

Technical notes

Data collection

Numbers of fire incidents excluded from calculations

Raw incident data are collected from the Incident Recording System (IRS). Full details of the questions and categories used in the recording of incidents under the 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. A response time measures the minutes and part minutes taken from time of call to time of arrival at scene of the first vehicle. Certain incidents are excluded from the average response time calculation ([see definition document](#)). This meant that in 2015/16 15% of incidents were excluded from the response times' calculations. This compares to 17% excluded in 2014/15.

Discontinuity of Response Times data before and after April 2009

There is a noticeable discontinuity in average response times between 2008/09 and 2009/10 of over half a minute for attendance to all types of fires (e.g. Dwellings, Other Buildings). While part of this increase may be genuine (the factors mentioned in Fire and Rescue Response Times 2011/12 included increased traffic congestion), it appears likely that there is also a measurement discontinuity. Analysis of the change in average response times from 2008/09 to 2009/10 identified six FRAs whose reported average response time increased by 1.2 minutes or more. Discussion with these FRAs helped to identify the various factors described in Fire and Rescue Response Times 2011/12. There is also the possibility of a further reason for the apparent discontinuity, namely that there may have been some inaccuracy in the largely paper-based Fire Data Report system which was in use until March 2009. Arrival times are now being recorded with more accuracy using a mobile data terminal on board the fire appliance, once the appliance has arrived at the scene. Previously, arrival times were transmitted to control via radio when the appliance was in the vicinity of the incident, enabling fire-fighters to then be focussed on preparing to disembark from the vehicle. With on-board data terminals and automatic recording of the nearest second under the Incident Recording System (since April 2009), incident response times should now be recorded consistently, with higher accuracy.

Discontinuity of extent of damage data before and after April 2009

There is a clear discontinuity between 2008/09 and 2009/10 in the average area of damage reported in fires in Other Buildings (i.e. those whose use is not as Dwellings). The stability of the data before and after April 2009 suggests that this is not a real change, but rather results from the introduction of the new Incident Recording System in since April 2009.

Review of the impact of periods of industrial action.

Throughout 2013/14 and 2014/15 there were several periods of industrial action where operational firefighters were out on strike. Information on this

industrial action is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/firefighters-pension-scheme-reforms>. During periods of industrial action local contingency plans are in place to respond to emergency calls. Due to fewer appliances being available during these periods it was expected that response times would increase slightly. The records submitted to the Incident Recording System for strike periods were included in the analysis for 2014/15. There were 26 periods of industrial action during 2014/15, and details on these incidents are given. There were 3,550 primary fire incidents recorded on the IRS on strike days during this time, which represent 7% of all fire records used for primary fire average response times calculations in 2014/15. The average response time for primary fires on strike days in 2014/15 was ten minutes 14 seconds, compared to eight minutes 43 seconds across the whole year.

Revisions policy

This policy has been developed in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official statistics.

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:

It is expected that data should not be subject to major revision. However, if any revisions are necessary due to the receipt of subsequent data, revisions will then be made to statistics relating to the period of one preceding financial year i.e. upon first publication of 2016/17 data, any revisions to statistics for periods during the financial year of 2015/16 would be made. It is also intended that revisions to any statistics relating to any given time period would be made only once, and data would not subsequently be revised further, barring exceptional circumstances.

Uses of the data

Users of response time data should bear in mind that the data may fluctuate, as the locations of fires will vary from one period to another.

The spreadsheet tables accompanying the release show the numbers of incidents on which each response time average has been calculated.

Averages based on smaller numbers of incidents will naturally tend to be more prone to fluctuation.

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.