



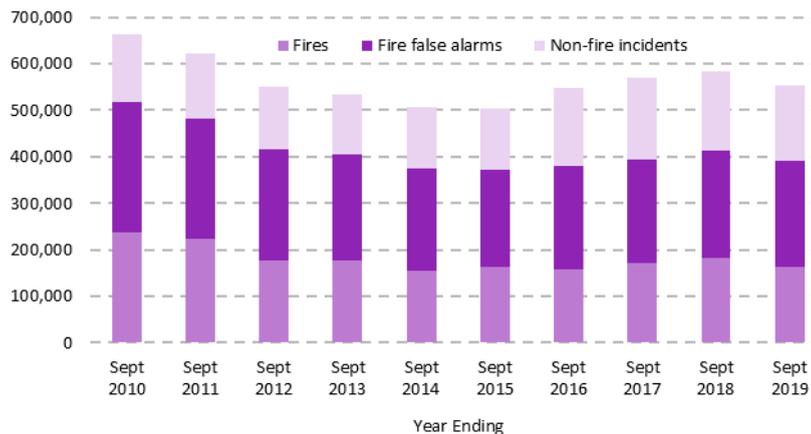
# Fire & rescue incident statistics, England, year ending September 2019

This release contains statistics about incidents attended by fire and rescue services (FRSs) in England for the year ending September 2019. The statistics are sourced from the Home Office’s online Incident Recording System (IRS) and include statistics on all incidents, fire-related fatalities and casualties from fires.

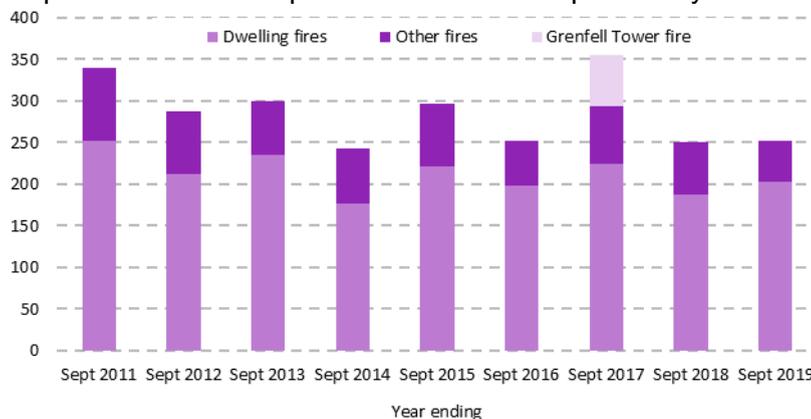
## Key results



FRSs attended **554,269 incidents** in the year to September 2019. This was a five per cent decrease compared with the previous year (584,408). Of these incidents, there were **163,039 fires**. This was a 10 per cent decrease compared with the previous year (182,013) with falls in all fire types but particularly driven by a 13 per cent decrease in secondary fires now that the hot, dry 2018 summer is in the comparator year.



There were **252 fire-related fatalities** in the year ending September 2019 compared with 251 in the previous year.



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# 1 Incident summary

Incidents that FRSs attend are categorised into three main types - [fires attended](#), [non-fire incidents](#) and fire false alarms.

## Key results

In the year ending September 2019:

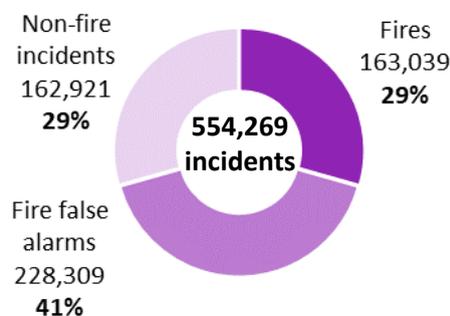
- **554,269 incidents were attended** by FRSs. This was a five per cent decrease compared with the previous year (584,408). This was driven by a decrease in the number of fires attended, particularly secondary fires. ([Source: FIRE0102](#))
- Of all incidents attended by FRSs, **fires accounted for 29 per cent, fire false alarms 41 per cent and non-fire incidents 29 per cent.** ([Source: FIRE0102](#))

The number of incidents attended by FRSs in England peaked in 2003/04, at over one million incidents. For around a decade, there was a general decline in all three categories of incidents attended and between 2012/13 and 2015/16 there were around half a million a year. Since 2015/16, this number rose to a peak of around 584,400 in the year ending September 2018 but then decreased to around 554,300 incidents in the year ending September 2019.

