



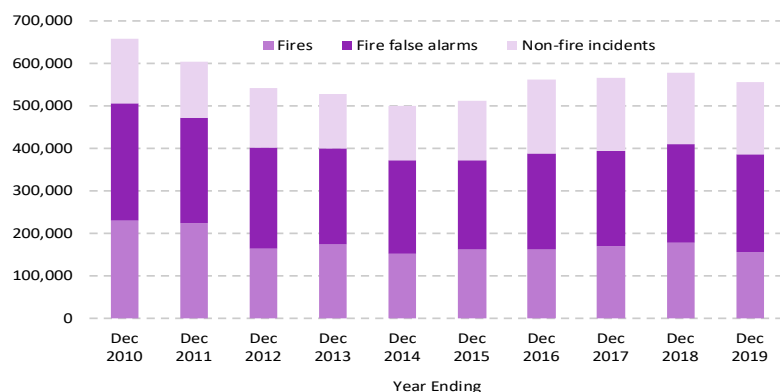
Fire & rescue incident statistics, England, year ending December 2019

This release contains statistics about incidents attended by fire and rescue services (FRSs) in England for the year ending December 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.

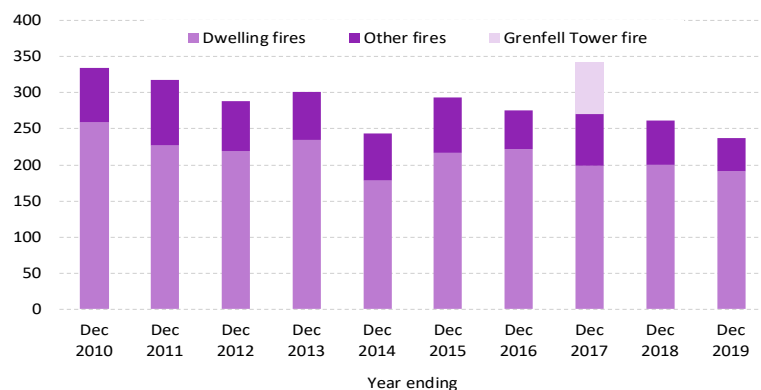
Key results



FRSs attended **555,759 incidents** in the year ending December 2019. This was a four per cent decrease compared with the previous year (578,113). Of these incidents, there were **157,156 fires**. This was a 12 per cent decrease compared with the previous year (178,200) with falls in all fire types but particularly driven by a 16 per cent decrease in secondary fires now that the hot, dry 2018 summer is in the comparator year.



There were **237 fire-related fatalities** in the year ending December 2019 compared with 262 in the previous year.



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[Home Office statistics release calendar](#)

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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 December 2019:

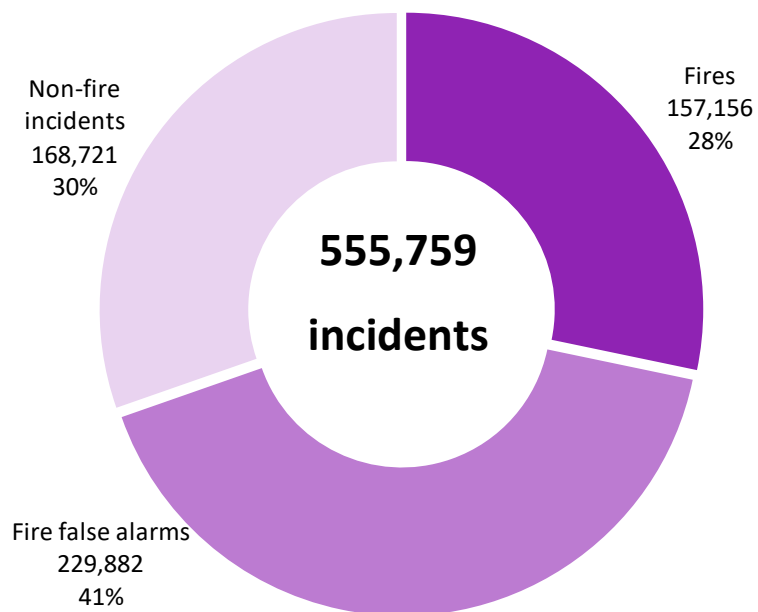
- **555,759 incidents were attended** by FRSs. This was a four per cent decrease compared with the previous year (578,113). This was driven by a decrease in the number of fires attended, particularly secondary fires. ([Source: FIRE0102](#))
- Of all incidents attended by FRSs, **fires accounted for 28 per cent, fire false alarms 41 per cent and non-fire incidents 30 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 578,113 in the year ending December 2018 but then decreased to 555,759 incidents in the year ending December 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 December 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 number of medical incidents and collaboration incidents attended, which are discussed in [Section 3](#). This year's decrease compared with the year ending December 2018 was driven by a decrease in the number of fires attended due to the hot, dry summer of 2018 being in the comparator year.

