



Detailed analysis of non-fire incidents attended by fire & rescue services, England, April 2018 to March 2019

This release contains detailed statistics about non-fire incidents attended by fire and rescue services (FRSs) in England for the financial year 2018/19 (1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019).

Key results

Top non-fire incident types and change since 2017/18:

Road traffic collisions



(31,090; up 3%)

Effecting entry/exit



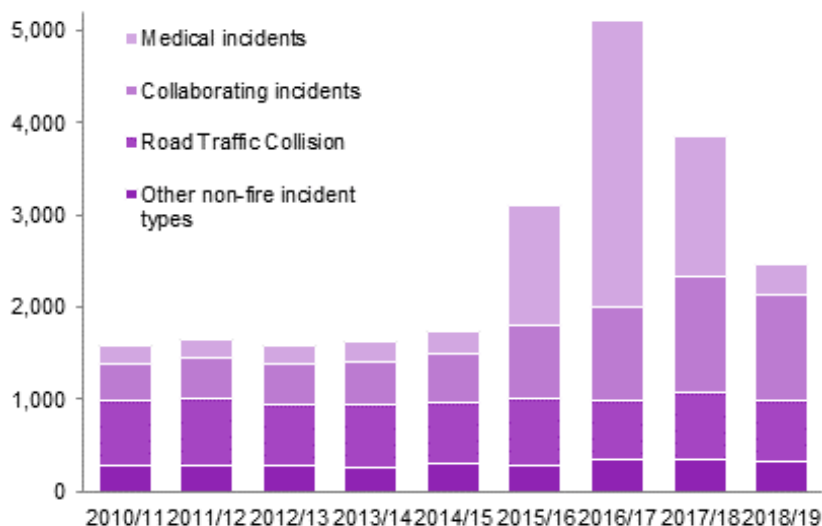
(24,874; up 3%)

Medical incidents



(19,903, down 40%)

In 2018/19, there were **2,458 fatalities in non-fire incidents** a decrease of 36 per cent from last year, reflecting the end of the emergency medical responding trials.



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Date published:
30 January 2020

Frequency of release:
Annual

Forthcoming release:
[Home Office statistics release calendar](#)

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1 Introduction

This release provides more detailed analysis of non-fire incidents attended by FRSs in 2018/19, including comparisons with previous years. Each year the content of the release is reviewed to ensure relevant topics are reported on; this year's release includes chapters covering overall trends, detailed breakdowns of fatalities and non-fatal casualties and road traffic collisions.

The latest headline figures on non-fire incidents are available for the year ending June 2019 in [Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics: England, year ending June 2019](#) published on 14 November 2019. However, to be consistent throughout, this release presents data for the financial year 2018/19 (year ending March 2019).

Each time an FRS attends an incident in England, details of that incident are uploaded to the Home Office's Incident Recording System (IRS) by the FRS. 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 and submitted to the IRS by 26 September 2019, when a snapshot of the database was taken for the purpose of analysis. As such, 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 fatalities. In addition, statisticians at the Home Office have improved the handling of historic revisions supplied to us by FRSs for figures from 2010/11 onwards.

More information on the IRS can be found at:

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

This publication is accompanied by reference data tables which can be found at [Non-fire incident tables](#). The following tables have been updated as part of this publication:

[Non-fire incidents](#): 0903, 0904, 0905, 0906, 0907, 0908, 0909

[Other](#): 1402, 1403

2 Overall pattern and trends in non-fire incidents

Key results

In 2018/19, there were

- **162,181 non-fire incidents.** This is a decrease of six per cent from last year but an increase of 23 per cent from five years ago.
- **19,903 medical incidents.** This is a decrease of 40 per cent from last year, mostly due to the end of the emergency medical responding trials.

