.
- The number of good intent false alarms, which makes up 30 per cent of the total, fell by 3 per cent to 65,300, while the number of malicious false alarms (which comprises the remaining three per cent of the total) fell by ten per cent to 6,800.

Chart 5a: Fire False Alarms by type, England. 1999-00 to 2014-15



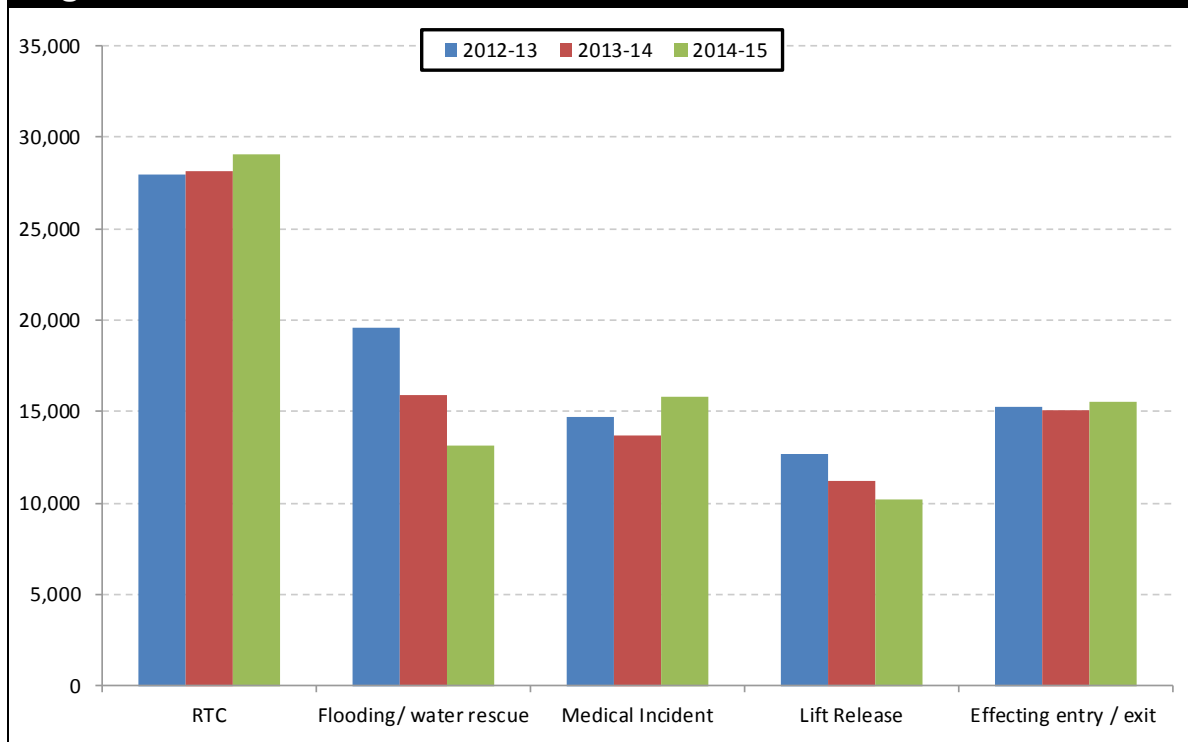
Further detail on these figures can be found in Fire Statistics Monitor Tables 1a, 1b, 3d (i), 3d (ii), 3 (iii), 3d (iv). They can be found here-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-monitor-april-2014-to-march-2015>.

6. Non-Fire Incidents

- Local authority fire and rescue services attended around 125,000 non-fire incidents in England during 2014-15. This figure shows a five per cent decrease compared to the previous year and a 21 per cent decrease over the past ten years.
- 25 per cent of all incidents attended by local authority fire and rescue services were non-fire incidents. This proportion was unchanged compared to the previous year but seven percentage points greater than ten years ago.
- Road traffic incidents continued to account for the largest proportion of non-fire incidents attended, at over one-fifth of the total in 2014-15 and a three per cent increase compared to the previous year.
- Medical incidents accounted for 13 per cent of the total in 2014-15, up by 16 per cent from the previous year, and the vast majority of these were as co-responder.
- There were 12,300 flooding incidents (ten per cent of all non-fire incidents), but this was a large reduction compared to the previous year (a 15 per cent reduction).

Chart 6a: Type of special service incidents attended, England. 2014-15



Further detail on these figures can be found in Fire Statistics Monitor Tables 1a, 7a, 7b, 7c. They can be found here- <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/fire-statistics-monitor-april-2014-to-march-2015>.

