

FIRE STATISTICS MONITOR

Covering period up to 31 December 2006

Prepared by Fire Research and Statistics Division

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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 (i.e. “*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 fire-fighters 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.



Key Points – Year on Year Changes

FIRES AND FALSE ALARMS

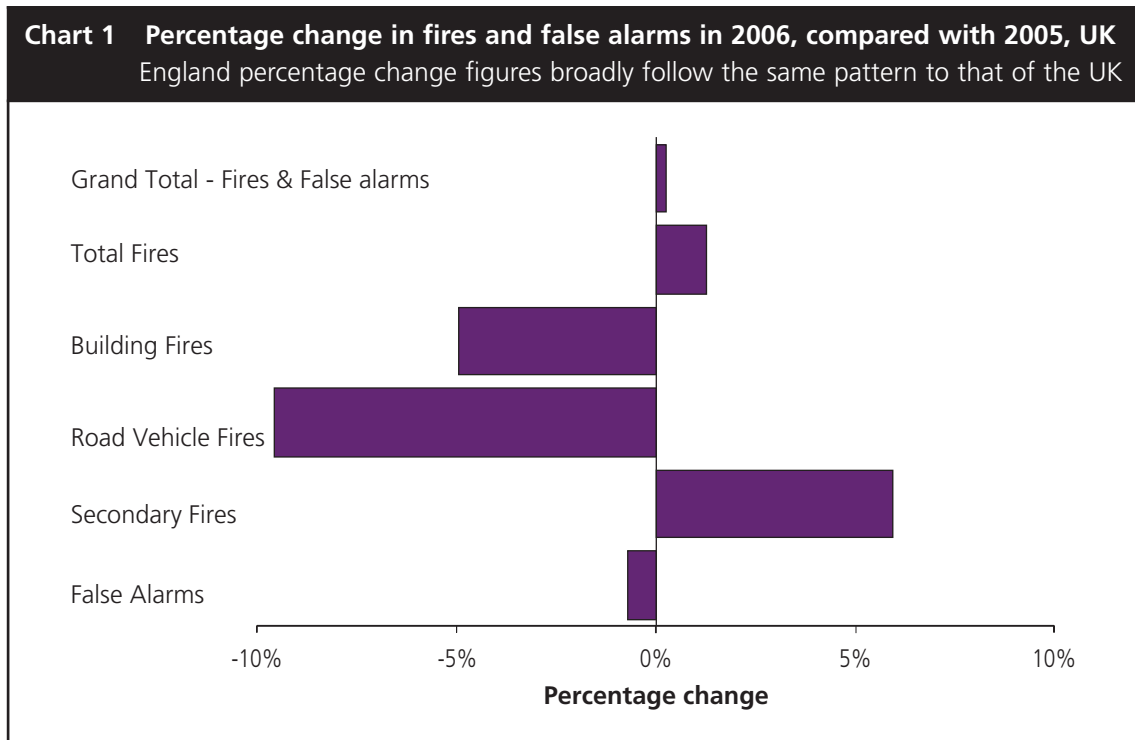
- In 2006, Fire and Rescue Services in the United Kingdom attended over 872,200 fires or false alarms, almost 3,000 more than the previous year. In England, there was a 1% fall, with a total of 689,900 fires or false alarms attended in the same period.
- Within the total number of fires (436,000 in the UK), primary fires fell by 6% to 159,300 – the lowest figure since 1983. Secondary fires increased by 6% to 266,300 and chimney fires rose by 8% to 10,500. In England, there were 339,800 fires consisting of 131,100 primary, 201,900 secondary and 6,800 chimney fires.
- Total fires in buildings in the UK fell by 5% to 88,400. The building fires total consists of 55,600 dwelling fires (down by 4%) and 32,800 fires in other buildings (i.e. commercial premises, schools etc.) – down by 7%. The number of road vehicle fires fell to 59,000 (down 10% to the lowest level since 1990). In England, building fires fell by 5% to 72,200 and road vehicle fires fell 11% to 49,100 incidents.
- The total number of fire false alarms attended in the UK fell by 1% to 436,200. This figure included a 14% fall in malicious false alarms to 33,700. In England, total false alarms fell by 1% to 350,100 incidents, while malicious false alarms fell by 16% to 25,400 incidents. The number of fire false alarms in the UK made with good intent in 2006 rose by 3% to 118,600 from 114,900 in 2005; in England, they rose by 3% from 92,150 in 2005 to 94,600 in 2006.