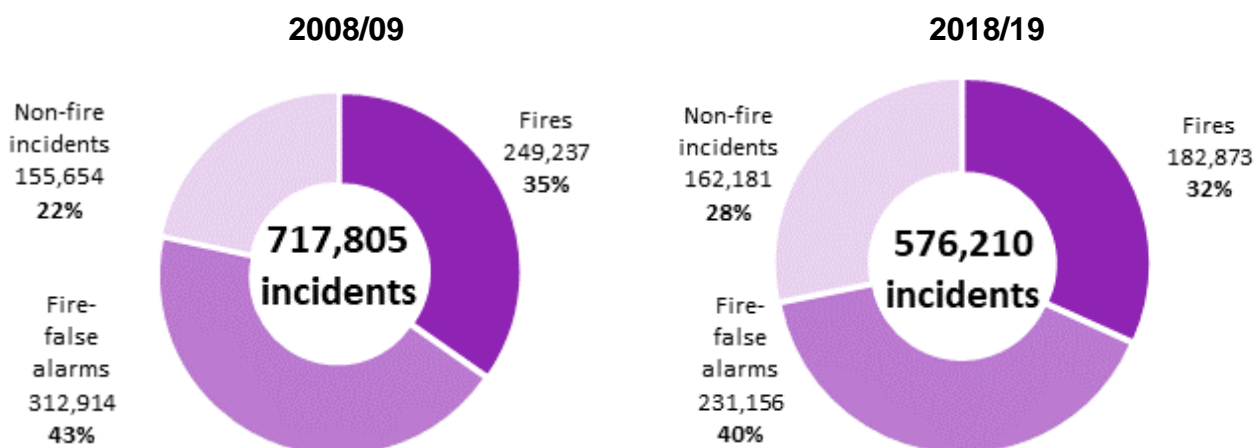
FRSs attend many types of incident that are not fires or fire false alarms, these are known as non-fire incidents or special service incidents. Examples include flooding incidents, responding to road traffic collisions, animal assistance, effecting entry/exit and assisting other agencies.

Trends in non-fire incidents

In 2018/19, there were 162,181 non-fire incidents representing a decrease of six per cent from 173,080 compared with the previous year. Data on non-fire incidents were first collected in 1999/00, and from then until 2014/15 the number of non-fire incidents was on a general long-term downward trend dipping from around 155,000 in 1999/00 to around 125,000 incidents in 2014/15. However, since then, the number of non-fire incidents showed two large year-on-year increases rising to around 175,000 incidents in 2016/17, before falling to around 162,000 in 2018/19. The increases in 2015/16 and 2016/17 coincided with the introduction, in 2015, of the National Joint Council supported trials of emergency medical responding where FRSs formed agreements with ambulance trusts to undertake health and care related work, in particular co-responding. The Fire Brigades Union removed support for the trials in September 2017, which is likely to be driving the recent decrease.

As can be seen from Chart 1 below, FRSs are now attending proportionally more non-fire incidents than 10 years ago.

Chart 1: Incidents attended by fire and rescue services in England, by incident type, for 2008/09 and 2018/19



Source: [FIRE0102](#).

Categories of non-fire incidents

Non-fire incident types are grouped into nine ‘main categories’ for this release and seven main categories for presentation in charts, see below. The rationale for this is to create broader categories which are easier to display and comment on. These categories comprise either the most common incident types, similar incident types or incident types of particular interest. Whilst the “Other” category is quite large, it contains many of the smaller non-fire incident types which don’t fit within the eight main categories.

The non-fire incident types with the highest number of incidents recorded for 2018/19 were:

- road traffic collisions (31,090; up 3% since 2017/18),
- effecting entry/exit (24,874; up 3%) and
- medical incidents (19,903, down 40%).

Road traffic collisions will be discussed in more detail in [Chapter 4](#).

Table 1: Number of non-fire incidents and percentage change by non-fire incident main categories, England, 2017/18 and 2018/19

Non-fire incident type	2017/18	2018/19	% change
Total	173,080	162,181	-6%
Medical incidents ^{1,2}	33,327	19,903	-40%
Road Traffic Collision	30,043	31,090	3%
Effecting entry/exit	24,079	24,874	3%
Flooding and rescue or evacuation from water ³	16,692	14,373	-14%
Assist other agencies	13,510	14,821	10%
Lift release	11,253	11,507	2%
Suicide (including attempts)	1,620	1,907	18%
False alarms ⁴	6,774	7,263	7%
Other ⁵	35,782	36,443	2%

Notes:

1 Coincides with the removal of support for the emergency medical responding trials.

2 Contains the "Medical incident - First responder" and "Medical incident - Co-responder" categories.

3 Contains the "Flooding" and "Rescue or evacuation from water" categories.

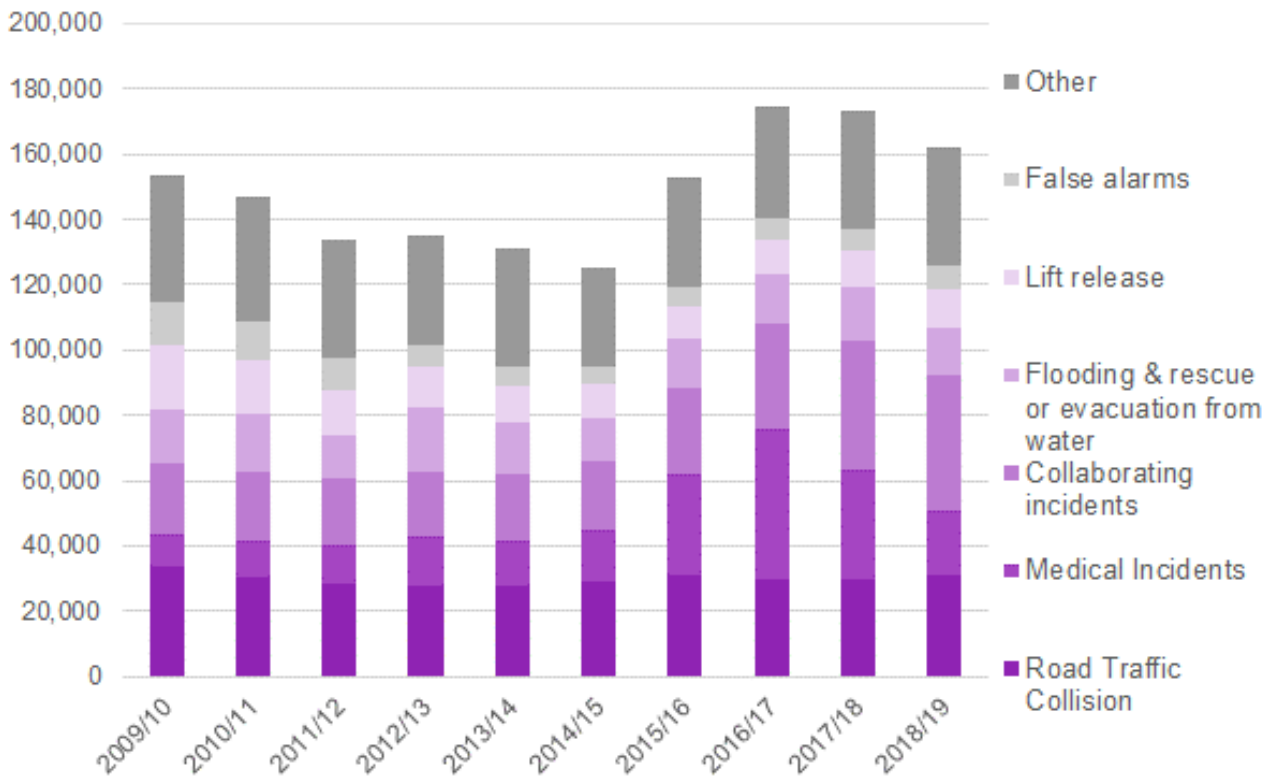
4 Contains the "Malicious False Alarm" and "Good Intent False Alarm" non-fire categories.

5 Contains the "Other transport incident", "Other rescue / release of persons", "Animal assistance incidents", "Removal of objects from people", "Hazardous Materials incident", "Spills and Leaks (not RTC)", "Making Safe (not RTC)", "Evacuation (no fire)", "Water provision", "Advice only", "Stand by" and "No action (not false alarm)" categories.

Detailed data on non-fire incident type were first collected when FRSs began to submit records via the online IRS in 2009/10. A complete list of every non-fire incident type recorded in the IRS can be found in table [FIRE0902](#).