Definitions

Incident Recording System (IRS) categories

Details of the questions and categories used in the recording of incidents under the new Incident Recording System (IRS) are available in the document 'IRS Questions and Lists'. This can be downloaded from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/incident-recording-system-for-fire-and-rescue-authorities.

Categories of incident

Primary fires are fires with one or more of the following characteristics-

- i) all fires in buildings and vehicles that are not derelict or in some outdoor structures
- ii) any fire involving casualties or rescues
- iii) any fire attended by five or more appliances.

In this publication primary fires are split into four sub-categories- dwellings, other buildings, road vehicles and others

Secondary fires are the majority of outdoor fires including grassland and refuse fires, unless these involve casualties or rescues, property loss or five or more appliances attend. It includes fires in derelict buildings.

Chimney fires - Any fire in buildings where the flame was confined within the chimney structure and did not involve casualties, rescues or attendance by five or more pumping appliances.

False Alarms are incidents in which the Fire and Rescue Service believes they are called to a reportable fire and then find there is no incident. False alarms are categorised as follows-

Malicious False Alarms are calls made with the intention of getting the fire and rescue service to attend a non-existent event, including deliberate and suspected malicious intentions.

Good Intent False Alarms are calls made in good faith in the belief that there really was an incident.

False Alarms Due to Apparatus are calls initiated by fire alarm and fire-fighting equipment operating (including accidental initiation of alarm apparatus by persons or where an alarm operates and a person then calls the FRS as part of a standing routine arrangement).

Accidental fires include those where the accident or the cause was not known or unspecified.

Deliberate fires include those where deliberate ignition is merely suspected and are recorded by fire and rescue authorities as 'doubtful'.

A **reportable fire** is an event of uncontrolled burning involving flames, heat or smoke which was attended by a fire and rescue authority, or which was a **late fire call**.

A **late fire call** is a fire attended by a fire and rescue authority which was known to be extinguished when the call was made (or to which no call was made) and the fire came to the attention of the authority by other means. Such fires should be reported if an attendance is made (even if one person attends for inspection only) but should not be reported if no attendance is made. Late fire calls are counted as fires in this publication.

Fatalities

Fire fatalities include any fatal casualty which is the direct or indirect result of injuries caused by a fire incident. Even if the fatal casualty dies subsequently, any fatality whose cause is attributed to a fire is included, and sometimes following road traffic collisions. There are also occasional cases where it transpires subsequently that fire was not the cause of death. For all of these reasons, fatalities data may therefore be subject to revision. In this report the fatal casualties which were either recorded as 'fire- related' or 'don't know', categories are grouped together as fire- related death for all output.

Non-fatal casualties and Precautionary checks

Since the introduction of the Incident Recording System, non-fatal casualties are recorded as being in one of the following four classes of severity-

- i) victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be serious
- ii) victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be slight
- iii) first aid given at scene
- iv) precautionary check recommended – this is when an individual, having no obvious injury or distress, is advised to attend hospital or to see a doctor as a precaution. This category does not lend itself to comparison between fire and rescue authorities, and numbers over time may not be wholly comparable. This is because this category is based on a subjective assessment, and this may also be dependent on the policy of the attending fire and rescue authority.

A discussion of these categories compared to those in the previous system can be found in paragraph 3 in the section 'Comparability of data under the Incident Recording System (IRS) and its predecessor, the 'Fire Data Report system'.

Non-fire incidents

Non-fire incidents are special service incidents requiring the attendance of an appliance or officer. They include-

- (i) local emergencies e.g. road traffic incidents, rescue of persons, or 'making pedestrian area/highway/unsafe structure safe'
- (ii) major environmental disasters e.g. flooding or hazardous material incidents
- (iii) domestic incidents e.g. water leaks, persons locked in or out etc
- (iv) prior arrangements to attend incidents, which may include some provision of advice and inspections and 'stand by' to tackle emergency situation. Non-fire incidents also include special service good intent false alarm and malicious false alarm incidents

Technical notes

Symbols

Zero is denoted by ‘-‘

Not available is denoted by ‘..’

(p) provisional data scheduled for revision in due course

(r) revised since previous edition of *Fire Statistics Monitor, England*

Data and data quality

The source of the data of this publication is records of incidents attended by local authority fire and rescue services. Fire and rescue authorities across Great Britain adopted the Incident Recording System by April 2009. Details of the Incident Recording System are available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/incident-recording-system-for-fire-and-rescue-authorities

Previously data was collected via the paper-based forms FDR1 and FDR3. FDR1 collected primary fire data while false alarm and secondary fire data were collected by FDR3.