DEATHS AND INJURIES

- The **provisional** (see note 6) total number of fire deaths recorded in the UK rose to 504 in 2006, compared to 492 in 2005. Deaths in dwelling fires fell by 4% to 362 from 377 in the previous year, while deaths in other buildings rose to 36 from 27. There were 79 deaths in road vehicles compared with 62 in the previous year. In England, 405 fire deaths were recorded. Of these, 286 were in dwelling fires and 63 in road vehicle fires.
- In 2006, the number of injuries in fires in the UK fell by 4% to 13,600 from 14,100 in the previous year. Injuries in dwelling fires fell by 4% to 11,100. In England, 10,900 injuries (down by 3%) were recorded, including 8,800 in dwelling fires (down by 4%).

Further Detail for the UK

FIRES AND FALSE ALARMS (SEE TABLE 1A AND CHART 1)



1. In 2006, Fire and Rescue Services attended 872,200 fires or false alarms in the UK, around 3,000 more than the previous year.
2. Within this total there were 436,000 fires attended (an increase of 1%) and 436,200 false alarms (a fall of 1%).
3. In the fourth quarter of 2006 (October to December) Fire and Rescue Services attended 205,800 fires or false alarms, a decrease of 2% compared with the last quarter of 2005.

FIRES (see Tables 1a, 3a-c, 4a & 5a-c)

4. A total of 436,000 fires were attended in the UK in 2006 – a 1% increase to that of the preceding year (430,300). Within the total number of fires, there was a 6% fall in primary fires to 159,300 (the lowest since 1983) and chimney fires increased by 8% to 10,500 (contrary to the long-term downward trend). This rise was partly due to an increase in chimney fires in Scotland (up 7%). Secondary fires (i.e. outdoor fires not involving property) rose to 266,300 in 2006 from 251,200 in the previous year (up 6%).