Since 2009/10 trends have varied across the non-fire incident main categories (see Chart 2).

Chart 2: Number of non-fire incidents by main categories, England, 2009/10 to 2018/19



Source: [FIRE0901](#).

Note: Collaborating incidents include “Assisting other agencies”, “Effecting entry/exit” and “Suicide/attempts”.

3 Fatalities and non-fatal casualties in non-fire incidents

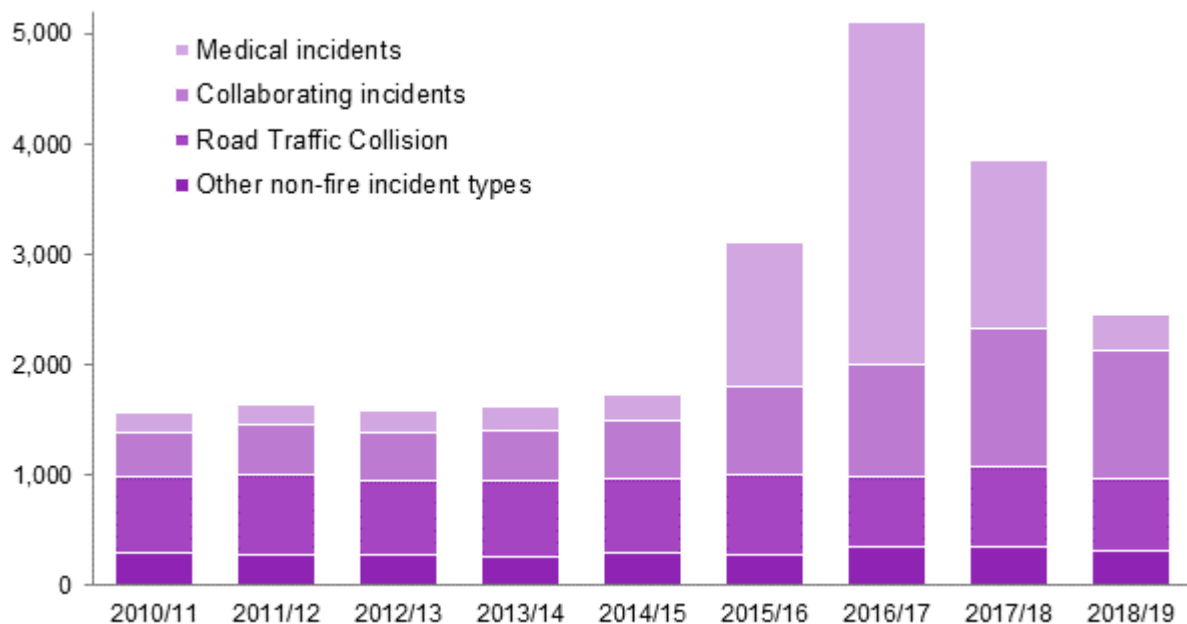
Key results

In 2018/19, there were:

- **2,458 fatalities in non-fire incidents.** This is a decrease of 36 per cent from last year, coinciding with the end of the emergency medical responding trials.
- **39,040 non-fatal casualties in non-fire incidents.** This is a decrease of 15 per cent from last year, also coinciding with the end of the emergency medical responding trials.

Detailed comparable data on fatalities in non-fire incidents were first available for 2010/11 and remained stable at around 1,600 fatalities until 2014/15. As can be seen in Chart 3, there was a peak of 5,112 fatalities for 2016/17 which has been followed by decreases; this coincides with the beginning and ending of the emergency medical responding trails.

Chart 3: Number of fatalities by non-fire incident types, England, 2010/11 to 2018/19



Source: [FIRE0904](#).

When excluding medical incidents, the number of fatalities in non-fire incidents were relatively stable from 2010/11 to 2014/15, followed by three year-on-year increases and a decrease in the last year.

Fatality rates

For 2018/19, the non-fire incident type main category (excluding false alarms, lift release as the numbers are too small to provide reliable rates and 'Other' as rates are not meaningful as the category is made up of disparate incident types) with the highest rate of fatalities was

suicide (including attempts) with a rate of 139 per 1,000 incidents. The non-fire incident type with the lowest rate of fatalities was flooding and rescue or evacuation from water with a rate of seven per 1,000 incidents. See table [FIRE0904b](#) for more information.