The change in collection method has allowed a greater volume of data to be captured. For example-

Data on Special Service Incidents are now recorded.

All fires are recorded.

Pre-IRS statistics were based on a sampled dataset.

Detail on secondary fires and chimney fires are now recorded.

Pre-IRS, only aggregates were available.

Commentary on the statistics in this publication is for the period April 2014 to March 2015. There can be considerable seasonality and other fluctuation which can make interpretation difficult, especially for periods of less than twelve months. The hot dry summer of 2003 and wet summer of 2012 are two particularly acute examples.

Tables 1a and 1b and 2a and 2b (accompanying spreadsheet tables) 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 was calculated then multiplied by the number of strike days. Information on the actual number of fatal casualties which occurred during the strike periods were obtained from the Ministry of Defence and media and is included.

Comparability of data under the Incident Recording System (IRS) and its predecessor, the Fire Data Report (FDR) system

The Incident Recording System was adopted across Great Britain by 1 April 2009. 16 Fire and Rescue Authorities switched to the Incident Recording System before this date, five by 1 April 2008, a further three in autumn 2008 and eight in the first quarter of 2009. Quality assurance of the data on which this monitor is based identified the following two areas of potential discontinuity arising from the switchover from the old Fire Data Report system, which was largely paper-based, to the new Incident Recording System questions.

The first area relates to increases (typically slight) in the numbers of certain types of incident within the data of a handful of Fire and Rescue Authorities, notably in numbers of primary outdoor fires. These are apparently not real increases, but for example they are the result of a small proportion of incidents in the past having been incorrectly reported as being 'secondary fires' rather than 'primary fires'. The following conclusions can be drawn-

- i) it appears that these differences follow from incorrect reporting under the old Fire Data Report system
- ii) the effect on national totals appears to be slight
- iii) there is no suggestion of a difference in completeness of recording of casualties.

The second area is the possibility of discontinuity in numbers of non-fatal casualties. Though the totals themselves do not suggest change in recording overall, the new categories have clearly affected sub-totals, notably the category 'precautionary check recommended'. This all follows from two improvements to the way in which non-fatal casualties have been recorded since the introduction of the Incident Recording System-

- i) The first change is that each casualty or fatality can be marked as 'not fire-related'. Around nine per cent of non-fatal casualties were marked as not fire-related in April 2011 to March 2012. However, in fire incidents, almost all non-fatal casualties can be expected to be 'fire-related', since very few would have occurred if there had not been a fire. Due to this concern, those non-fatal casualties marked 'not fire-related' have not been excluded. It is also worth noting that excluding the 9 per cent of non-fatal casualties would have introduced a large discontinuity compared to data from before the introduction of the new Incident Recording System.
- ii) The other potential issue arises since the Incident Recording System collects details of the injury of each non-fatal casualty in two questions, the first categorising the casualty as one of 'severe injury (hospital)', 'slight injury', 'first aid' or 'precautionary check advised', while the second question records the type of injury. This contrasts with the Fire Data Report system where a single question was used instead, with no category for 'first aid'. It appears that casualty cases recorded under the Incident Recording System as 'first aid' would have most commonly been recorded under the old Fire Data Report system as 'precautionary check' (see chart 3b and tables 2a, 2b, 3e, 3f, 3g, 3h(i), 3h(ii), 3h(iii), 3h(iv), 4b, 4c, 4d), and a smaller proportion recorded as a specific type of injury. As noted, overall the total of all non-fatal casualty categories (including non-fatal

casualties whose severity was either 'first aid' or 'precautionary check recommended' under Incident Recording System) appears to be consistent with totals under the Fire Data Report system.

Data quality for 2014-15

The Greater Manchester fire and rescue service was unable to provide a complete set of records for 2014-15 in time for the production of these statistics, although the scale of underreporting is thought to be much less than for 2013-14 – representing around 3% of their incidents, but only 0.2% of the national total incidents this year. It may also mean that casualty figures will be slightly underestimated, but it is understood that the fatality total is correct. We hope that full data will be picked up in time for the next set of revisions.

Twenty eight days were affected by industrial action during the course of 2014-15, with strike periods ranging between 24 hours and 4 days. Industrial action may have an impact on the data included in this publication – both in terms of the numbers and types of incidents which fire and rescue services attended, and also the ability of some services to complete the IRS when fire fighters are on strike.

The scale of revisions to 2013-14 has been larger than usual, owing to Greater Manchester's missing data at the time of the 2013-14 Monitor, and some estimation made by DCLG as a result last year. [Last year's publication](#) sets out full details of this estimation.