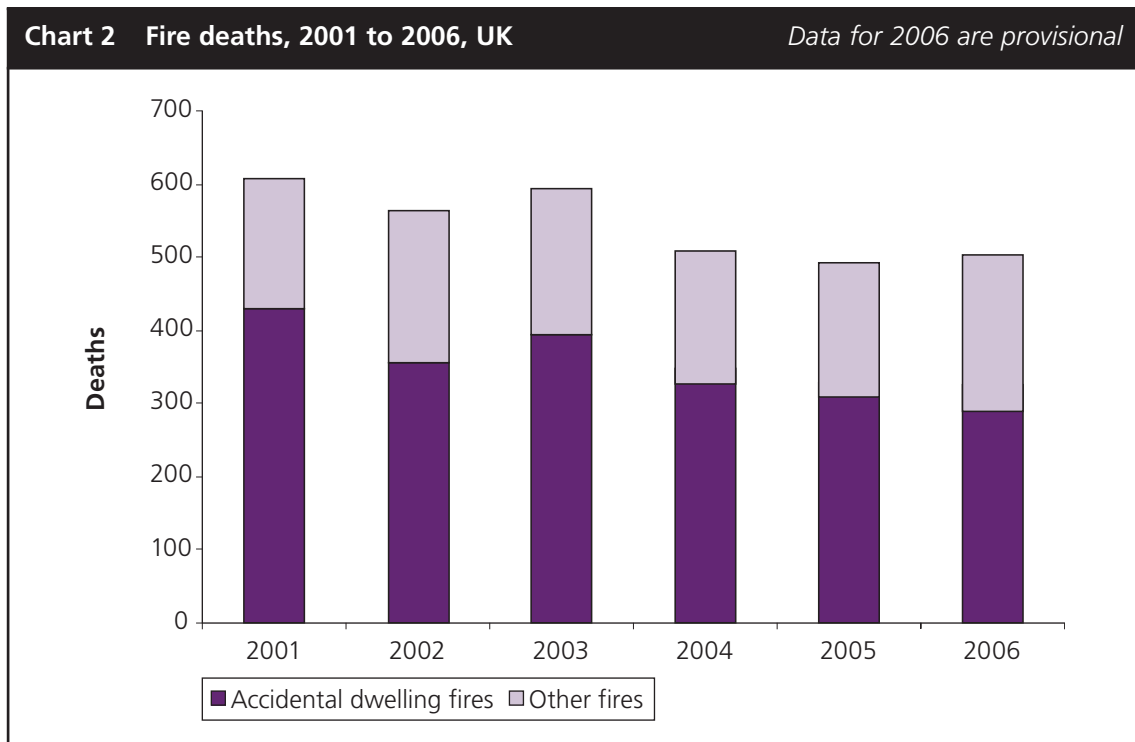
5. Within the primary fires category, there was a fall of 5% in the total number of building fires to the lowest level since 1971 – down to 88,400. This fall includes a 4% decrease in dwelling fires to 55,600 and a 7% decrease in other building fires (i.e. commercial premises, schools etc.) to 32,800. The number of road vehicle fires fell by 10% to 59,000, the lowest figure since 1990.
6. There were 55,600 accidental dwelling fires in 2006 (4% less than in 2005) – continuing the long term downward trend.
7. Deliberate primary fires fell by 9% to 72,200 in 2006, the lowest figure since 1991 – 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 12% to 42,000, the lowest figure since 1995).
8. Secondary fires rose by 6% to 266,300 in 2006. The number of grassland fires was up 36% to 87,500. The majority of secondary fires are refuse fires – these fell by 3 to 147,300. Derelict vehicle fires fell by 16% to 5,900 incidents.
9. A total of 94,200 fires were attended in the UK in the fourth quarter of 2006 (October to December), 4% less than in the corresponding fourth quarter of 2005. The number of primary fires fell (down by 7% to 39,400) compared to the same quarter in 2005. The number of secondary fires decreased by 2% (down to 52,000) compared to the corresponding fourth quarter of 2005.

FALSE ALARMS (see Tables 1a & 3di-iii)

10. In 2006, the number of fire false alarms attended in the UK fell by 1% to 436,200 continuing the trend since 2001. Within this category the number of malicious false alarms fell by 14% to 33,700 which also follows the general long-term trend. False alarms due to apparatus fell slightly, down to 283,800 incidents) compared to the previous year's (285,191 incidents); these incidents constitute 65% of all fire false alarms during 2006.