FRSs attended 229,882 fire false alarms in the year ending December 2019. This was a one per cent decrease compared with the previous year (231,644). 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 December 2019



Source: [FIRE0102](#)

Notes:

1. Non-fire incidents include non-fire false alarms
2. Percentages do not sum to 100 due to rounding.

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 December 2019:

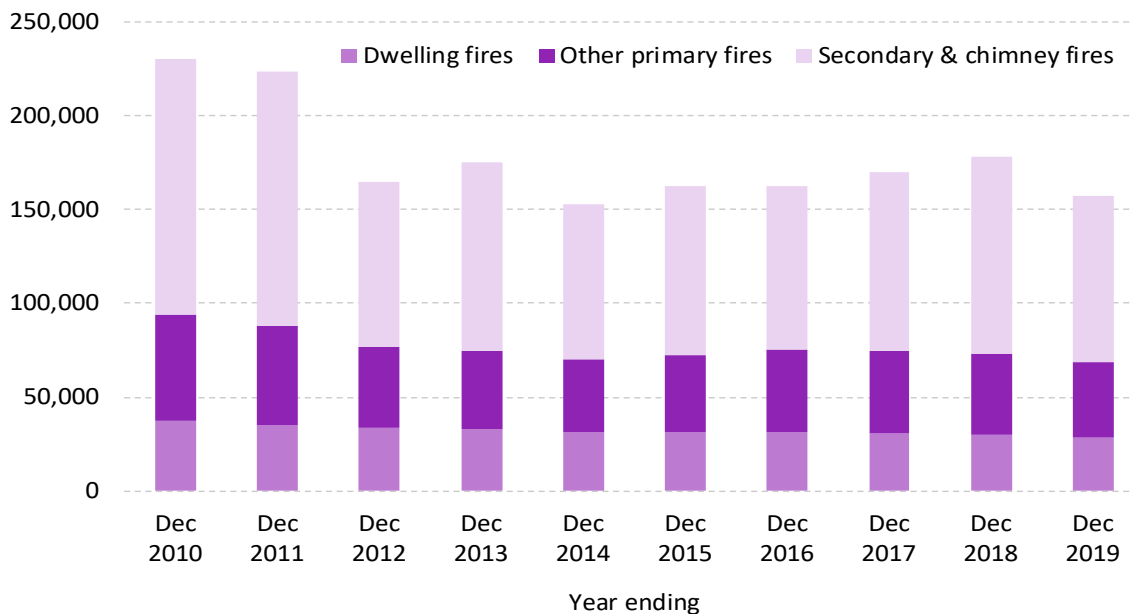
- **FRSs attended 157,156 fires**. This was a 12 per cent decrease compared with the previous year (178,200). This decrease was across all fire types but was particularly driven by a 16 per cent decrease in secondary fires (from 101,018 to 85,116) now that the hot, dry summer in 2018 is in the comparator year. Secondary fires display seasonality, with more occurring during the hotter and drier months. ([Source: FIRE0102](#))
- There were **68,871 primary fires** (44% of the 157,156 fires attended). This was a six per cent decrease compared with the previous year (73,424). There were similar decreases for dwelling fires (5%), other building fires (4%) and road vehicle fires (5%). As with secondary fires, other outdoor fires¹ decreased by 18 per cent, now that the hot, dry summer of 2018 is in the comparator year, but these are a relatively small category of primary fires. ([Source: FIRE0102](#))
- **Total deliberate fires decreased by nine per cent** from 79,394 to 72,154 compared with the previous year. This reflected decreases in deliberate fires across almost all fire categories (11% decrease for deliberate secondary fires, 7% for deliberate other outdoor fires, 4% for deliberate dwelling fires and 3% for deliberate road vehicle fires), with only deliberate other building fires showing an increase (6% increase). ([Source: FIRE0401](#))

The long-term picture shows that 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 12 per cent from 178,200 in the year ending December 2018 to 157,156 in the year ending December 2019 (Figure 2.1). There were decreases in all fire types with falls of six per cent (from 73,424 to 68,871) in primary fires and 16 per cent (from 101,018 to 85,116) in secondary fires.

