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FIRE DEATHS IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1970

by

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August 1970

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SUMMARY

A preliminary survey shows that at least 98 persons died in fires in England and Wales in the second quarter in 1970. The corresponding figures for Scotland and Northern Ireland were 34 and two respectively. The figure for England and Wales shows a decrease of about 25 per cent compared with the corresponding quarter in 1969. However the Scottish figure has doubled.

The worst fire in the quarter occurred when oil on the surface of the Manchester ship canal became ignited, involved craft on the canal and resulted in five deaths.

KEY WORDS: Fatalities, fire statistics

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MINISTRY OF TECHNOLOGY AND FIRE OFFICES' COMMITTEE
JOINT FIRE RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

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INTRODUCTION

This report is the tenth in a series of reports giving preliminary information on deaths in fires attended by fire brigades. The information is based on reports of fires in the second quarter of 1970 received by 31 July 1970 and is subject to revision.

During the quarter 98 persons died in 84 fires in England and Wales. There were 34 deaths in 30 fires in Scotland and two in one fire in Northern Ireland. The figures for England and Wales compare favourably with the 1969 figure of 135 deaths in the corresponding quarter; but the Scottish figure was more than twice that for the second quarter of 1968.

The two worst fires in the quarter were both in outdoor hazards. Five deaths occurred in an incident when oil on the surface of the Manchester ship canal ignited and spread to a boat. Two people were killed in a fire following an air crash and a third person died in a house that was severely damaged in this incident.

Tables 1-4 give details of hazards, times of call, sources of ignition and ages of buildings. Details of age and sex are given in Table 5A; causes of death are shown in Table 5B. Table 6 gives the numbers of fatal and non-fatal casualties in each brigade area.

Table 1A. Hazard in which fire started (England and Wales)

Hazard in which fire started	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	84	9	98	23
IN BUILDINGS Total	75	6	82	13
Industry	2	-	2	-
Distributive trades	1	1	2	2
Financial, professional services, etc.	2	-	2	-
Medical services	2	-	2	-
Clubs, hotels, etc.	1	-	1	-
Houses - detached or semi-det.	11	-	11	1
- terraced	19	1	20	2
- not stated	17	1	18	2
Flats - in blocks	5	-	5	-
- converted	7	2	10	5
- other or not stated	2	-	2	-
Private sheds, garages, etc.	2	-	2	-
Other	4	1	5	2
NOT IN BUILDINGS Total	9	3	16	10
Road vehicles	4	1	5	2
Other transport	2	2	8	8
Caravans	1	-	1	-
Other	2	-	2	-

Table 1B. Hazard in which fire started (Scotland)

Hazard in which fire started	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	30	3	34	7
IN BUILDINGS Total	29	3	33	7
Industry	2	-	2	-
House - detached or semi-det.	3	-	3	-
- not stated	7	1	9	3
Flates - in block or tenement	13	2	15	4
- converted	2	-	2	-
- other or not stated	2	-	2	-
NOT IN BUILDINGS Total	1	-	1	-
Road vehicles	1	-	1	-

Table 1C. Hazard in which fire started (Northern Ireland)

There was one fire in a house in Northern Ireland, resulting in two deaths.

Table 2A. Time of call to fires (England and Wales)

Time of call to fires	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	84	9	98	23
Midnight - 02.59	10	-	10	-
03.00 - 05.59	8	-	8	-
06.00 - 08.59	18	2	23	7
09.00 - 11.59	6	2	9	5
12.00 - 14.59	6	-	6	-
15.00 - 17.59	12	2	14	4
18.00 - 20.59	5	-	5	-
21.00 - 23.59	9	3	13	7
Late call	10	-	10	-

Table 2B. Time of call to fires (Scotland)

Time of call to fires	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	30	3	34	7
Midnight - 02.59	4	-	4	-
03.00 - 05.59	5	-	5	-
06.00 - 08.59	3	1	4	2
09.00 - 11.59	2	-	2	-
12.00 - 14.59	2	-	2	-
15.00 - 17.59	6	-	6	-
18.00 - 20.59	2	1	4	3
21.00 - 23.59	4	1	5	2
Late call	2	-	2	-

Table 2C. Time of call to fires (Northern Ireland)

The brigade was called to one fire in Northern Ireland at 18.34. This fire resulted in two deaths.

Table 3A. Source of ignition of fires (England and Wales)

Source of ignition of fire	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	84	9	98	23
Children with fire	4	2	6	4
Crash or collision	4	2	7	5
Malicious ignition	1	-	1	-
Matches, tapers, etc.	3	-	3	-
Smoking materials	10	1	11	2
Electric - space heating	9	-	9	-
- wire and cable	1	-	1	-
- blanket	1	-	1	-
- other	1	-	1	-
Gas - cooking	1	-	1	-
- other	1	1	2	2
Solid fuel - fire in grate	2	-	2	-
- other	1	-	1	-
Oil - space heating	4	-	4	-
- other	1	-	1	-
Other	2	-	2	-
Unknown*	38	3	45	10

*Includes fires recorded as 'unknown, pending inquest'

Table 3B. Source of ignition of fires (Scotland)

Source of ignition of fire	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	30	3	34	7
Children with fire	1	-	1	-
Crash or collision	1	-	1	-
Malicious ignition	1	-	1	-
Matches, tapers, etc.	2	-	2	-
Smoking materials	5	-	5	-
Electric - wire and cable	3	-	3	-
Gas - cooking	1	-	1	-
- other	1	1	2	2
Solid fuel - fire in grate	2	1	3	2
Other	1	-	1	-
Unknown*	12	1	14	3

*Includes fires recorded as 'unknown, pending inquest'

Table 3C. Source of ignition of fires (Northern Ireland)

The one fatal fire in Northern Ireland has been recorded as being of unknown source of ignition.

