

Fire Statistics definitions

Incident Recording System (IRS)

The source of the data used for fire statistics publications is the record of incidents attended by fire and rescue services (FRSs). The Incident Recording System (IRS) was adopted by April 2009.

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.

The definitions within this document do not replace the National IRS guidance but are intended to help our users of our statistics.

Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) is the local service providing emergency cover. In 2015/16, there were 45 FRSs in England, 1 in Scotland and 3 in Wales. As of 2016/17 there are 45 in England, following a merge of 2 FRSs.

Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) is the legislative and administrative statutory public body that oversees an FRS. As a tier of local government, FRAs are funded through central government grants and small levies on local council tax. Depending on the structure of local government beneath an FRA, they can be organised as either: Greater London Authority, a unitary authority, a joint authority, a combined authority or a county council.

Response Times

A response time measures the minutes and part minutes taken from time of call to time of arrival at scene of the first vehicle. The following incidents have been excluded from the average response time calculations:

- a. Where there was heat and smoke damage only.
- b. Where road vehicle was abandoned.
- c. Where the location of fire was derelict.
- d. Where an FRA learned of the fire when it was known to have already been extinguished. Such incidents are known as 'late calls'.
- e. Where the response time for an incident was over an hour or less than one minute.

The last two of these exclusions have been applied to avoid erroneous data or exceptional incidents from skewing the averages.

Primary fires are generally more serious fires that harm people or cause damage to property. Primary fires are defined as fires that cause damage and meet at least one of the following conditions:

- any fire that occurred in a (non-derelict) building, vehicle or (some) outdoor structures
- any fire involving fatalities, casualties or rescues

- any fire attended by five or more pumping appliances.

Primary fires are split into four sub-categories:

- **Dwelling fires** are fires in properties that are a place of residence i.e. places occupied by households such as houses and flats, excluding hotels/hostels and residential institutions. Dwellings also includes non-permanent structures used solely as a dwelling, such as houseboats and caravans.
- **Other buildings fires** are fires in other residential or non-residential buildings. Other (institutional) residential buildings include properties such as hostels/hotels/B&Bs, nursing/care homes, student halls of residence etc. Non-residential buildings include properties such as offices, shops, factories, warehouses, restaurants, public buildings, religious buildings etc.
- **Road vehicle fires** are fires in vehicles used for transportation on public roads, such as cars, vans, buses/coaches, motorcycles, lorries/HGVs etc. 'road vehicles' does not include aircraft, boats or trains, which are categorised in 'other outdoors'.
- **Other outdoors fires** are fires in either primary outdoor locations, or fires in non-primary outdoor locations that have casualties or five or more pumping appliances attending. Outdoor primary locations include aircraft, boats, trains and outdoor structures such as post or telephone boxes, bridges, tunnels etc.

Secondary fires are generally small outdoor fires, not involving people or property. These include refuse fires, grassland fires and fires in derelict buildings or vehicles, unless these fires involved casualties or rescues, or five or more pumping appliances attended, in which case they become primary other outdoor fires.

Fatalities are, in general, those that would not have otherwise occurred had there not been a fire. i.e. 'no fire = no death'.

This includes 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, sometimes following road traffic collisions. For the purpose of publications, published figures include the number of fatal casualties which were either recorded as 'fire-related' or 'don't know', grouped together as fire-related deaths; thus excluding only those that were recorded as 'not fire-related'.

Casualties: In order to be able to present a time series that is comparable over time, the non-fatal casualty data in this publication include all non-fatal casualties who went to hospital, but exclude first aid cases and where there was no obvious injury, but a precautionary check was recommended.