¹ 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 December 2010 to year ending December 2019



Source: [FIRE0102](#)

Of the 28,470 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 780 fires in purpose-built high-rise (10+ storeys) flats, a four per cent decrease compared with the previous year (811). ([Source: FIRE0205](#))

3 Non-fire incidents attended

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 December 2019:

- FRSs attended **168,721 non-fire incidents**. This was virtually unchanged compared with the previous year (168,269). This year's total demonstrates a mixed picture with a decrease in medical incidents but an increase for assisting other agencies with smaller decreases or increases in other non-fire incident types. (Source: [FIRE0901](#))
- FRSs attended **19,105 medical incidents**. This was a 17 per cent decrease compared with the previous year (23,055). The removal of support for the emergency medical responding trials by the Fire Brigades Union in September 2017 ([described in Section 3](#)) is likely to be continuing to drive this decrease. (Source: [FIRE0901](#))
- FRSs attended **45,609 collaborating incidents**². This was a ten per cent increase compared with the previous year (41,276) and continued the increases in recent years, reflecting the duty to collaborate legislation.
- FRSs attended **31,467 road traffic collisions** (RTCs, a 2% increase on the previous year) and **14,474 flooding incidents** (a 12% 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, the number of non-fire incidents attended showed an increase, mainly due to changes in medical and collaborating incidents, but have since stayed fairly stable to the year ending December 2019.

As Figure 3.1 shows, from year ending December 2014 to year ending December 2016 over two-thirds (67%) 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,

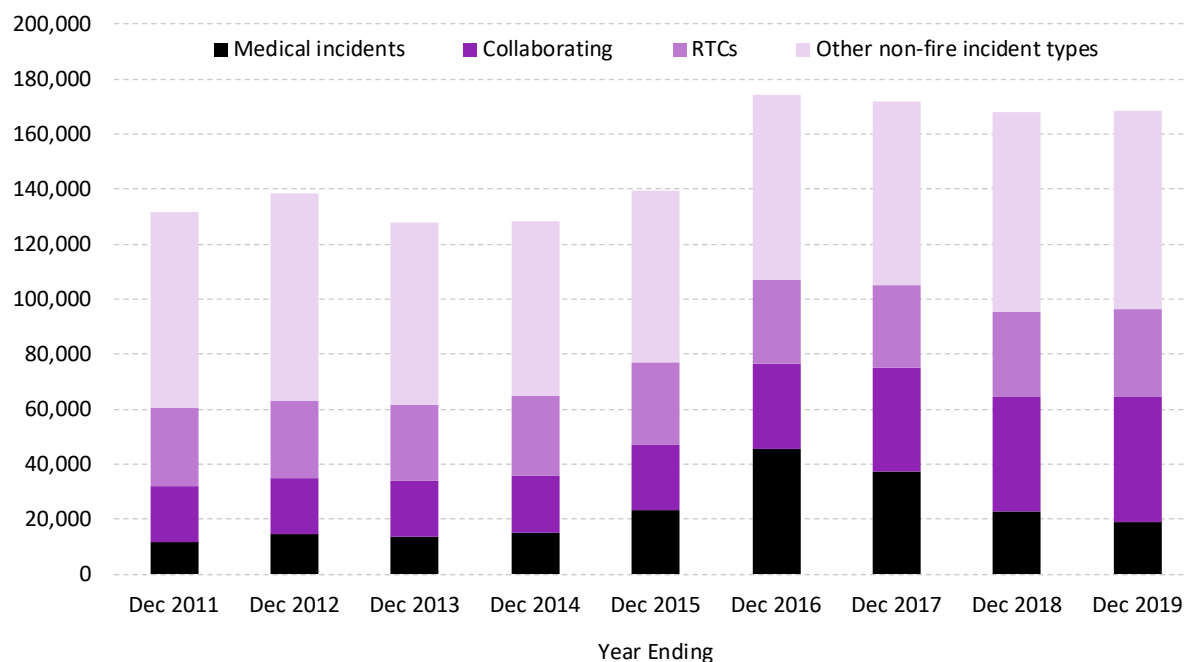
² The following non-fire incident types are classed as incidents that could involve collaborating: "Effecting entry/exit", "Assist other agencies" and "Suicide/attempts".

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.

