



Fire and rescue incident statistics,

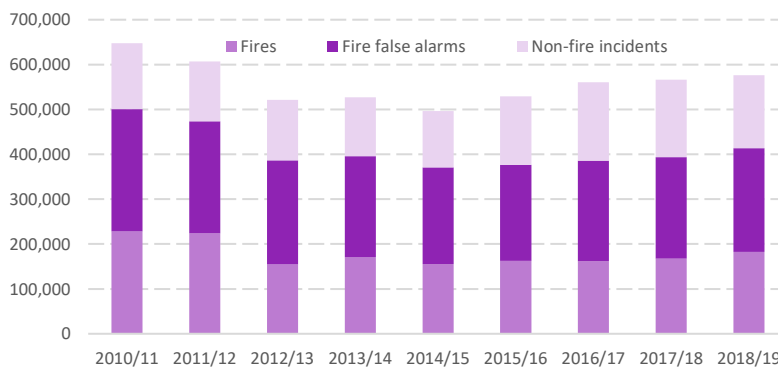
England, year ending March 2019

This release contains statistics about incidents attended by fire and rescue services (FRSs) in England for 2018/19 (or the year ending March 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.

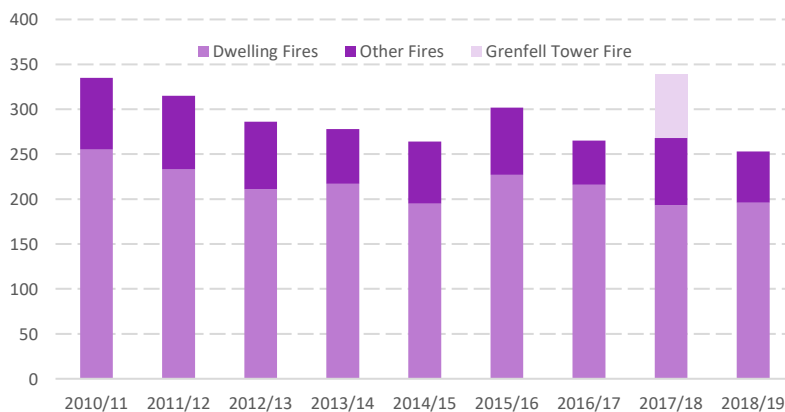
Key results



FRSs attended **576,040 incidents** in 2018/19. This was a two per cent increase compared with the previous year (566,433). Of these incidents, there were **182,825 fires**. This was a nine per cent increase compared with the previous year (167,330) and was driven by a 19 per cent increase in secondary fires.



There were **253 fire-related fatalities** in 2018/19 (the lowest number of fire-related fatalities in the series) compared with 339 (including 71 from the Grenfell Tower fire) in the previous year (a 25% decrease).



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Forthcoming releases:
[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 2018/19:

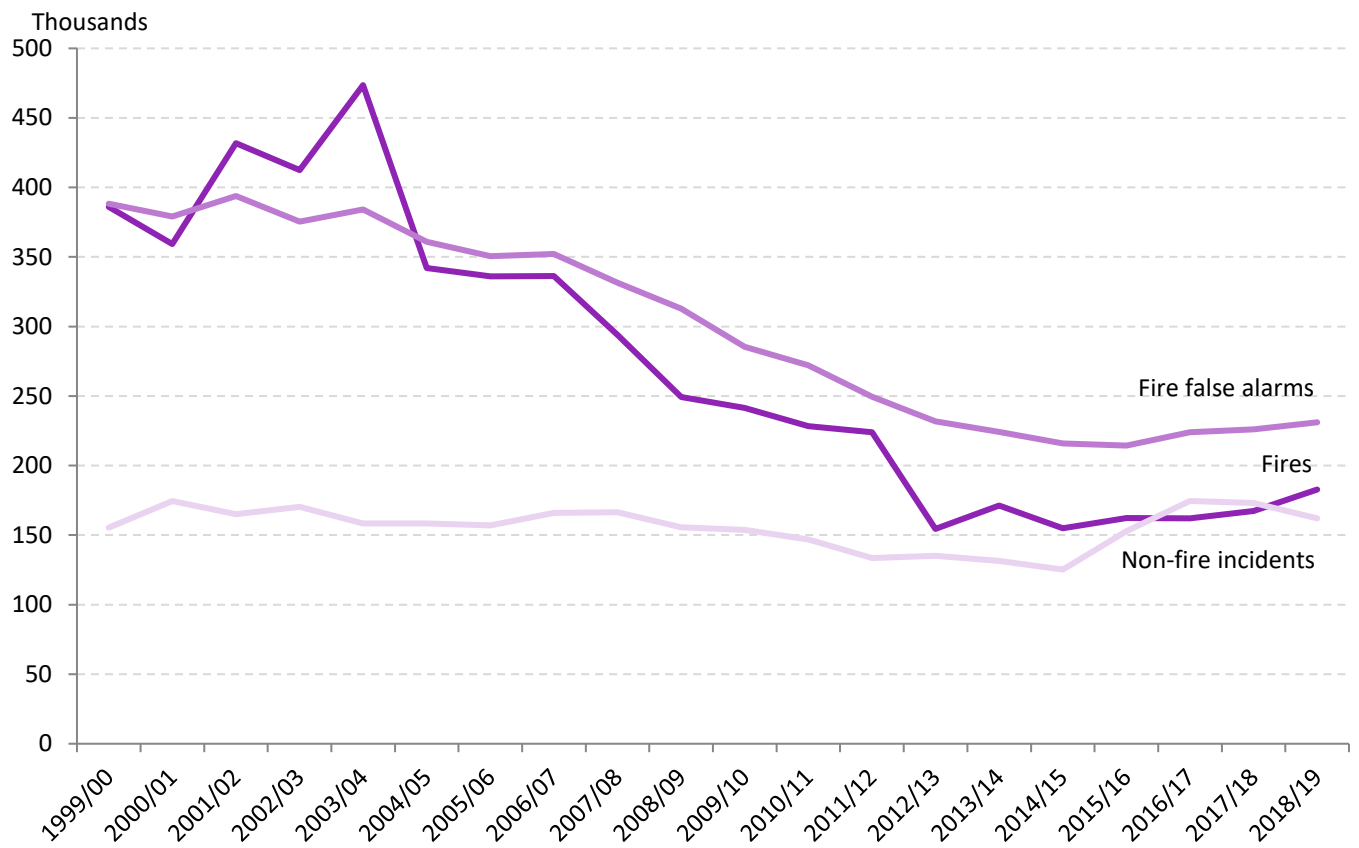
- **576,040 incidents were attended** by FRSs. This was a two per cent increase compared with the previous year (566,433), a nine per cent increase compared with five years ago (526,812) but a 20 per cent decrease compared with ten years ago (717,805). The increase this year compared with last year was driven by a rise in the number of fires attended, and in particular, secondary fires. ([Source: FIRE0102](#))
- Of all incidents attended by FRSs, **fires accounted for 32 per cent, fire false alarms 40 per cent and non-fire incidents 28 per cent.** ([Source: FIRE0102](#))

The number of incidents attended by FRSs in England peaked in 2003/04, at over one million incidents ([see chart 1](#)). 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 has risen to around 576,000 incidents in 2018/19.

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 (when the EMR trials began as [described further below](#)) and 2018/19 has been driven by a 29 per cent increase in non-fire incidents, but there was also an 18 per cent increase in fires over this time. The increase in non-fire incidents was mainly due to an increase in FRSs attending medical co-responding incidents. However, from September 2017 these incidents started to show a decrease. The increase in fire incidents from 2014/15 to 2018/19 was due to an increase in secondary fires linked to the hot, dry summer in 2018.

FRSs attended 231,067 fire false alarms. This was a two per cent increase compared with the previous year (226,025), a three per cent increase compared with five years ago (224,119) but a 26 per cent decrease compared with ten years ago (312,914). Fire false alarms 'due to apparatus' accounted for around two thirds (65%) of fire false alarms this year. ([Source: FIRE0104](#))

Chart 1: Total incidents attended by type of incident, England; 1999/00 to 2018/19



Source: [FIRE0102](#)

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 2018/19:

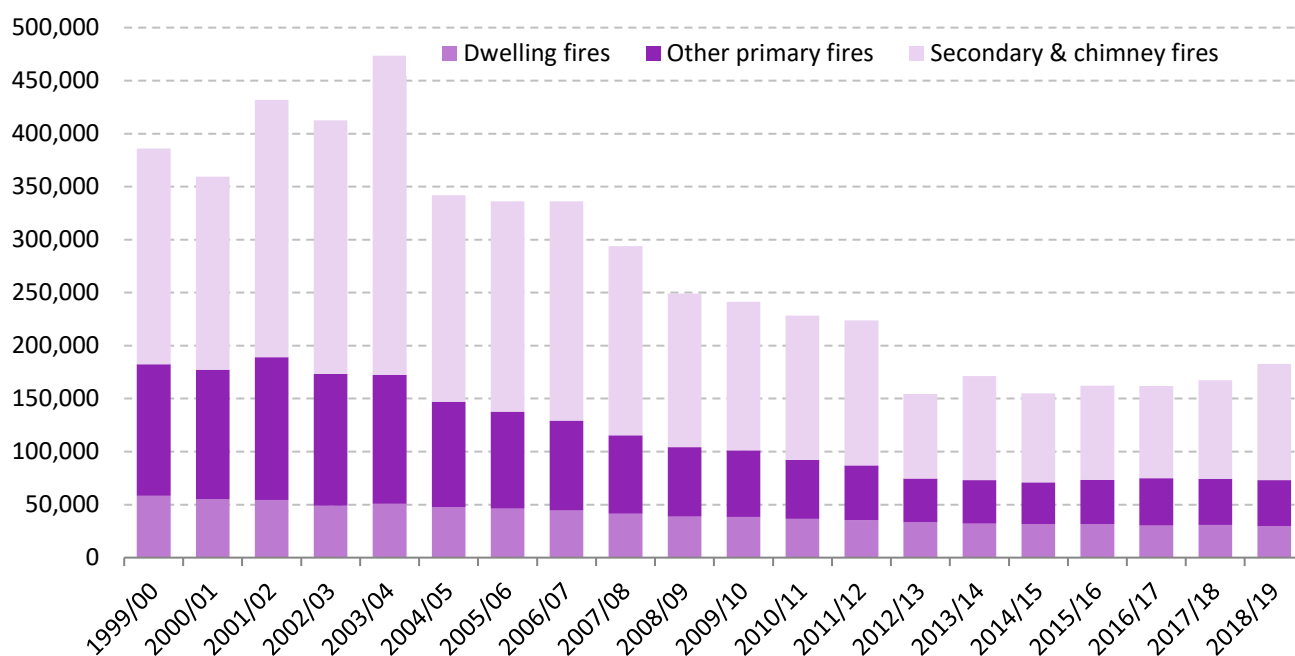
- **FRSs attended 182,825 fires.** This was a nine per cent increase compared with the previous year (167,330), a seven per cent increase compared with five years ago (171,349) but a 27 per cent decrease compared with ten years ago (249,237). The increase this year compared with last year can be attributed to the **greatest number of secondary fires in any quarter since 2011/12 Q1 – Apr to Jun** (43,034 in 2018/19 Q2 – Jul to Sept 2018) linked to the hot, dry summer in 2018. There were 19 per cent more secondary fires in 2018/19 (106,283) than in 2017/18 (89,033). Secondary fires display seasonality, with more occurring during the hotter and drier months, as highlighted in Chart 2 of the previous [Fire and rescue incident statistics](#) release. ([Source: FIRE0102](#))
- There were **73,214 primary fires** (40% of the 182,825 fires attended). This was a one per cent decrease compared with the previous year (74,257), no change compared with five years ago (73,230) and a 30 per cent decrease compared with ten years ago (104,348). Compared with last year, there were decreases of four per cent in fires in dwellings and other buildings and a two per cent decrease in fires in road vehicles. Other outdoor fires¹ increased by 25 per cent, linked to the hot, dry summer in 2018, as with secondary fires, but these are a relatively small category of primary fires. ([Source: FIRE0102](#))
- Of the 29,570 primary dwelling fires attended by FRSs, around three-quarters (74%) were in houses, bungalows, converted flats and other properties, whilst around a quarter (26%) 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; six 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 **820 fires in purpose-built high-rise (10+ storeys) flats**, a three per cent increase compared with the previous year (800). ([Source: FIRE0205](#))

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.

Over the past decade (when excluding chimney fires) road vehicle and other building fires (both sub-categories of primary fires) have shown the greatest decreases (40% and 32% respectively). Dwelling and secondary fires have shown similar decreases (23% and 22% respectively) while primary 'other outdoor' fires showed the smallest decrease at seven per cent.