In contrast to the earlier decreases (caused by a reduction in fire and fire false alarm incidents), the increase in total incidents between 2014/15 and the year ending September 2018 was driven by increases in fire and non-fire incidents. The increase in non-fire incidents was mainly due to the changes in the numbers of medical incidents and collaboration incidents attended, which are discussed further [below](#).

FRSs attended 228,309 fire false alarms in the year ending September 2019. This was a two per cent decrease compared with the previous year (231,856). Fire false alarms 'due to apparatus' accounted for around two thirds (67%) of fire false alarms.

**Figure 1.1: Total incidents attended by type of incident, England; year ending September 2019**



Source: [FIRE0102](#)

Notes:

1. Non-fire incidents include non-fire false alarms

## 2 Fires attended

Fire incidents are broadly categorised as primary, secondary or chimney fires depending on the location, severity and risk levels of the fire, and on the scale of response needed from FRSs to contain them.

**Primary fires** are those that meet at least one of the following criteria – occurred in a (non-derelict) building, vehicle or outdoor structure or involved a fatality, casualty or rescue, or were attended by five or more pumping appliances.

**Secondary fires** are generally small outdoor fires, not involving people or property.

### Key results

In the year ending September 2019:

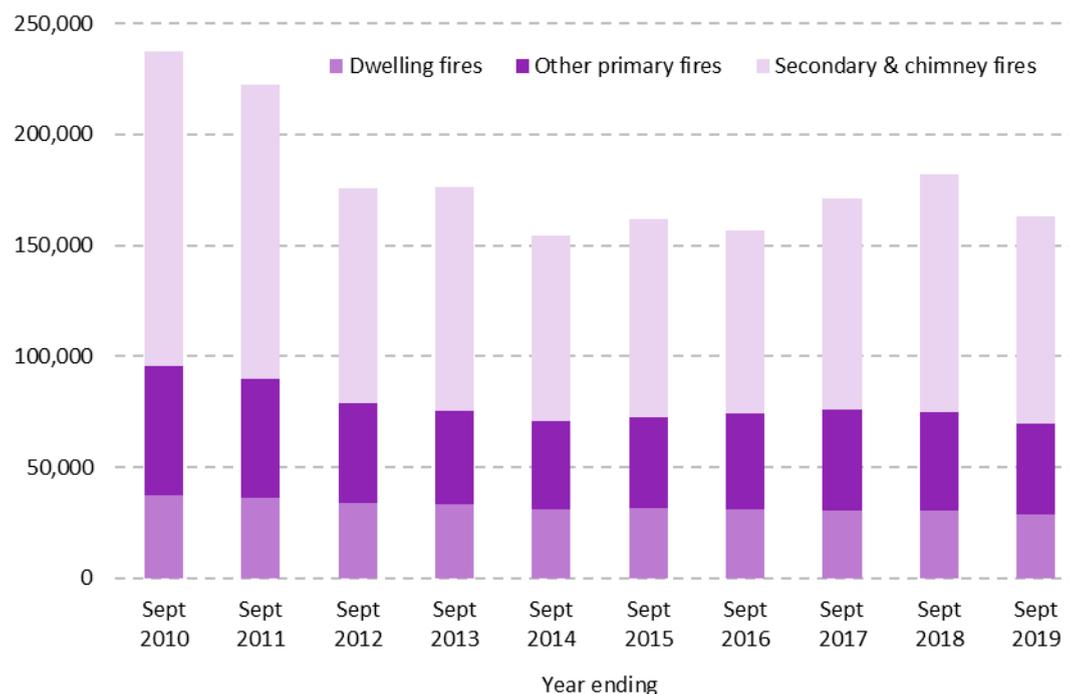
- **FRSs attended 163,039 fires.** This was a 10 per cent decrease compared with the previous year (182,013). This decrease was across all fire types but was particularly driven by a 13 per cent decrease in secondary fires (from 103,360 to 90,236) now that the hot, dry summer in 2018 is in the comparator year. Secondary fires display seasonality, with more occurring during the hotter and drier months. ([Source: FIRE0102](#))
- There were **69,534 primary fires** (43% of the 163,039 fires attended). This was a seven per cent decrease compared with the previous year (74,730). There were similar decreases for dwelling fires (7%), other building fires (5%) and road vehicle fires (6%). Other outdoor fires<sup>1</sup> decreased by 17 per cent, now that the hot, dry summer of 2018 is in the comparator year, as with secondary fires, but these are a relatively small category of primary fires. ([Source: FIRE0102](#))
- **Total deliberate fires decreased by eight per cent** from 82,349 to 75,558. This reflected decreases across almost all fire categories (9% decrease for each of deliberate secondary fires, dwelling fires and other outdoor fires, and 4% decrease for deliberate road vehicle fires), with only deliberate other building fires showing virtually no change (<1% increase). ([Source: FIRE0401](#))