Between the year ending December 2015 and the year ending December 2019 the number of collaborating incidents attended has nearly doubled (from 23,752 to 45,609), as can be seen in Figure 3.1. 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.”³

For more detailed information on EMR and collaborating incidents see table [FIRE0901](#) and the [‘Detailed analysis of non-fire incidents attended by fire and rescue services, England, April 2018 to March 2019’](#) statistical release.

Figure 3.1: Total non-fire incidents attended by FRSs, England; year ending December 2011 to year ending December 2019



Source: [FIRE0901](#)

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

³ 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 December 2019:

- There were **237 fire-related fatalities** (see Figure 4.1) compared with 262 in the previous year (a decrease of 10%). Fire-related fatalities have been on a downward trend since the 1980s, but have fluctuated in recent years. ([Source: FIRE0502](#))
- There were **191 fire-related fatalities in dwelling fires**, compared with 200 in the previous year (a decrease of 5%).
- There were **7,021 non-fatal casualties⁴**, virtually unchanged compared with 7,025 in the previous year. Of these, **3,026 were casualties requiring hospital treatment**, a four per cent decrease compared with the 3,144 in the previous year. ([Source: FIRE0502](#))

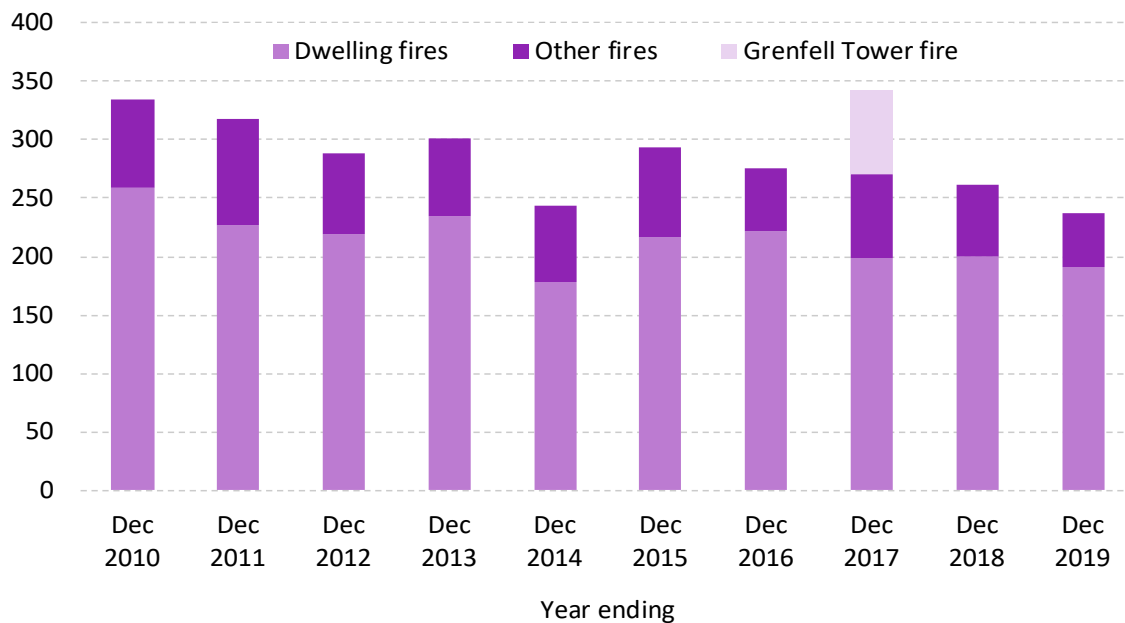
The number of fire-related fatalities in England was on a general downward trend from 1981/82, when comparable figures first became available. Though the numbers have fluctuated due to the relatively small numbers involved, over recent years the number of fatalities has plateaued. There was an exceptionally high figure in year ending December 2017 (Figure 4.1) due to the Grenfell Tower fire.⁵ A very small proportion of fires resulted in a fire-related fatality: 224 out of the 68,871 primary fires (0.33%). This proportion is a slight