Table 2: Number of fatalities in non-fire incidents, percentage change and fatality rate per 1,000 incidents by non-fire incident main categories, England, 2017/18 and 2018/19

Non-fire incident type	2017/18	2018/19	% change	Fatality rate per 1,000 incidents
Total	3,854	2,458	-36%	15
Road Traffic Collision	738	653	-12%	21
Assist other agencies	571	490	-14%	33
Effecting entry/exit	398	395	-1%	16
Medical incidents*	1,532	334	-78%	17
Suicide (including attempts)	272	265	-3%	139
Flooding and rescue or evacuation from water	108	101	-6%	7
Other	235	220	-6%	N/A

Source: [FIRE0904a](#) and [FIRE0904b](#).

Notes: * Coincides with the removal of support for the emergency medical responding trials. Rates for "other" are not meaningful.

Non-fatal casualties in non-fire incidents

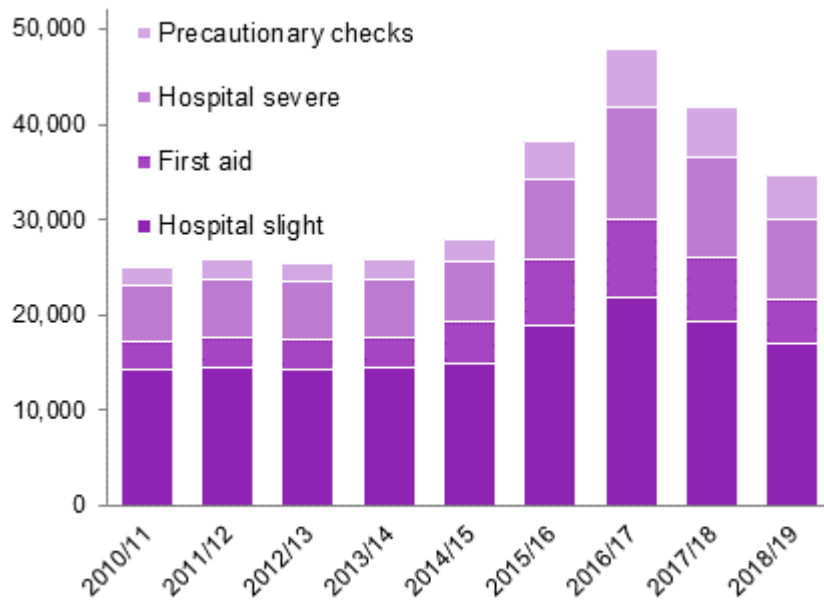
As with fatalities, the number of non-fatal casualties in non-fire incidents remained relatively stable until 2014/15, this was then followed by two year-on-year increases and then decreases in each of the last two years. These changes are attributable to the reduction in the number of medical incidents attended by FRSs and, in particular, medical co-responding.

In 2018/19, there were 39,040 non-fatal casualties in non-fire incidents showing a decrease of 15 per cent from last year. The top three categories were: road traffic collisions (20,269; accounting for 52% of non-fatal casualties), medical incidents (8,344; 21%) and assist other agencies (3,663; 9%). See table [FIRE0904d](#) for more information.

Of the 39,040 non-fatal casualties in non-fire incidents, 43 per cent were in the 'hospital slight injury' severity category (16,916), 21 per cent 'hospital severe' (8,267), 12 per cent

each for 'first aid' and 'precautionary checks' (4,808 and 4,574 respectively) and 11 per cent 'unknown' (4,475). Each injury severity (except unknown) had a decrease compared with the previous year.

Chart 4: Number of non-fatal casualties in non-fire incidents, by injury severity, England, 2010/11 to 2018/19



Non-fatal casualties are split into four subcategories:

- **Hospital severe** – at least an overnight stay in hospital as an in-patient
- **Hospital slight** – attending hospital as an outpatient (not a precautionary check)
- **First Aid given** – first aid given at scene (by anyone), including after a precautionary check
- **Precautionary check** – a precautionary check (to attend hospital or to see a doctor) was recommended (by anyone).