Chart 2 shows the long-term trend in fire incidents from 1999/00 to 2018/19, for primary (split into dwelling and other primary) and secondary plus chimney fires. The series high for secondary plus chimney fires occurred in 2003/04, which experienced an unusually hot and dry summer. This reflects the fact that the total number of fires attended in a single year can often be affected by external factors, particularly the weather. Weather is more likely to affect outdoor primary and secondary fires which make up a large share of all fires (over half in almost every year since these data became available in 1999/00).

Chart 2: Total fires attended by type of fire, England; 1999/00 to 2018/19



Source: [FIRE0102](#)

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 release type incidents such as lift releases and effecting entry/exit (a complete list can be found in fire data table [FIRE0902](#)).

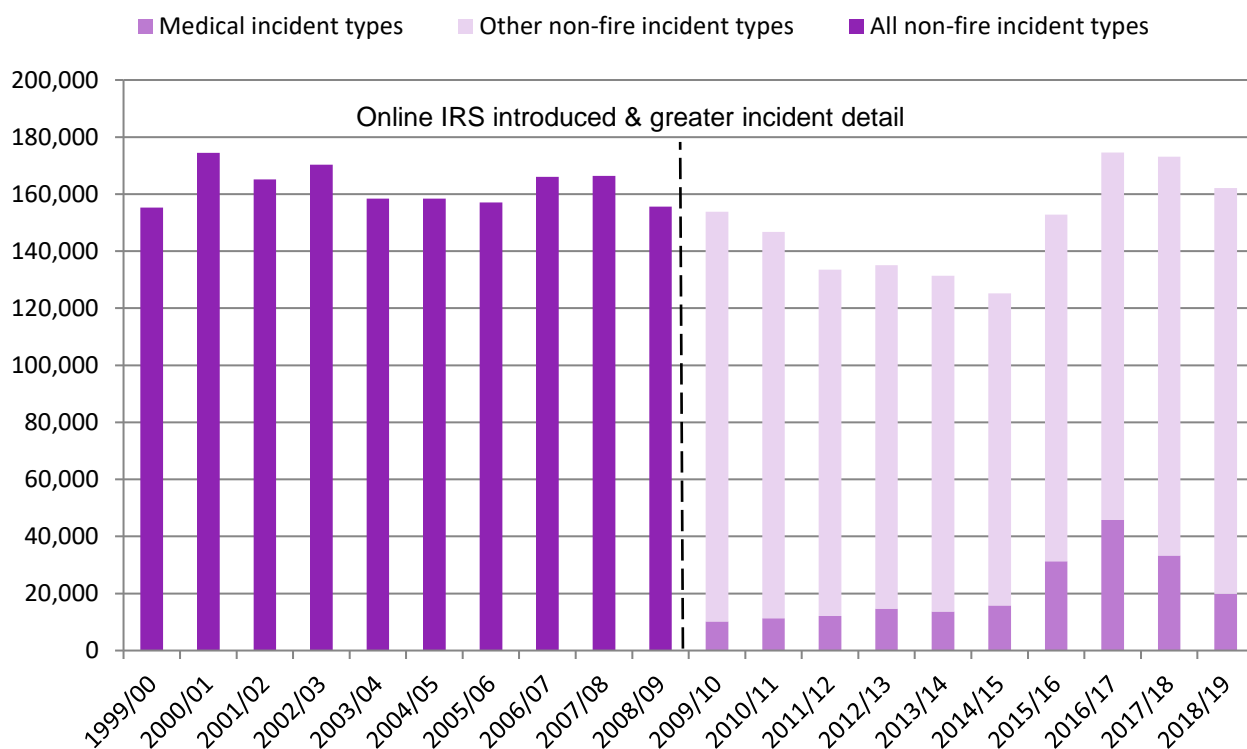
Key results

In 2018/19:

- FRSs attended **162,148 non-fire incidents**. This was a six per cent decrease compared with the previous year (173,078) but a 23 per cent increase compared with five years ago (131,344) and a four per cent increase compared with ten years ago (155,654). The decrease this year compared with last year was a mixed picture with a large decrease in medical incidents being offset slightly by increases in other non-fire incident types. (Source: [FIRE0901](#), [FIRE0902](#))
- The **five largest non-fire incident types** were road traffic collisions (31,086 **up** 3% from 30,043 in the previous year), effecting entry/exit (24,871, **up** 3% from 24,079 in the previous year), medical incidents (19,898 **down** 40% from 33,326 in the previous year), assisting other agencies (14,817 **up** 10% from 13,509 in the previous year) and flooding incidents (13,360 **down** 15% from 15,670 in the previous year) (Source: [FIRE0901](#), [FIRE0902](#))
- FRSs attended **19,898 medical incidents**. This was a 40 per cent decrease compared with the previous year (33,326). 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](#), [FIRE0902](#))
- When excluding medical incidents, FRSs attended **142,250 other non-fire incidents**, a two per cent increase compared with the previous year (139,752). This increase was a mixed picture with flooding incidents decreasing by 15 per cent but with most of the other non-fire incident types increasing. (Source: [FIRE0901](#), [FIRE0902](#))