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

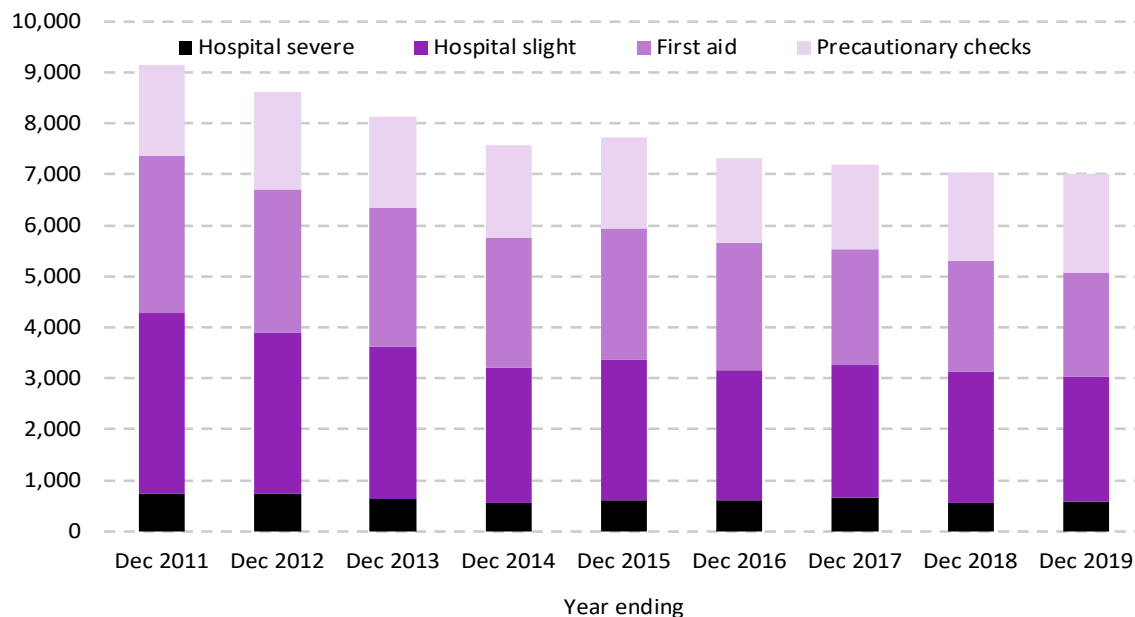
increase compared with the previous year, when there were 238 fires with a fire-related fatality out of the 73,424 primary fires (0.32%). There were six fires from the 780 fires in purpose-built high-rise (10+ storeys) flats in the year ending December 2019 which resulted in a fatality, compared with two in the previous year.

Figure 4.1: Total fire-related fatalities, England; year ending December 2010 to year ending December 2019



The number of non-fatal casualties in fires in England had been on a downward trend since the mid-1990s and since the introduction of the online IRS in 2009 the hospital slight and first aid categories have shown the biggest decline, 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 December 2011 to year ending December 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

This table compares the year ending December 2019 with the year ending December 2018, five years previously in 2013/14 and ten years previously (where available) in 2008/09.

Incident type	Year ending December 2019 compared with		
	Year ending December 2018	2013/14	2008/09
555,759 all incidents	578,113 -4% ↓	526,812 +5% ↑	717,805 -23% ↓
157,156 fires	178,200 -12% ↓	171,349 -8% ↓	249,237 -37% ↓
68,871 primary fires	73,424 -6% ↓	73,230 -6% ↓	104,348 -34% ↓
28,470 dwelling fires	30,032 -5% ↓	31,910 -11% ↓	38,584 -26% ↓
25,559 accidental dwelling fires	26,988 -5% ↓	28,613 -11% ↓	32,428 -21% ↓
85,116 secondary fires	101,018 -16% ↓	92,132 -8% ↓	136,744 -38% ↓
229,882 fire false alarms	231,644 -1% ↓	224,119 +3% ↑	312,914 -27% ↓
168,721 non-fire incidents	168,269 <1% ↓	131,344 +28% ↑	155,654 +8% ↑
19,105 medical incidents	23,055 -17% ↓	13,649 +40% ↑	.. ¹
237 fire-related fatalities	262 -10% ↓	278 -15% ↓	323 -27% ↓
191 fire-related fatalities in dwellings	200 -5% ↓	217 -12% ↓	255 -25% ↓
7,021 non-fatal casualties	7,025 =	7,819 -10% ↓	9,227 -24% ↓
3,026 non-fatal casualties requiring hospital treatment	3,144 -4% ↓	3,453 -12% ↓	5,030 -40% ↓
5,064 non-fatal casualties in dwellings	5,263 -4% ↓	6,118 -17% ↓	7,455 -32% ↓

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

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.

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 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 December 2019. This includes incident records that were submitted to the IRS by 15 March 2020, when a snapshot of the database was taken for the purpose of analysis. As a snapshot of the dataset was taken on 15 March 2020, 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 Ireland⁶ 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.

⁶ Northern Ireland's statistical website is currently under construction.

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