Source: [FIRE0904d](#).

Note: Excludes injury severities recorded as unknown.

4 Road traffic collisions

Key results

In 2018/19,

- FRSs attended **31,090 Road Traffic Collisions** in England. This is an increase of three per cent from last year.
- FRS attendance at RTCs was most common during the **'late afternoon and evening'** hours (14:00-22:00) peaking between 17:00 and 18:00.

Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) – incidents not involving a fire which require the attendance of the FRS for collisions involving one or multiple road vehicles (i.e. large and small vehicles, including motorbikes). These include incidents where FRSs attend the incident for safety reasons, where people are extricated or released from their vehicle and other reasons. RTCs that involve a fire are recorded as road vehicle fires and reported on in table [FIRE0302](#).

In 2018/19, there were 31,090 RTCs attended by FRSs in England representing an increase of three per cent from 30,043 the previous year. There was a general downward trend in the number of RTCs attended between 2009/10 (when data were first collected) and 2012/13. Since then, the number of RTCs attended has fluctuated. Around two per cent of RTC incidents attended by FRSs involved a fatality, and this has remained stable over the series.

Of the 31,090 RTCs, the top three types of action were: 31 per cent (9,564) to make the scene safe, 29 per cent (8,989) to make the vehicle safe, 15 per cent (4,641) for the extrication of person(s). This is consistent with previous years.

RTCs and time of day

In 2018/19, FRS attendance at RTCs was most common during the 'late afternoon and evening' hours (14:00-22:00) peaking between 17:00 and 18:00. When looking at the 'late morning and early afternoon' hours (06:00-14:00), incidents peaked between 08:00 and 09:00. These peaks coincide with the morning and evening rush hour when there are more vehicles on the road.

There is a similar pattern for RTCs with a fatality: these are most common during the 'late afternoon and evening' hours but peak earlier between 15:00 and 16:00. However, if there is an incident during the 'night and early morning' hours (22:00-06:00) there's a greater chance of it involving a fatality than at other times of the day (see Table 3 below).

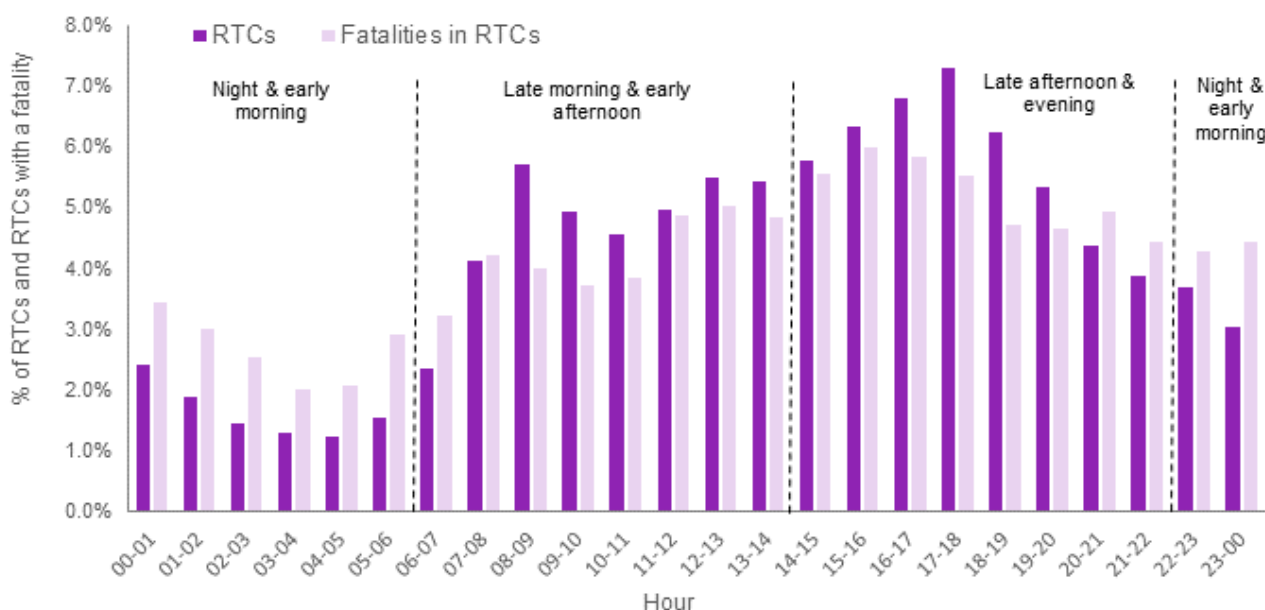
Table 3: Number and proportion of RTC incidents and fatalities by time of day, England, 2018/19