The total number of fires attended by FRSs decreased for around a decade – falling by two thirds from a peak of around 474,000 in 2003/04 to around 154,000 in 2012/13. The total number of fires has fluctuated since 2012/13.

The total number of fires decreased by 10 per cent from 182,013 in the year ending September 2018 to 163,039 in the year ending September 2019 (Figure 2.1). There were decreases in all fire types with falls of seven per cent (from 74,730 to 69,534) in primary fires and 13 per cent (from 103,360 to 90,236) in secondary fires.

<sup>1</sup> Fires in either primary outdoor locations (that is, aircraft, boats, trains and outdoor structures such as post or telephone boxes, bridges, tunnels etc.), or fires in non-primary outdoor locations that have casualties or five or more pumping appliances attending.

**Figure 2.1: Total fires attended by type of fire, England; year ending September 2010 to year ending September 2019**



Source: [FIRE0102](#)

Of the 28,655 primary dwelling fires attended by FRSs, just under three-quarters (73%) were in houses, bungalows, converted flats and other properties, whilst just over a quarter (27%) were in purpose-built flats. When looking at fires in purpose-built flats in more detail, 17 per cent of all dwelling fires were in purpose-built low-rise (1-3 storeys) flats/maisonettes; seven per cent were in purpose-built medium-rise (4-9 storeys) flats and three per cent were in purpose-built high-rise (10+ storeys) flats. FRSs attended 802 fires in purpose-built high-rise (10+ storeys) flats, virtually unchanged compared with the previous year (801). ([Source: FIRE0205](#))

### 3 Non-fire incidents attended

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FRSs attend many types of incident that are not fires or fire false alarms. These are known as **non-fire incidents** or special service incidents. Examples include flooding incidents, responding to road traffic collisions, animal assistance and collaboration incidents such as effecting entry/exit and assisting other agencies (a complete list can be found in fire data table [FIRE0902](#)).

#### Key results

In the year ending September 2019:

- FRSs attended **162,921 non-fire incidents**. This was a four per cent decrease compared with the previous year (170,539). This decrease was a mixed picture with a large decrease in medical incidents and much smaller decreases or increases in other non-fire incident types. (Source: [FIRE0901](#))
- FRSs attended **18,619 medical incidents**. This was a 27 per cent decrease compared with the previous year (25,630). The removal of support for the emergency medical responding trials by the Fire Brigades Union in September 2017 ([described further below](#)) is likely to be driving this decrease. (Source: [FIRE0901](#))
- FRSs attended **43,796 collaborating incidents**<sup>2</sup>. This was a seven per cent increase compared with the previous year (40,970) and continued the increases in recent years, reflecting the duty to collaborate legislation.
- FRSs attended **31,136 road traffic collisions** (RTCs, a 2% increase on the previous year) and **13,163 flooding incidents** (a 20% per cent decrease). The number of RTCs has been broadly stable since comparable information became available in 2009/10. (Source: [FIRE0901](#))

There was a general decline in the number of non-fire incidents attended between 2007/08 and 2014/15. Since then, numbers have increased mainly due to changes in medical and collaborating incidents.

As Figure 3.1 (below) shows, from year ending September 2014 to year ending September 2016 over two-thirds (70%) of the increase in non-fire incidents was accounted for by a rise in the number of medical incidents attended. The large increase in the number of medical incidents attended coincided with the introduction, in 2015, of the National Joint Council (NJC) supported trials of emergency medical responding (EMR) where FRSs formed agreements with ambulance trusts to undertake health and care related work, in particular co-responding. Following the withdrawal of FBU support in September 2017, the number of these incidents has decreased to a level slightly higher than before the trials.

