

FIRE STATISTICS MONITOR

Covering period up to 31 March 2007

Prepared by Fire Statistics and Social Research Branch

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Introduction

The statistics in this Monitor are compiled from reports submitted to Communities and Local Government on fires and false alarms attended by the fire and rescue service throughout the UK.

Detailed information is collected on all fires in buildings, vehicles and outdoor structures and any fires involving casualties or rescues (ie “*primary*” fires). The source of these data on “primary fires” is the fire report form FDR1(94) introduced in January 1994. Less detailed aggregated information is collected on “*secondary*” and chimney fires (collected via fire report form FDR3); so subsequent analysis of them is limited.

Due to the industrial action by firefighters in November 2002 and January and February 2003, the reporting of fires for these days was disrupted. In total fifteen 24-hour periods were affected; ten of these occurred in November, three in January and two in February.

In order to present the most accurate picture of the fires, casualties and false alarms which occurred in 2002 and 2003, estimates have been incorporated in this publication to account for the missing information in November, January and February. However, actual data on fatalities was collected during these periods and is reported in this monitor.

Tables referred to in this document are available as separate downloadable files on the Communities and Local Government website.



Key Points – Year on Year Changes

Fires and False Alarms

- In the year ending 31 March 2007, Fire and Rescue Services in the United Kingdom attended 862,300 fires or false alarms, less than a 1 per cent increase compared to the previous year. In England, there was a less than 1 per cent fall, with a total of 683,400 fires or false alarms attended in the same period.
- Within the total number of fires (426,800 in the UK), primary fires fell by 5 per cent to 156,800 – the lowest figure since 1983. Secondary fires increased by 5 per cent to 261,200 and chimney fires fell by 18 per cent to 8,800. In England, there were 333,900 fires consisting of 129,000 primary, 199,300 secondary and 5,600 chimney fires.
- Total fires in buildings in the UK fell by 5 per cent to 87,500. The building fires total consists of 55,000 dwelling fires (down by 4%) and 32,500 fires in other buildings (ie commercial premises, schools etc.) – down by 6 per cent. The number of road vehicle fires fell to 57,500 (down 9%). In England, building fires fell by 4 per cent to 71,500 and road vehicle fires fell 10 per cent to 47,800.
- The total number of fire false alarms attended in the UK rose by less than 1 per cent to 435,700. This figure included a 3 per cent rise in good intent false alarms, and an 11 per cent fall in malicious false alarms. In England, false alarms fell by less than 1 per cent to 349,600.

Deaths and injuries

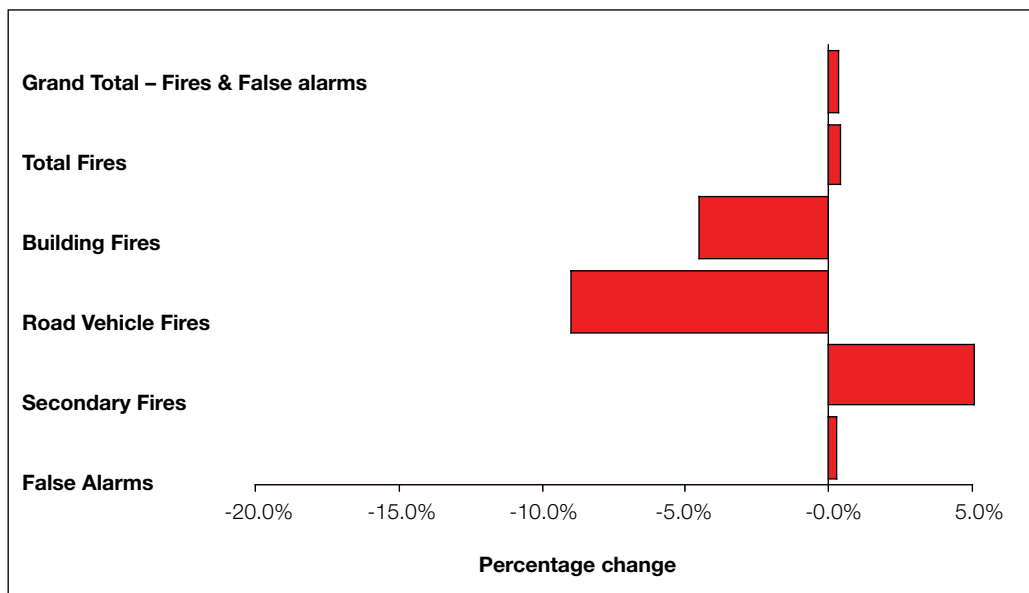
- The **provisional** (see note 6) total number of fire deaths recorded in the UK fell to 448 in the year ending 31 March 2007, compared to 471 in 2005/06 – this is the lowest figure since before 1950. Deaths in dwelling fires fell to 324 from 336 in the previous year, while deaths in other buildings fell from 32 to 30. There were 66 deaths from fires in road vehicles compared with 80 in the previous year. In England, 361 fire deaths were recorded. Of these, 252 were in dwelling fires and 56 in road vehicle fires.
- In 2006/07, the number of injuries in fires in the UK fell by 3 per cent to 13,500 from 13,900 in 2005/06. Injuries in dwelling fires fell by 4 per cent to 11,000. In England, 10,800 injuries (down by 3%) were recorded, including 8,700 in dwelling fires (down by 3%).