Time of day	Number of RTCs	Fatalities in RTCs	% of RTCs with a fatality
Total	100% (31,090)	100% (653)	2.1%
Late morning and early afternoon (06:00-14:00)	35.7% (11,105)	32.5% (212)	1.9%
Late afternoon and evening (14:00-22:00)	46.5% (14,460)	41.2% (269)	1.9%
Night and early morning (22:00-06:00)	17.8% (5,525)	26.3% (172)	3.1%

Source: [FIRE0901](#) and [FIRE0906](#).

The higher proportion of RTCs attended by FRSs with a fatality during the ‘night and early morning’ hours (22:00-06:00) compared with all RTCs can be seen in more detail in Chart 5. The ‘Fatalities in RTCs’ bars in the chart are higher than the ‘RTCs’ bars for each hour of the ‘night and early morning’ hours and an hour either side. In general, this is reversed during the day time hours of late morning until evening (08:00-20:00).

Chart 5: Percentage of RTCs and fatalities from RTCs by hour of the day, England; combined data for 2010/11 to 2018/19



Source: [FIRE0906](#).

Notes: Data are only included from 2010/11 onwards as detailed data collected before this date are less robust.

Rate of RTCs per 100,000 people

In 2018/19, there were 56 RTCs attended by FRSs per 100,000 people in England. This compared with 54 in the previous year and 64 in 2009/10 (when data was first collected).

At an FRS level, Surrey attended the most RTCs per 100,000 people with 102, followed by West Midlands (92) and Hereford and Worcester (90). The FRS with the fewest RTCs per 100,000 people (excluding the Isles of Scilly as they had none in 2018/19) was West Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear with 26 each and South Yorkshire with 28. See table [FIRE0903](#) for more information.

Extrication of people from RTCs

Of the 31,090 RTCs attended by FRSs in 2018/19, 15 per cent (4,641) involved the extrication of at least one person. This compared with 17 per cent (5,039) the previous year and 25 per cent (8,439) in 2009/10 (when data was first collected). See table [FIRE0902](#) for more information.

Extrication is the removal or setting free of something with difficulty, where equipment or expertise are necessary to remove someone from a situation i.e. trapped in a vehicle RTC. It includes extrication of fatal victims from an RTC incident.

The number of extrications from RTCs has been on a downward trend, falling year-on-year since 2009/10.

The most common method of extrication was 'Other space creation' with 2,413 incidents, followed by 'Roof removal' with 1,659 incidents. See table [FIRE0907](#) for more information.

The 4,641 RTC incidents with extrications involved the removal of 4,910 people (more than one person may be extricated from a single RTC incident) compared with 5,293 in the previous year (a decrease of 7%) and 8,936 in 2009/10 (a decrease of 45%).

5 Further information

This release contains statistics about non-fire 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.

Non-fire 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 31 March 2019. This includes incident records that were submitted to the IRS by 26 September 2019, when a snapshot of the database was taken for the purpose of analysis. As a snapshot of the dataset was taken on 26 September 2019, the statistics published may not match those held locally by FRSs and revisions may occur in the future.

Other related publications

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

- [Fire and rescue incident statistics, England](#): provides statistics on trends in fires, casualties, false alarms and non-fire incidents attended by fire and rescue services in England, updated quarterly.
- [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.

- [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.
- [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.

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.

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 reports to the National Statistician with respect to all professional statistical matters and oversees all Home Office Statistics products with respect to the Code, being responsible for their timing, content and methodology.

ISBN: 978-1-78655-968-5

ISSN: 1759-7005



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