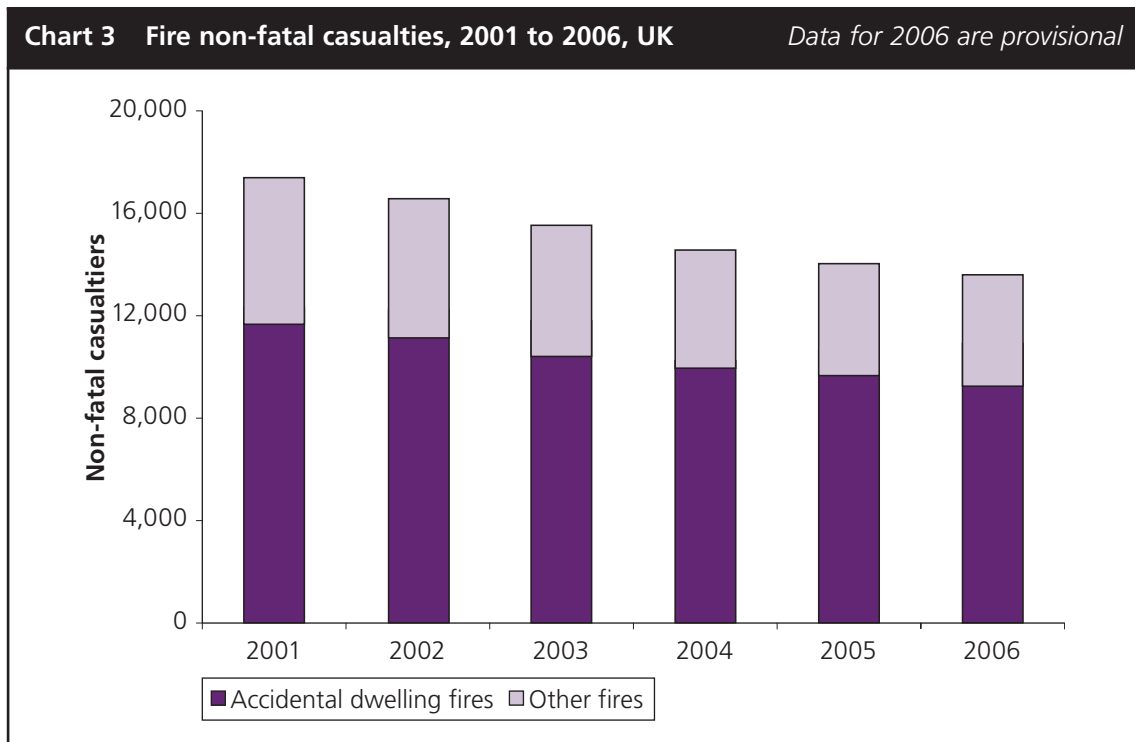
FIRE DEATHS (see Tables 2a & 4b and Chart 2)

11. **Provisional** figures (see note 6) for 2006 show a 2% rise in the total number of fire deaths in the UK, up to 504 fatalities from 492 in 2005.
12. Within the total number of deaths in 2006, 362 occurred in dwelling fires. This total is a 4% fall from the 377 deaths recorded in 2005.
13. *Deaths in accidental dwelling fires.* In 2006, there were 290 such deaths recorded, compared with 310 in 2005, a fall of 6%.
14. The figures for fire deaths should be treated with caution, as the data for 2006 are still provisional. This is particularly the case for road vehicle fires – see note 6 for further explanation.



FIRE NON-FATAL CASUALTIES (see Tables 2a & 4c and Chart 3)

15. In 2006, the number of non-fatal casualties in fires in the UK fell by 3% to 13,600 from 14,100 in 2005. 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.
16. There were 11,100 non-fatal casualties in dwelling fires, a fall of 4% from 11,600 in 2005. Non-fatal casualties in *accidental* dwelling fires fell by 5% to 9,200 continuing the downward trend.



Further Detail for England

FIRES (see Tables 1b, 3a-c, 4a & 5a-c)

17. A total of 339,800 fires were attended in England in 2006 – a 1% decrease compared with the comparable 2005. Within the total number of fires, there was a 7% fall in primary fires to 131,100 but a 3% rise in secondary fires to 201,900. Chimney fires rose by 7% to 6,800 incidents.
18. Within the primary fires category, there was a fall of 5% in the total number of building fires – down to 72,200. This fall includes a 4% decrease in dwelling fires to 44,800 and a 7% decrease in other building fires (i.e. commercial premises, schools etc.) to 27,400 incidents. The number of road vehicle fires fell by 11% to 49,100 incidents – the lowest level since 1990.
19. There were 37,100 accidental dwelling fires in 2006 (down by 3% on 2005), continuing the decline seen since 2000.
20. Deliberate primary fires in England totalled 59,400, down 11% from the previous year. Deliberate road vehicle fires fell by 13% – down to 34,900 incidents.
21. Secondary fires rose by 3% to 201,900. The number of grassland fires rose by 29% to 65,600. The majority of secondary fires are refuse fires – these fell by 6% to 109,800. Derelict vehicle fires also fell by 22% to 4,300 incidents.