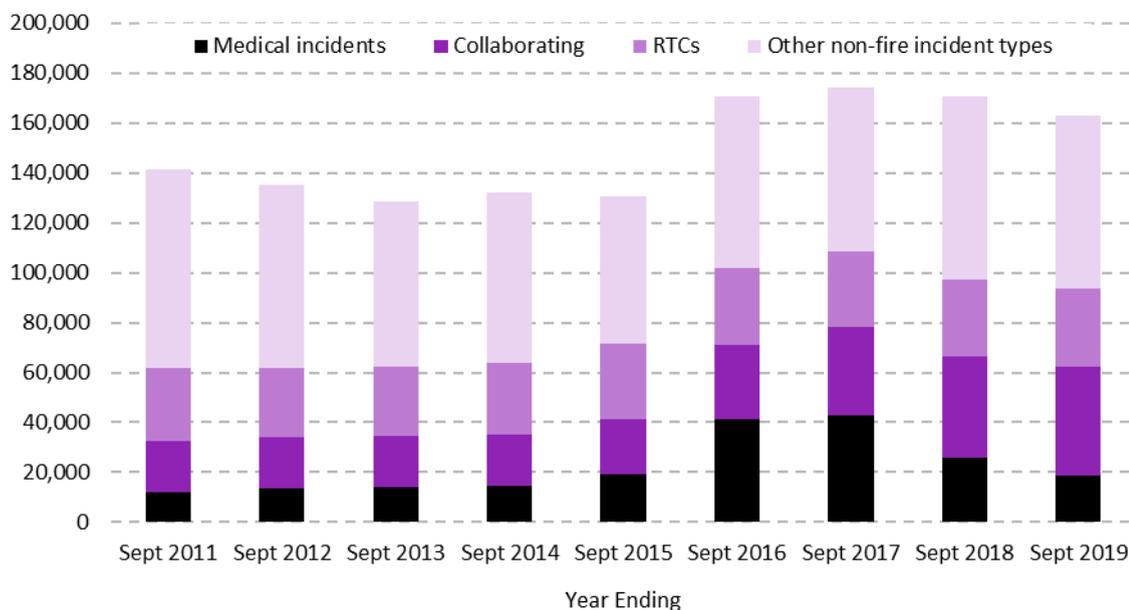
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<sup>2</sup> The following non-fire incident types are classed as incidents that could involve collaborating: "Effecting entry/exit", "Assist other agencies" and "Suicide/attempts".

Between the year ending September 2015 and the year ending September 2019 the number of collaborating incidents attended more than doubled (from 21,876 to 43,796), as can be seen in Figure 3.1 (below). The increases coincide with the [duty to collaborate legislation](#), whereby each emergency service “must keep under consideration whether entering into a collaboration agreement with one or more other relevant emergency services in England could be in the interests of the efficiency or effectiveness of that service and those other services.”<sup>3</sup>

For more detailed information on EMR and collaborating incidents see table [FIRE0901](#) and statistical release '[Detailed analysis of non-fire incidents attended by fire and rescue services, England](#)'.

**Figure 3.1: Total non-fire incidents attended by FRs, England; year ending September 2011 to year ending September 2019**



**Source:** [FIRE0901](#)

**Notes:** Consistent detailed non-fire incident information is only available from April 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Policing and Crime Act 2017, Part 1, Chapter 1, Section 2(1): <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/3/section/2/enacted>

## 4 Fire-related fatalities and casualties

As the Incident Recording System (IRS) is a continually updated database, the statistics published in this release may not match those held locally by FRSs and revisions may occur in the future (see the [revisions section](#) for further detail). This may be particularly relevant for fire-related fatalities where a coroner's report could lead to revisions in the data some time after the incident. It should also be noted that the numbers of fire-related fatalities are prone to year-on-year fluctuations due to relatively low numbers.

**Fire-related fatalities** are those that would not have otherwise occurred had there not been a fire. For the purpose of publications, a fire-related fatality includes those that were recorded as 'don't know'.