There was a general decline in the number of non-fire incidents attended between 2007/08 and 2014/15. Over the next two years there was a large increase of almost two-fifths, taking the total to above that in 2007/08, before stabilising in 2017/18. The large increase was mainly due to an increase in attendance of emergency medical responding incidents, as detailed below.

Chart 3: Non-fire incidents attended by broad incident, England; 1999/00 to 2018/19



Source: [FIRE0901](#)

Between 2009/10, when attendance at medical incidents were first recorded, and 2014/15, the number of medical incidents attended steadily rose from around 10,000 to around 16,000 a year. From 2014/15 to 2016/17 around two-thirds (61%) of the increase in non-fire incidents was accounted for by a further 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. The number of such incidents peaked in 2016/17, but on 18 September 2017 the Fire Brigades Union, who represent the employees' side of the NJC, removed their support for the EMR trials. As a result, some of this work has now stopped and it is likely that this is driving the recent decrease in such incidents. As such, these incidents are now approaching the same levels as in 2014/15, before the EMR trials commenced.

For more detailed information on EMR incidents, see [FIRE0902](#) and '[Detailed analysis of non-fire incidents](#)'.

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 injury was caused by the fire or not.

Key results

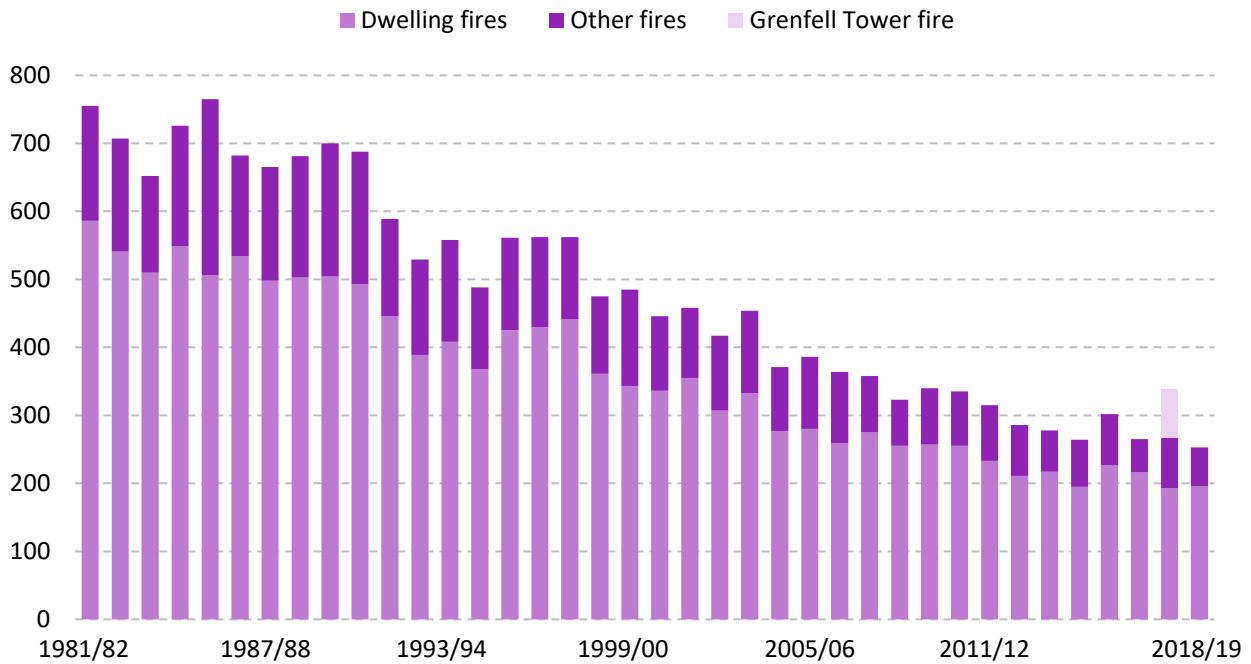
In 2018/19:

- There were **253 fire-related fatalities** ([see key results](#) for chart) compared with 339 (including 71 from the [Grenfell Tower fire](#)) in the previous year (a decrease of 25%). Fire-related fatalities decreased by nine per cent compared with five years ago when there were 278 fire-related fatalities and by 22 per cent compared with ten years ago when there were 323 fire-related fatalities. Fire-related fatalities had been on a downward trend since the 1980s but have plateaued in recent years. This year's figure however is the lowest number of fire-related fatalities in the series. ([Source: FIRE0502](#))
- There were **7,160 non-fatal casualties²**, a two per cent decrease compared with the 7,302 in the previous year. There has been an eight per cent decrease compared with the 7,819 non-fatal casualties five years ago and a 22 per cent decrease compared with 9,227 ten years ago. Of the non-fatal casualties this year, **3,145 were casualties requiring hospital treatment**, a five per cent decrease compared with the 3,298 in the previous year. ([Source: FIRE0502](#))
- A **very small proportion of fires resulted in a fire-related fatality**: 231 out of the 182,825 fires (0.13%). This proportion was slightly lower than the previous year, when there were 249 fires with a fire-related fatality out of the 167,330 fires (0.15%). There were four fires which resulted in a fatality, from the 820 fires in purpose-built high-rise (10+ storeys) flats in 2018/19.

The number of fire-related fatalities in England has been on a general downward trend since 1981/82 ([see chart 4](#)), when comparable figures first became available, though the numbers have fluctuated due to the relatively small numbers involved. In 1981/82 there were 755 fire-related fatalities but by 2014/15 this figure had fallen to 264 – a decrease of 65 per cent over 33 years – and has fluctuated thereafter, falling to a series low in 2018/19.

² 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.

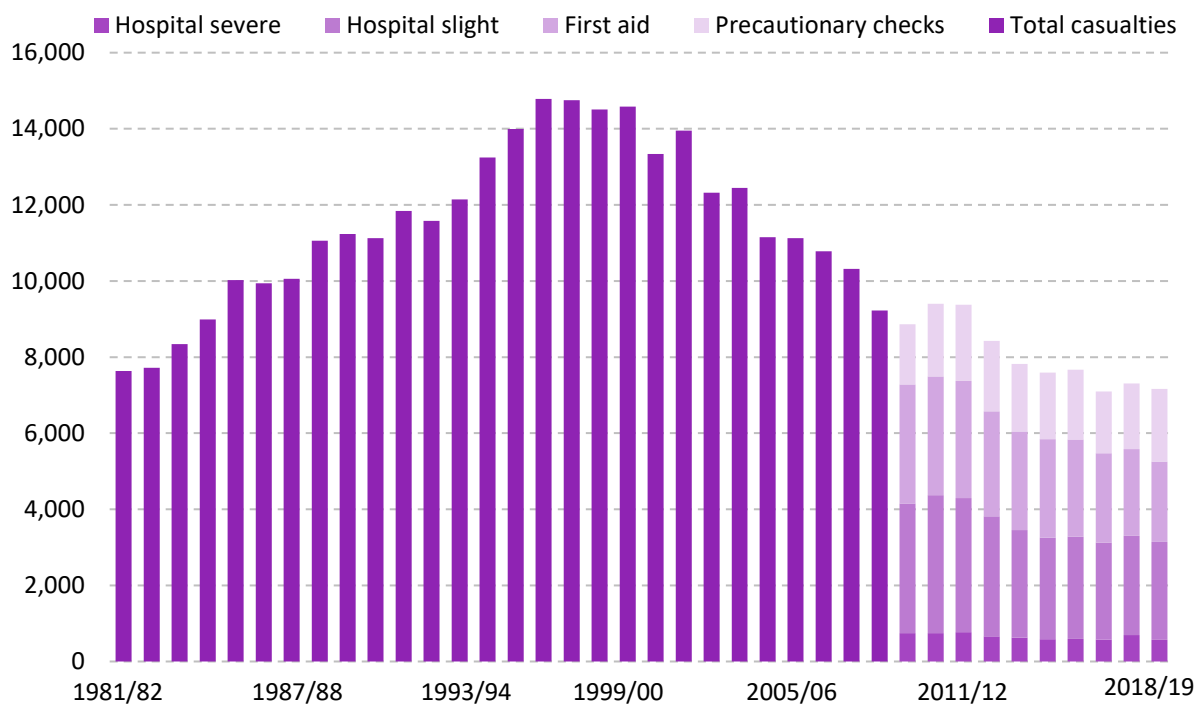
Chart 4: Total fire-related fatalities in dwellings or other fires, England; 1981/82 to 2018/19