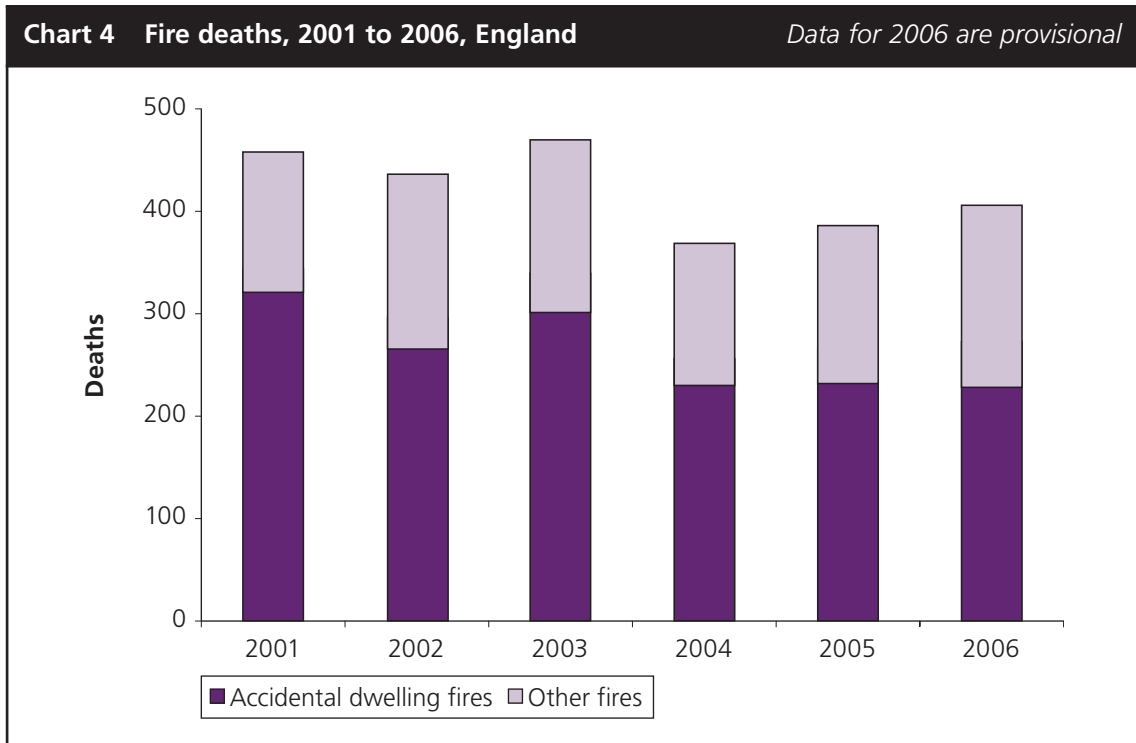
22. A total of 73,100 fires were attended in England in the fourth quarter of 2006 (October to December), 5% less than the last quarter of 2005. The number of secondary fires fell by 3% to 39,000 from 40,200 incidents over the same period. The number of primary fires fell (down by 7% to 32,300) compared to the last quarter in 2005.

FALSE ALARMS (see Tables 1b & 3di-iii)

23. In 2006, the number of false alarms attended in England fell by 1% to 350,100 incidents. Within this category the number of malicious false alarms fell by 16% to 25,400 following the general long-term trend. False alarms due to apparatus were down 1% on the 2005 figures to 230,100 incidents; these incidents constitute just over half of all false fire alarms during 2006.