**Non-fatal casualties** are those resulting from a fire, whether the casualty was caused by the fire or not.

### Key results

In the year ending September 2019:

- There were **252 fire-related fatalities** ([see front page key results](#) for chart) compared with 251 in the previous year (an increase of <1%). Fire-related fatalities have been on a downward trend since the 1980s but have plateaued in recent years. ([Source: FIRE0502](#))
- There were **203 fire-related fatalities in dwelling fires**, compared with 187 in the previous year (an increase of 9%).
- There were **6,980 non-fatal casualties**<sup>4</sup>, a two per cent decrease compared with 7,107 in the previous year. Of these, **3,083 were casualties requiring hospital treatment**, a two per cent decrease compared with the 3,131 in the previous year. ([Source: FIRE0502](#))

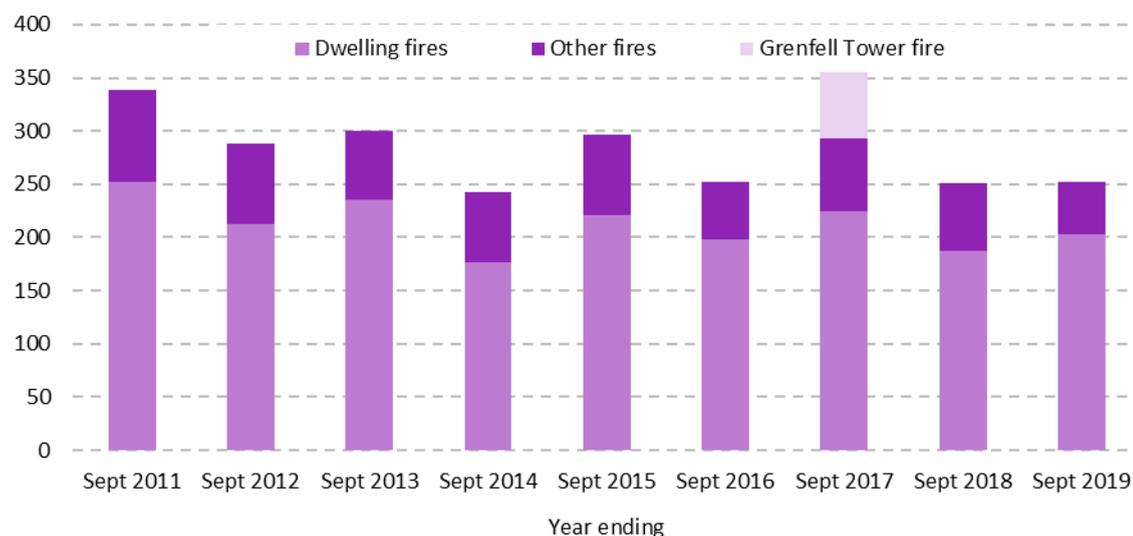
The number of fire-related fatalities in England was on a general downward trend from 1981/82, when comparable figures first became available. Though the numbers have fluctuated due to the relatively small numbers involved, over recent years the number of fatalities has plateaued. There was an exceptionally high figure in year ending September 2017 (Figure 4.1) due to the Grenfell Tower fire.<sup>5</sup> A very small proportion of fires resulted in a fire-related fatality: 230 out of the 69,534 primary fires (0.33%). This proportion was increased from the previous year, when there were 232 fires with a fire-related fatality out of

<sup>4</sup> For more detailed technical definitions of fire-related and non-fatal casualties, see the [Fire Statistics Definitions document](#). A further breakdown of the different types of non-fatal casualties is available in the published fire data tables.

<sup>5</sup> London Fire Brigade's records of the number of fatalities are based on information provided by the Metropolitan Police Service. The fire-related fatalities figure of 80 was announced by the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) on 10 July 2017. MPS have since revised this number to 71 fire-related fatalities on 16 November 2017. The non-fatal casualty numbers are derived from numbers published by the London Ambulance Service for people who attended hospital together with those recorded by the London Fire Brigade who received first aid or required a 'precautionary check'. On 29 January 2018, a further victim, who had initially survived the fire, passed away in hospital. As a result, a figure of 72 fatalities from the Grenfell Tower fire has been widely cited in the media and the Grenfell Tower inquiry honoured her memory at the commemoration hearings. However, at the time of writing the Metropolitan Police had not yet added her to the official list of fatalities from the fire, pending the results of a coroner's report which will determine whether her death was a direct result of the fire or caused by her pre-existing medical condition. She, therefore, remains counted in the list of non-fatal casualties pending a final decision from the coroner and the subsequent updating of any formal records in the police and fire systems regarding this case.