Further detail for the UK

Fires and False Alarms

See: Table 1a

Chart 1: Percentage change in fires and false alarms in 2006/07, compared with 2005/06, UK



Data for 2006/07 are provisional

In 2006/07, Fire and Rescue Services attended 862,300 fires or false alarms in the UK, an increase of less than 1 per cent than in the previous year.

Within this total there were 426,800 fires attended (an increase of less than 1%) and 435,700 false alarms (an increase of less than 1%).

In the first quarter of 2007 (January to March) Fire and Rescue Services attended 176,000 fires or false alarms, a decrease of 6 per cent compared with the corresponding quarter of 2006, continuing a long-term downward trend.

Fires

See: Tables 1a, 3, 4 and 5

A total of 426,800 fires were attended in the UK in 2006/07 – a less than 1 per cent increase compared with the preceding year. Within the total number of fires, there was a 5 per cent fall in primary fires to 156,800 (the lowest since 1983) and chimney fires decreased by 18 per cent to 8,800 (continuing the long-term downward trend). Secondary fires (ie outdoor fires not involving property) rose to 261,200 in 2006/07 from 248,600 in the previous year (5%).

Within the primary fires category, there was a fall of 5 per cent in the total number of building fires to the lowest level since 1968 – down to 87,500. This fall includes a 4 per cent decrease in dwelling fires to 55,000 and a 6 per cent decrease in other building fires (ie commercial premises, schools etc.) to 32,500. The number of road vehicle fires fell by 9 per cent to 57,500, the lowest figure since 1990.

There were 45,000 accidental dwelling fires in 2006/07 (5% less than in 2005/06).

Deliberate primary fires fell by 9 per cent to 70,500 in 2006/07 – continuing the downward trend since the peak in 2001 of 123,300. The overall fall includes a large decrease in the number of deliberate road vehicle fires (down 13% to 40,300).

Secondary fires rose by 5 per cent to 261,200. The number of grassland fires was up 26% to 83,800. The majority of secondary fires are refuse fires – these fell by 3 per cent to 145,500. Derelict vehicle fires fell by 12 per cent to 5,800.

A total of 79,900 fires were attended in the UK in the first quarter of 2007 (January to March), 11 per cent fewer than in the corresponding first quarter of 2006. The number of primary fires fell (down by 8% to 35,800) compared to the same quarter in 2006. The number of secondary fires decreased by 11 per cent (to 40,200) compared to the corresponding first quarter of 2006.

False Alarms

See: Tables 1a and 3

In 2006/07, the number of fire false alarms attended in the UK increased by under 1 per cent to 435,700 continuing the trend since 2001. Within this category the number of malicious false alarms fell by 11 per cent to 33,200 which also follows the general long-term trend. False alarms due to apparatus increased by 1 per cent to 283,700; these incidents constitute 65 per cent of all fire false alarms during 2006/07.

Fire Deaths

See: Tables 2a and 4 & Chart 2

Provisional figures (see note 6) for 2006/07 show a 5 per cent fall in the total number of fire deaths in the UK, down to 448 fatalities from 471 in 2005/06.

Within the total number of deaths in 2006/07, 324 occurred in dwelling fires. This total is a 4 per cent fall from the 336 deaths recorded in 2005/06.

Deaths in accidental dwelling fires. In 2006/07, there were 262 such deaths recorded, compared with 292 in 2005/06, a fall of 10 per cent.

The figures for fire deaths should be treated with caution, as the data for 2006/07 are still provisional. This is particularly the case for road vehicle fires – see note 6 for further explanation.