Source: [FIRE0502](#)

The number of non-fatal casualties in fires in England had been on a downward trend since the mid-1990s, but it appears the downward trend has plateaued in recent years. Since the introduction of the online IRS in 2009/10, detail on injury severity has been collected. All injury types have fallen by at least 20 per cent in 2018/19 compared with 2009/10, except 'precautionary checks' which has increased by 20 per cent. The proportion of non-fatal casualties requiring hospital treatment has been relatively stable since the online IRS was introduced, ranging from 43 per cent to 47 per cent.

Chart 5: Total non-fatal casualties in fires by injury severity, England; 1981/82 to 2018/19



Source: [FIRE0502](#)

The Grenfell Tower fire

This box contains information provided by London Fire Brigade³ on the fire that took place at Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017. The data in this release includes records of incidents that had reached the IRS by 16 June 2019, when a snapshot of the database was taken. As such, figures on the Grenfell Tower fire may be revised in subsequent releases. When the snapshot of the database was taken London Fire Brigade reported:

- 71 fire-related fatalities
- 109 non-fatal casualties, of which:
 - 67 were 'hospital severe'
 - 10 were 'hospital slight'
 - 1 required 'first aid'
 - 31 had 'precautionary checks'

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.

³ 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'.

5 Summary of changes over time

Below is a summary table comparing 2017/18 with 2018/19, five years previously in 2013/14 and ten years previously (where available) in 2008/09.

Incident type	2018/19 compared with		
	2017/18	2013/14	2008/09
576,040 all incidents	566,433 +2% ↑	526,812 +9% ↑	717,805 -20% ↓
182,825 fires	167,330 +9% ↑	171,349 +7% ↑	249,237 -27% ↓
73,214 primary fires	74,257 -1% ↓	73,230 <-1% ↓	104,348 -30% ↓
29,570 dwelling fires	30,813 -4% ↓	31,910 -7% ↓	38,584 -23% ↓
26,539 accidental dwelling fires	27,584 -4% ↓	28,613 -7% ↓	32,428 -18% ↓
106,283 secondary fires	89,033 +19% ↑	92,132 +15% ↑	136,744 -22% ↓
231,067 fire false alarms	226,025 +2% ↑	224,119 +3% ↑	312,914 -26% ↓
162,148 non-fire incidents	173,078 -6% ↓	131,344 +23% ↑	155,654 +4% ↑
19,898 medical incidents	33,326 -40% ↓	13,649 +46% ↑	.. ¹
Fatalities and non-fatal casualties			
253 fire-related fatalities	339 -25% ↓	278 -9% ↓	323 -22% ↓
196 fire-related fatalities in dwellings	268 -26% ↓	217 -10% ↓	255 -23% ↓
7,160 non-fatal casualties	7,302 -2% ↓	7,819 -8% ↓	9,227 -22% ↓
3,145 non-fatal casualties requiring hospital treatment	3,298 -5% ↓	3,453 -9% ↓	5,030 -37% ↓
5,239 non-fatal casualties in dwellings	5,458 -4% ↓	6,118 -14% ↓	7,455 -30% ↓

Source: [Fire statistics data tables](#)

Notes:

1. Medical incidents were first 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. The sections below 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 is 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 31 March 2019. This includes incident records that were submitted to the IRS by 16 June 2019, when a snapshot of the database was taken for the purpose of analysis. As a snapshot of the dataset was taken on 16 June 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.

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.

National Statistics

These statistics have been assessed by the UK Statistics Authority to ensure that they continue to meet the standards required to be designated as National Statistics. This statistical bulletin is produced to the highest professional standards and is free from political interference. It has been produced by statisticians working in accordance with the Home Office's Statement of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, which covers Home Office policy on revisions and other matters. The Chief Statistician, as Head of Profession, reports to the National Statistician with respect to all professional statistical matters and oversees all Home Office National Statistics products with respect to the Code, being responsible for their timing, content and methodology. This means that these statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, impartiality, quality and public value, and are fully compliant with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

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