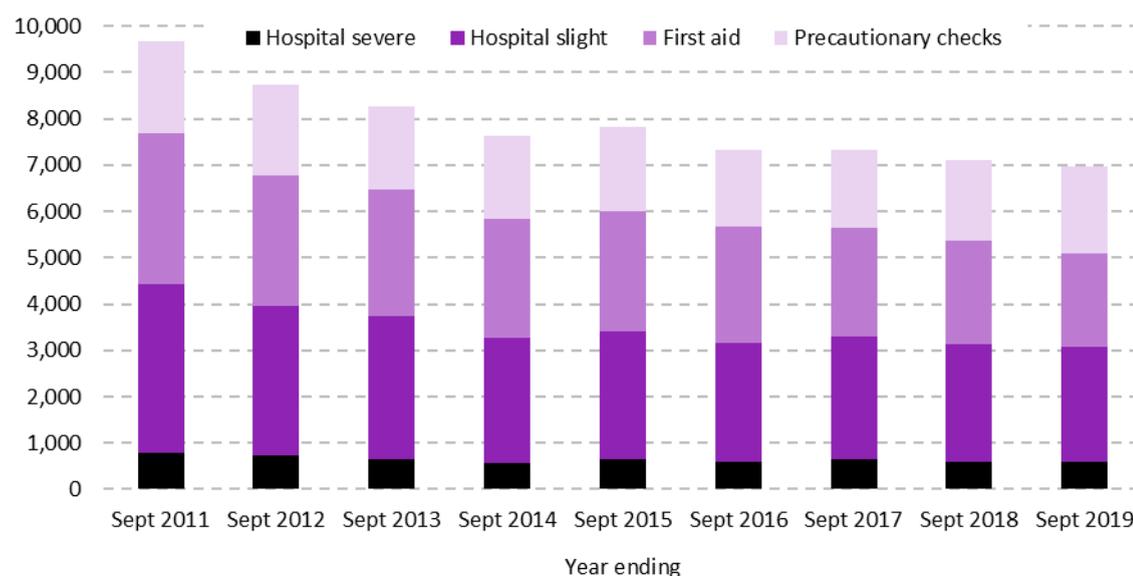
the 74,730 primary fires (0.31%). There were six fires which resulted in a fatality, from the 802 fires in purpose-built high-rise (10+ storeys) flats in the year ending September 2019 compared with none in the previous year.

**Figure 4.1: Total fire-related fatalities, England; year ending September 2011 to year ending September 2019**



The number of non-fatal casualties in fires in England had been on a downward trend since the mid-1990s with the main decreases in the hospital slight and first aid categories, but it appears the overall downward trend has slowed in recent years due to slight increases in precautionary checks. Casualties recorded as hospital severe have remained low but fluctuate from year to year. (Figure 4.2)

**Figure 4.2: Total non-fatal casualties in fires by injury severity, England; year ending September 2011 to year ending September 2019**



Source: [FIRE0502](#)

Notes: These figures are for all casualties in fires, whether the fire caused the casualty or not.

## 5 Summary of changes over time

Below is a table comparing the year ending September 2019 with the year ending September 2018, five years previously in 2013/14 and ten years previously (where available) in 2008/09.

Incident type	Year ending September 2019 compared with		
	Year ending September 2018	2013/14	2008/09
554,269 all incidents	584,408 -5% ↓	526,812 +5% ↑	717,805 -23% ↓
163,039 fires	182,013 -10% ↓	171,349 -5% ↓	249,237 -35% ↓
69,534 primary fires	74,730 -7% ↓	73,230 -5% ↓	104,348 -33% ↓
28,655 dwelling fires	30,740 -7% ↓	31,910 -10% ↓	38,584 -26% ↓
25,755 accidental dwelling fires	27,569 -7% ↓	28,613 -10% ↓	32,428 -21% ↓
90,236 secondary fires	103,360 -13% ↓	92,132 -2% ↓	136,744 -34% ↓
228,309 fire false alarms	231,856 -2% ↓	224,119 +2% ↑	312,914 -27% ↓
162,921 non-fire incidents	170,539 -4% ↓	131,344 +24% ↑	155,654 +5% ↑
18,619 medical incidents	25,630 -27% ↓	13,649 +36% ↑	.. <sup>1</sup>
252 fire-related fatalities	251 =	278 -9% ↓	323 -22% ↓
203 fire-related fatalities in dwellings	187 +9% ↑	217 -6% ↓	255 -20% ↓
6,980 non-fatal casualties	7,107 -2% ↓	7,819 -11% ↓	9,227 -24% ↓
3,083 non-fatal casualties requiring hospital treatment	3,131 -2% ↓	3,453 -11% ↓	5,030 -39% ↓
5,164 non-fatal casualties in dwellings	5,284 -2% ↓	6,118 -16% ↓	7,455 -31% ↓