Chart 2: Fire deaths, 2002 to 2006/07, UK



Data for 2006/07 are provisional

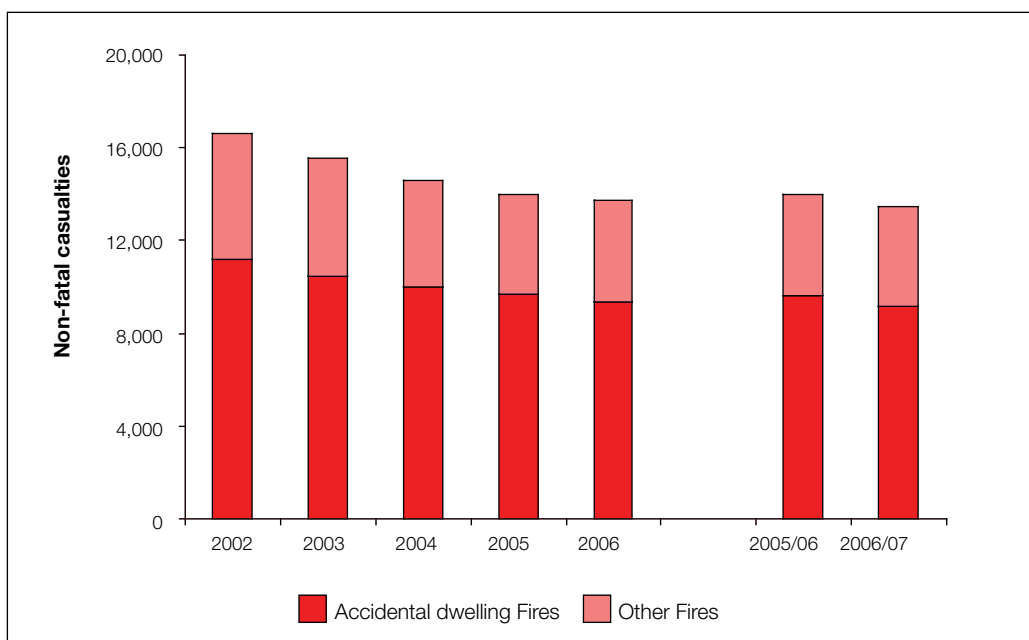
Fire Non-fatal Casualties

See: Tables 2a and 4 & Chart 3

In 2006/07, the number of non-fatal casualties in fires in the UK fell by 3 per cent to 13,500 from 13,900 in 2005/06. This decrease continues the downward trend in injuries in fires and represents the lowest figure recorded since the revised fire statistics collection was introduced in 1994.

There were 11,000 non-fatal casualties in dwelling fires, a fall of 4 per cent from 11,500 in 2005/06. Non-fatal casualties in *accidental* dwelling fires fell by 5 per cent to 9,100 continuing the downward trend.

Chart 3: Fire non-fatal casualties, 2002 to 2006/07, UK



Data for 2006/07 are provisional

Further detail for England

Fires

See: Tables 1b, 3, 4 and 5

A total of 333,900 fires were attended in England in 2006/07 – a less than 1 per cent decrease compared with 2005/06. Within the total number of fires, there was a 6 per cent fall in primary fires to 129,000 but a 4 per cent rise in secondary fires to 199,300. Chimney fires fell by 19 per cent to 5,600.

Within the primary fires category, there was a fall of 4 per cent in the total number of building fires – down to 71,500. This fall includes a 4 per cent decrease in dwelling fires to 44,300 and a 5 per cent decrease in other building fires (ie commercial premises, schools etc.) to 27,200. The number of road vehicle fires fell by 10 per cent to 47,800.

There were 36,500 accidental dwelling fires in 2006/07 (down slightly on 2005/06), continuing the decline seen since 2000.

Deliberate primary fires in England totalled 57,900, down 10 per cent from the previous year. Deliberate road vehicle fires fell by 14 per cent – down to 33,500.

Secondary fires rose by 4 per cent to 199,300. The number of grassland fires rose by 26 per cent to 63,700. The majority of secondary fires are refuse fires – these fell by 3 per cent to 145,500. Derelict vehicle fires also fell by 12 per cent to 5,800.

A total of 62,800 fires were attended in England in the first quarter of 2007 (January to March), 9 per cent less than the corresponding first quarter of 2006. The number of secondary fires fell – by 8 per cent to 30,800 from 33,400. The number of primary fires fell (down by 8% to 29,500) compared to the same quarter in 2006.

False Alarms

See: Tables 1b and 3

In 2006/07, the number of false alarms attended in England fell by under 1 per cent to 349,600. Within this category the number of malicious false alarms fell by 13 per cent to 25,000 following the general long-term trend. False alarms due to apparatus were down by under 1 per cent to 229,800; these incidents constitute two-thirds of all false fire alarms during this period.