Revisions policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official statistics and the Department for Communities and Local Government Revisions Policy (found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statistical-notice-dclg-revisions-policy>).

There are two types of revisions that the policy covers:

Non-Scheduled Revisions

Where a substantial error has occurred as a result of the compilation, imputation or dissemination process, the statistical release, live tables and other accompanying releases will be updated with a correction notice as soon as is practical.

Scheduled Revisions

Revisions will be handled as per the Department for Communities and Local Government revisions policy <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/corporate/pdf/1466387.pdf>.

This release includes routine revisions to the 2013-14 data. Revised figures for selected measures: fires, false alarm, non-fire incidents, fire fatalities and non-fatal casualties are compared with the figures when first provisional figures were first published in July 2014.

These revisions are greater than we would usually expect, mainly due to reasons-

1. As there was no release in the Winter this release covers a whole year of updates to the IRS, rather than six months.
2. Last year's release contained imputed data for Greater Manchester whereas now these records have been included in the release, which would mean more accurate results in this release.

Revisions – data for 2013-14 published in August 2015 compared to that published in July 2014, England			
	Revised 2013-14 at August 2015	Difference from when first published in July 2014	% Difference from when first published in July 2014
All fires	171,329	+1,358	+0.80
Fire false Alarms	224,123	+747	+0.33
Non-fire incidents	131,343	+747	+0.57
Fire fatalities	274	-1	-0.36
Fire non-fatal casualties	7,817	-365	-4.46

In usual circumstances this release would not publish revisions to 2012-13 data. However it was decided that given the Winter release was cancelled, we should allow revisions to 2012-13 in this case as they would have been included in that release. This does not set a precedent.

Revisions – data for 2012-13 published in August 2015 compared to that published in July 2014, England

	Revised 2012-13 at August 2015	Difference from when first published in July 2014	% Difference from when first published in July 2014
All fires	154,445	+12	+0.01
Fire false Alarms	231,764	+7	+0.00
Non-fire incidents	135,040	+8	+0.01
Fire fatalities	285	-4	-1.38
Fire non-fatal casualties	8,432	+1	+0.01

Uses of the data

The data in this publication and its accompanying spreadsheet annex tables are used in the following ways-

- i) informing and monitoring local and national and local fire prevention and safety policy, initiatives and campaigns
- ii) benchmarking by fire and rescue authorities
- iii) the Department's fire casualties indicator. This is calculated from the numbers of fatalities and non-fatal casualties excluding the precautionary check category. The Department's fire casualty indicator is based on the following data from this publication: Non-fatal casualties (including hospital severe & slight and first aid cases, but excluding precautionary checks), plus fire fatalities. The indicator is calculated per population as described in the Indicator Measurement Annex. This and the values of this indicator are available at:

www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/publications/corporate-reports/

We judge that the quality and reliability of the data are suitable for these uses with the following exceptions-

- i) Numbers of 'precautionary checks' within non-fatal casualties. By definition, these involve judgement of the fire officers at the scene and may also depend on policy. Therefore, they may not be comparable between fire and rescue authorities or over time.
- ii) Numbers of false alarms due to apparatus attended. These may also vary greatly according to the policies of fire and rescue authorities on mobilisation, in particular, human confirmation of the fire may be a requirement for some or all buildings. It is worth noting that numbers of false alarms

reduced greatly for these authorities due to such a change in policy, such as Oxfordshire in 2003-04 and Warwickshire and Essex in 2011-12.

User engagement

Users are encouraged to provide feedback on how these statistics are used and how well they meet user needs. Comments on any issues relating to this statistical release are welcomed and encouraged. Responses should be addressed to the "Public enquiries" contact given in the "Enquiries" section below.

The Department's engagement strategy to meet the needs of statistics users is published here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/engagement-strategy-to-meet-the-needs-of-statistics-users>

The DCLG Fire Statistics team are investigating how data collected through the Incident Recording System can be made available in a more useful way to users. If you have any views on this process (either experiences around handing such data or views on which variables would be most useful) we would be happy to hear from you (fire.statistics@communities.gsi.gov.uk).

Related statistics for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Fire incident statistics for other UK countries are available as follows-

Scotland: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PubFires>

Wales: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/fire2012/>

Northern Ireland: Equivalent data are not available for Northern Ireland. Annual fire incident data is available from: <http://www.nifrs.org/statistics.php>

Designation

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Enquiries

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Information on Official Statistics is available via the UK Statistics Authority website:

www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/browse-by-theme/index.html

Information about statistics at DCLG is available via the Department's website:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/about/statistics

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