Source: [Fire statistics data tables](#)

Notes:

1. Medical incidents were first separately recorded in the IRS in 2009/10. This means a ten-year comparison is unavailable.

## 6 Further information

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This release contains statistics about incidents attended by fire and rescue services (FRSs) in England. The statistics are sourced from the [Home Office's online Incident Recording System \(IRS\)](#). This system allows FRSs to complete an incident form for every incident attended, be it a fire, a false alarm or a non-fire incident (also known as a Special Service). The online IRS was introduced in April 2009. Previously, paper forms were submitted by FRSs and an element of sampling was involved in the data compilation process.

Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics and other Home Office statistical releases are available from the [Statistics at Home Office](#) pages on the GOV.UK website.

Data tables linked to this release and all other fire statistics releases can be found on the Home Office's 'Fire statistics data tables' page. The sections above state the most relevant tables for each section. The tables can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-data-tables>

Guidance for using these statistics and other fire statistics outputs are available on the fire statistics collection page, found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fire-statistics-guidance>.

The information published in this release is kept under review, taking into account the needs of users and burdens on suppliers and producers, in line with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). If you have any comments, suggestions or enquiries, please contact the team via email using [firestatistics@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:firestatistics@homeoffice.gov.uk) or via the user feedback form on the fire statistics collection page.

### Revisions

The IRS is a continually updated database, with FRSs adding incidents daily. The figures in this release refer to records of incidents that occurred up to and including 30 September 2019. Due to a technical issue with the Home Office system, no revisions were included in this release. The tables and commentary therefore include records for incidents up to 30 June 2019 that were submitted to the IRS by 26 September 2019, and incidents from 1 July to 30 September that reached the IRS by 17 December 2019, when snapshots of the database were taken for the purpose of analysis. As snapshots of the dataset were taken on 26 September and 17 December 2019, the statistics published may not match those held locally by FRSs and revisions may occur in the future. This is particularly the case for statistics with relatively small numbers, such as fire-related fatalities. For instance, this can occur because coroner's reports may mean the initial view taken by the FRS will need to be revised; this can take many months, even years, to do so.

### Changes to this release and future releases

This release has been published using the new Home Office statistical release template. We [welcome comments](#) on the new format of release.

## Other related publications

[Home Office](#) publish five other statistical releases covering fire and rescue services:

- [Detailed analysis of fires attended by fire and rescue services in England](#): focuses on fires attended by fire and rescue services across England, and fire-related fatalities and non-fatal casualties in those fires; including analyses of the causes of fires and smoke alarms ownership and operation.
- [Detailed analysis of non-fire incidents attended by fire and rescue services, England](#): focuses on non-fire incidents attended by fire and rescue services across England, including analysis on overall trends, fatalities and non-fatal casualties in non-fire incidents, and further detailed analysis of different categories of non-fire incidents.
- [Fire and rescue workforce and pensions statistics](#): focuses on total workforce numbers, workforce diversity and information regarding leavers and joiners; covers both pension fund income and expenditure and firefighters' pension schemes membership; and includes information on incidents involving attacks on firefighters.
- [Fire prevention and protection statistics, England](#): focuses on trends in smoke alarm ownership, fire prevention and protection activities by fire and rescue services.
- [Response times to fires attended by fire and rescue services, England](#): covers statistics on trends in average response times to fires attended by fire and rescue services.

The [Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government](#) publish one statistical release on fire:

[English housing survey: fire and fire safety report](#): focuses on the extent to which the existence of fire and fire safety features vary by household and dwelling type.

Fire statistics are published by the other UK nations:

Statistics for [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#) are published based on the IRS. [Northern Ireland](#) fire statistics are published by the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service using data from a system similar to the Incident Recording System, which means that they are not directly comparable to English, Welsh and Scottish data.

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