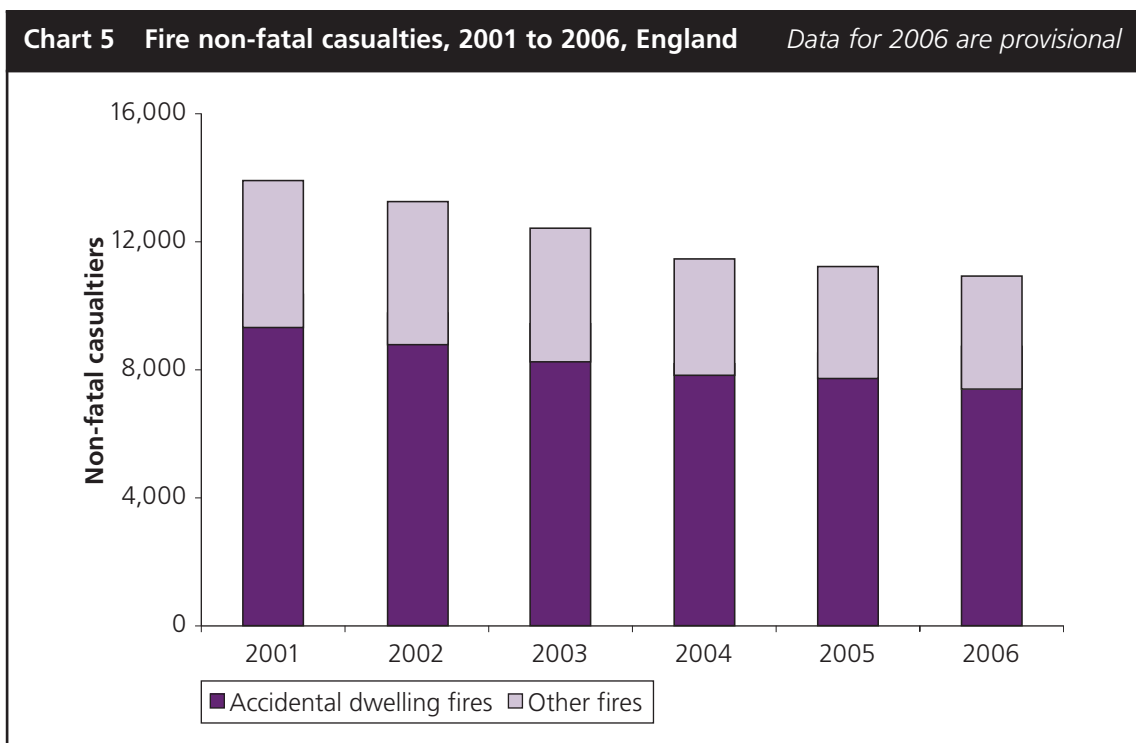
FIRE DEATHS (see Tables 2b & 4b and Chart 4)

24. **Provisional** figures (see note 6) for 2006 show a 4% rise in the total number of fire deaths in England, up to 405 fatalities from 388 in 2005, largely because of an increase in deaths attributed to road vehicle fires (see cautionary note below).
25. Within the total number of deaths, 286 occurred in dwelling fires in 2006. There were 289 dwelling fire fatalities recorded in 2005.
26. *Deaths in accidental dwelling fires.* In 2006, there were 228 such deaths recorded; there were 232 comparable deaths in 2005.
27. The figures for fire deaths should be treated with caution, as the data for 2006 are still provisional. This is particularly the case for road vehicle fires – see note 6 for further explanation.



FIRE NON-FATAL CASUALTIES (see Tables 2b & 4c and Chart 5)

- 28. In 2006, the number of non-fatal casualties in fires in England fell by 3% to 10,900 from 11,300 in the previous year. 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.
- 29. There were 8,800 non-fatal casualties in dwelling fires, a fall of 4% from 9,200 in 2005. Non-fatal casualties in *accidental* dwelling fires fell by 4% to 7,400 incidents.



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 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.
7. **The figures for 2006 should not be quoted without first consulting the Fire Statistics & Research Branch.**

REVISIONS

8. Since publication of 'Fire Statistics United Kingdom 2004' in February 2006, further validation of the 2004 data from the FDR3 form has been undertaken. This Monitor contains some revised figures for secondary fires, chimney fires and false alarms, which will therefore differ from those previously published.
9. Further information on fire statistics can be obtained from:

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