Fire Deaths

See: Tables 2b and 4 & Chart 4

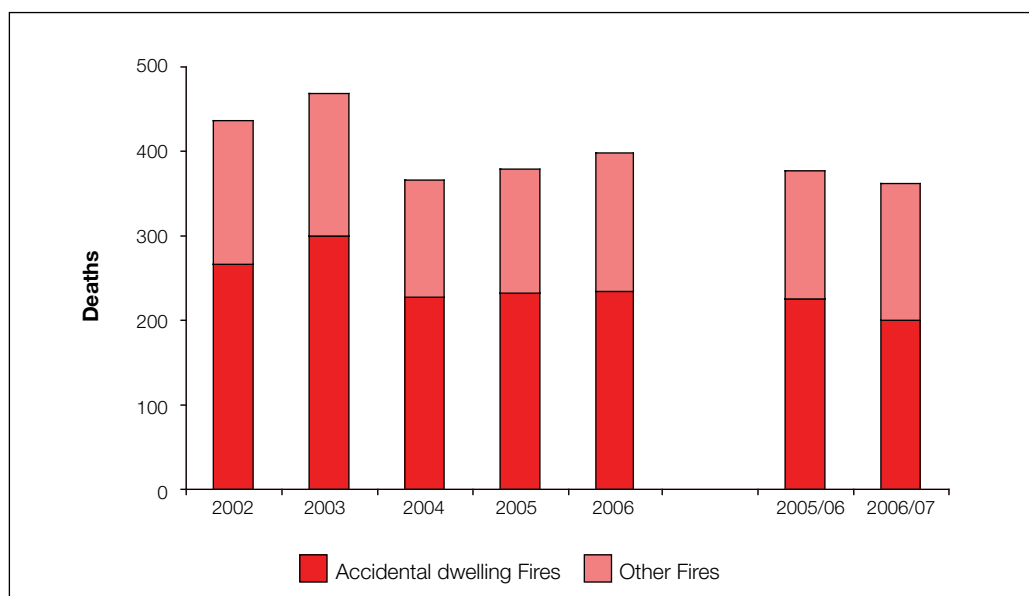
Provisional figures (see note 6) for 2006/07 show a 4 per cent decrease in the total number of fire deaths in England, down to 361 fatalities from 377 in 2005/06.

Within the total number of deaths, 252 occurred in dwelling fires in 2006/07. This is a 3 per cent fall from the 261 deaths recorded in 2005/06.

Deaths in accidental dwelling fires. In 2006/07, there were 199 such deaths recorded, compared with 226 in 2005/06, a fall of 12 per cent.

The figures for fire deaths should be treated with caution, as the data for 2006/07 are still provisional. This is particularly the case for road vehicle fires – see note 6 for further explanation.