Table 4A. Date of construction of buildings (where applicable)
(England and Wales)

Date of construction	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	84	9	98	23
Pre- 1900	17	1	18	2
1900 - 1909	22	3	26	7
1910 - 1919	3	-	3	-
1920 - 1929	5	-	5	-
1930 - 1939	8	-	8	-
1940 - 1949	5	-	5	-
1950 - 1959	9	1	10	2
1960 onwards	4	-	4	-
Unknown, not stated	2	1	3	2
Not applicable (outdoor hazard)	9	3	16	10

Table 4B. Date of construction of buildings (where applicable)
(Scotland)

Date of construction	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	30	3	34	7
Pre- 1900	9	1	10	2
1900 - 1909	7	-	7	-
1930 - 1939	5	2	8	5
1940 - 1949	2	-	2	-
1960 onwards	4	-	4	-
Unknown, not stated	2	-	2	-
Not applicable (outdoor hazard)	1	-	1	-

Table 4C. Date of construction of buildings (Northern Ireland)

One fire occurred in a building built in 1870.

Table 5A. Sex and age of fatal casualties

Age (years)	England and Wales		Scotland		Northern Ireland	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
TOTAL	51	47	22	12	-	2
Under 1	-	4	-	-	-	-
1 - 4	4	2	4	1	-	2
5 - 14	1	3	-	-	-	-
15 - 44	16	8	8	1	-	-
45 - 64	13	8	3	4	-	-
65 - 74	8	7	5	1	-	-
75 and over	8	15	2	5	-	-
Not stated	1	-	-	-	-	-

Table 5B. Cause of death

Cause of death	England and Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
TOTAL	98	34	2
Burns	28	7	-
Asphyxiation	35	20	-
Other	3	-	-
Unknown or 'pending inquest'	32	7	2

Table 6. Numbers of casualties in each brigade area

	No. of casualties	
	Fatal	Non-fatal
United Kingdom	134	908
England and Wales	98	822
Scotland	34	72
Northern Ireland	2	14

(A) English and Welsh County Borough Fire Brigades

Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal	Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal
Bath	1	3	Manchester	--	15
Birkenhead	2	6	Newcastle upon Tyne and Gateshead	1	11
Birmingham	--	50	Newport (Mon.)	--	4
Blackpool	1	7	Northampton	--	1
Bolton	1	10	Norwich	--	5
Bootle	--	1	Nottingham	--	13
Bournemouth	--	1	Oldham	--	2
Bradford	2	3	Oxford	1	5
Brighton	--	3	Preston	1	4
Bristol	2	6	Rochdale	--	4
Burnley	--	1	Rotherham	--	2
Burton upon Trent	3	4	Salford	--	7
Bury	--	1	Sheffield	1	4
Cardiff	1	2	Solihull	--	1
Carlisle	--	1	Southampton	--	4
Chester	--	1	Southport	--	1
Coventry	--	7	South Shields	--	5
Darlington	--	1	Stoke-on-Trent	--	8
Derby	--	3	Sunderland	--	1
Dewsbury	1	8	Swansea	1	3
Dudley	--	5	Tynemouth	--	1
Eastbourne	--	1	Wakefield	--	1
Exeter	--	1	Wallasey	1	3
Great Yarmouth	--	1	Walsall	--	6
Halifax	--	5	Hartlepool	--	2
Hastings	--	3	Wolverhampton	6	15
Huddersfield	--	4	York	--	1
Kingston upon Hull	--	6	Warley	--	6
Leeds	--	12	West Bromwich	1	4
Leicester	1	6	Teesside	--	7
Liverpool	1	8			
Luton	--	1			

(B) English and Welsh County Fire Brigades

Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal	Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal
Bedfordshire	1	6	Lancashire	7	25
Brecon/Radnorshire	1	-	Leicestershire/Rutland	-	6
Buckinghamshire	2	5	Lincolnshire(Lindsey)	2	1
Caernarvonshire	-	5	London (Greater)	25	270
Cambridge and Ely	2	3	Merioneth	-	2
Cardigan/Carmarthen	-	4	Norfolk	1	10
Cheshire	2	8	Northamptonshire	-	9
Cornwall	1	6	Northumberland	3	5
Cumberland	-	4	Nottinghamshire	2	4
Denbigh/Montgomery	1	1	Oxfordshire	1	1
Derbyshire	-	2	Shropshire	1	1
Devon and Torbay	-	13	Somerset	-	12
Durham (Co.)	-	4	Staffordshire	2	12
Essex	2	17	Suffolk and Ipswich	1	5
Flintshire	2	3	Surrey	-	1
Glamorgan	2	6	Sussex, East	-	5
Gloucestershire	-	7	Sussex, West	-	7
Hampshire	3	5	Warwickshire	1	11
Herefordshire	-	2	Wight, Isle of	-	1
Hertfordshire	-	1	Wiltshire	1	1
Huntingdon/Peterborough	-	2	Yorkshire (E.Riding)	-	3
Kent (incl.Canterbury)	2	10	Yorkshire (N.Riding)	1	3

(C) Scottish Fire Brigades

Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal	Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal
Glasgow	8	39	South Eastern	6	8
Lanark	2	6	Fife	1	1
Central	1	3	Angus	1	2
Western	6	6	North Eastern	1	2
South Western	7	4	Northern	1	1

(D) Northern Irish Fire Brigades

Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal
South	-	1
West	2	1
Belfast	-	12