Chart 4: Fire deaths, 2002 to 2006/07, England



Data for 2006/07 are provisional

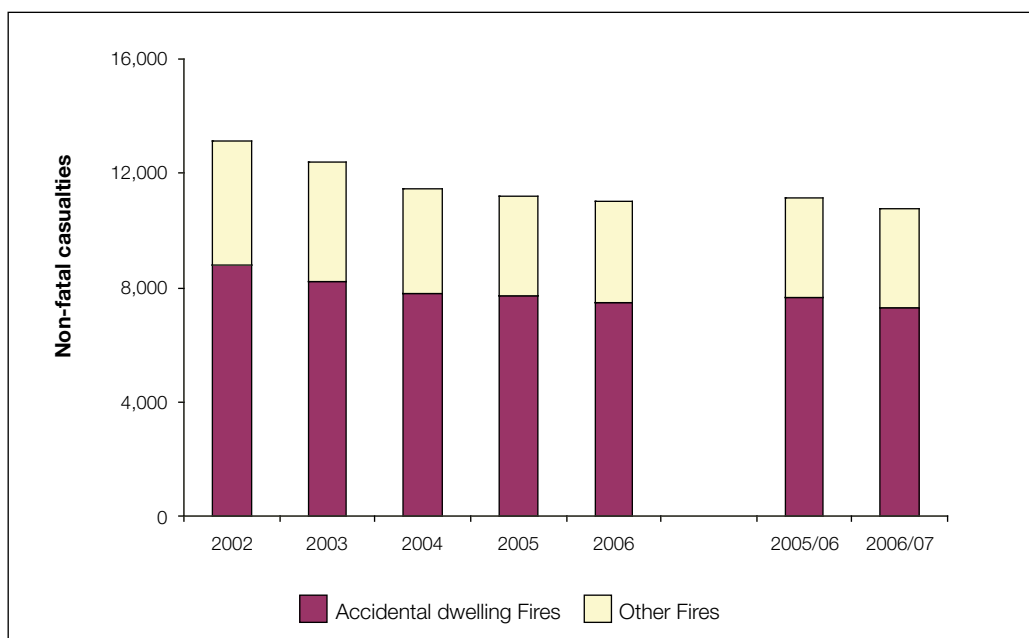
Fire Non-fatal Casualties

See: Tables 2b and 4 & Chart 5

In 2006/07 the number of non-fatal casualties in fires in England fell by 3 per cent to 10,800 from 11,100 in 2005/06. This decrease continues the downward trend in injuries in fires and represents the lowest figure recorded since the revised fire statistics collection was introduced in 1994.

There were 8,700 non-fatal casualties in dwelling fires, a fall of 3 per cent from 9,000 in 2005/06. Non-fatal casualties in accidental dwelling fires fell by 4 per cent to 7,300.

Chart 5: Fire non-fatal casualties, 2002 to 2006/07, England



Data for 2006/07 are provisional

Notes

1. **Primary** fires include all fires in buildings, vehicles and outdoor structures or any fires involving casualties or rescues or fires attended by five or more appliances.
2. **Secondary** fires are the majority of outdoor fires including grassland and refuse fires unless they involve casualties or rescues, property loss or five or more appliances attend. They include fires in derelict buildings.
3. The figures quoted in this monitor for 2006 and 2007 are provisional, and although quarterly data are shown in the tables, very little comment has been included, as there can be considerable variation (both random and seasonal) in the number of fires, which makes interpretation difficult. The effects of the 2003 hot dry summer are an obvious example.

Estimates

4. Data for 2002 and 2003 include estimates for November 2002 and January and February 2003 to account for the lack of information recorded during fifteen days of national industrial action. These estimates have been produced using comparable data for the same month of the previous year – a daily rate is calculated then multiplied by the number of strike days. Information on the actual number of fatal casualties which occurred during the strike periods has been obtained from the MOD and media and is included in this monitor.
5. Following the changes in responsibility of Government departments (May 2006); the policy responsibility for the Fire and Rescue Service and hence publication of fire statistics and research has now moved to the Communities and Local Government. Formerly, responsibility lay with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

Fatalities

6. A person whose death is attributed to a fire is counted as a fatality even if the death occurred weeks or months later. However, it is not always the case that fire was the cause of death. The figures for fatalities are thus subject to revision, as information supplied by the fire and rescue service needs to be cross-checked against the cause of death that appears on the death certificate. The main area of uncertainty is whether fire was the cause of death in road accident fatalities. This monitor contains finalised death figures for all years to 2005 and provisional figures for 2006 and 2007.
7. **The figures for 2006/07 should not be quoted without first consulting the Fire Statistics & Research Branch.**

Index of tables held on website

Tables referred to in this document are available as separate downloadable files on the Communities and Local Government website:

www.communities.gsi.gov.uk/fire/fireandresiliencestatisticsandre/firestatisticsmonitors/

Table 1a: Fires by location and false alarms, UK, 1997 – 2007 Qtr1

Table 1b: Fires by location and false alarms, England, 1997 – 2007 Qtr1

Table 2a: Casualties from fires, UK, 1997 – 2007 Qtr1

Table 2b: Casualties from fires, England, 1997 – 2007 Qtr1

Workbook 3 (*tables by fire and rescue service, 2001 – 2007 Qtr1*)

Table 3a: All fires, including chimney fires,

Table 3b: Primary fires

Table 3c: Secondary fires

Table 3d(i): False alarms

Table 3d(ii): Malicious false alarms

Table 3d(iii): False alarms due to apparatus

Table 3e: Fatal casualties

Table 3f: Non-fatal casualties

Workbook 4 (*tables by fire and rescue service, 2001 – 2007 Qtr1*)

Table 4a: Accidental dwelling fires

Table 4b: Fatal casualties in accidental dwelling fires

Table 4c: Non-fatal casualties in accidental dwelling fires

Workbook 5 (*tables by fire and rescue service, 2001 – 2007 Qtr1*)

Table 5a: Deliberate primary fires

Table 5b: Deliberate road vehicle primary fires

Table 5c: Deliberate primary fires in locations other than road vehicles

Further Information

Further information on fire statistics can be obtained from:

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