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FIRE DEATHS IN THE THIRD QUARTER OF 1970

by

S. E. CHANDLER

November 1970

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F.R. Note No. 849.
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SUMMARY

A preliminary survey shows that 88 persons died in fires in the third quarter of 1970. Of those, 79 were in England and Wales, 8 in Scotland and one in Northern Ireland.

The worst incidents in this quarter were a road traffic accident in Birkenhead (7 deaths) and a multiple occupancy house in Wembley (6 deaths).

KEY WORDS: Fatalities, fire statistics.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY AND FIRE OFFICES' COMMITTEE
JOINT FIRE RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

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Introduction

This report gives preliminary information on deaths in fires attended by fire brigades. It is based on reports of fires during the third quarter of 1970 which were received by 2nd November 1970 and is subject to revision.

The worst fatality fires in this quarter were in a multi-occupancy house at Wembley (London) in which a woman and five children died in a room that was locked from the inside, and a road accident at Birkenhead involving a dormobile and a car and in which seven people sustained fatal burns.

Tables 1 - 5 give further details of hazards, times of calls, sources of ignitions, ages of buildings, age and sex and causes of death. Table 6 gives the numbers of fatal and non-fatal casualties in each brigade area. A total of eighty-eight deaths were reported in this quarter (79 in England and Wales, 8 in Scotland and one in Northern Ireland) - about the same number as in the corresponding quarter in 1969.

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	56	12	79	35
IN BUILDINGS Total	41	9	56	24
Industry	2	1	3	2
Clubs, hotels, restaurants and public houses	3	-	3	-
Houses - detached or semi-detached	3	1	4	2
- terraced	11	3	16	8
- not stated	9	1	10	2
Flats - in blocks	3	-	3	-
- converted	6	2	12	8
Non-institutional dwellings as part of other occupancies	1	-	1	-
Other	3	1	4	2
NOT IN BUILDINGS Total	15	3	23	11
Road vehicles	7	3	15	11
Other means of transport	1	-	1	-
Caravans	3	-	3	-
Other	4	-	4	-

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
IN BUILDINGS Total	7	1	8	2
Industry	1	-	1	-
Houses - not stated	3	-	3	-
Flats - in blocks	2	-	2	-
- other or not stated	1	1	2	2

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

There was one death in a private house in Northern Ireland.

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	56	12	79	35
Midnight - 02.59	9	-	9	-
03.00 - 05.59	9	2	11	4
06.00 - 08.59	6	2	9	5
09.00 - 11.59	10	3	19	12
12.00 - 14.59	6	1	7	2
15.00 - 17.59	5	2	11	8
18.00 - 20.59	4	2	6	4
21.00 - 23.59	3	-	3	-
Late call	4	-	4	-

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	7	1	8	2
Midnight - 02.59	1	-	1	-
03.00 - 05.59	2	-	2	-
06.00 - 08.59	2	1	3	2
09.00 - 11.59	1	-	1	-
15.00 - 17.59	1	-	1	-

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

There was one fatal fire in Northern Ireland to which the brigade was called at 21.59.

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	56	12	79	35
Children with fire	1	-	1	-
Crash or collision	7	3	15	11
Malicious ignition, suicide	3	1	4	2
Matches, tapers, etc	4	-	4	-
Smoking materials	13	3	17	7
Electric - space heating	1	-	1	-
- other	2	-	2	-
Solid fuel - fire in grate	-	-	-	-
- other	1	-	1	-
Other	4	-	4	-
Unknown*	20	5	30	15

*Includes fires reported 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	7	1	8	2
Smoking materials	2	-	2	-
Electric - space heating	1	-	1	-
- other	1	-	1	-
Solid fuel - fire in grate	1	-	1	-
Unknown*	2	1	3	2

*Includes fires reported as "Unknown, pending inquest"

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

The cause of the one fatal fire in Northern Ireland was recorded as "doubtful".

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

Date of constructiom	No. of fatal fires	No. of multiple death fires	No. of deaths	No. of deaths in multiple death fires
TOTAL	56	12	79	35
Pre - 1900	10	2	12	4
1900 - 1909	11	4	21	14
1910 - 1919	2	-	2	-
1920 - 1929	1	1	2	2
1930 - 1939	4	-	4	-
1940 - 1949	1	-	1	-
1950 - 1959	6	1	7	2
1960 onwards	5	1	6	2
Not stated	1	-	1	-
Not applicable (outdoor hazard)	15	3	23	11

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	7	1	8	2
Pre - 1900	1	-	1	-
1920 - 1929	1	-	1	-
1930 - 1939	3	-	3	-
1950 - 1959	1	1	2	2
1960 onwards	1	-	1	-

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

The one fatal casualty in Northern Ireland occurred in a house built in 1890.

Table 5A Sex and age of fatal casualties

Age (years)	England and Wales		Scotland		Northern Ireland	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
TOTAL	43	36	5	3	1	-
Under 1	-	1	-	-	-	-
1 - 4	3	9	1	-	-	-
5 - 14	6	3	1	-	-	-
15 - 44	16	10	1	-	-	-
45 - 64	11	4	1	-	1	-
65 - 74	4	2	-	1	-	-
75 and over	3	7	1	2	-	-

Table 5B : Cause of death

Cause of death	England and Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
TOTAL	79	8	1
Burns	20	2	-
Asphyxiation	29	3	-
Unknown	30	3	1

Table 6 Numbers of casualties in each brigade area

	Fatal	Non-fatal
UNITED KINGDOM	88	640
England & Wales	79	536
Scotland	8	98
Northern Ireland	1	6

(A) English and Welsh County Borough Fire Brigades

Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal	Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal
Barnsley	-	2	Oldham	-	3
Bath	-	2	Plymouth	-	3
Birkenhead	8	-	Portsmouth	-	1
Birmingham	4	34	Preston	1	2
Blackpool	-	4	Rotherham	1	2
Bolton	1	2	St. Helens	-	1
Bootle	-	5	Salford	-	3
Bournemouth	-	2	Sheffield	-	5
Bradford	4	1	Solihull	-	2
Bristol	-	5	Southampton	-	1
Burnley	1	2	Southport	-	1
Burton upon Trent	-	1	South Shields	-	2
Chester	-	1	Stockport	-	9
Coventry	-	13	Stoke-on-Trent	2	5
Derby	-	4	Sunderland	-	1
Dudley	1	2	Wallasey	-	3
Exeter	-	4	Warrington	-	2
Halifax	-	4	Wigan	-	2
Hastings	-	1	Wolverhampton	-	2
Kingston upon Hull	-	11	York	-	1
Leeds	1	11	Warley	2	4
Liverpool	-	8	West Bromwich	-	2
Luton	-	8	Tees-side	1	4
Manchester	3	4			
Merthyr Tydfil	-	2			
Newcastle/Gateshead	-	5			
Newport (Mon.)	-	3			
Norwich	-	1			
Nottingham	-	6			

(B) English and Welsh County Fire Brigades

Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal	Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal
Bedfordshire	–	6	Merioneth	1	–
Berkshire and Reading	–	5	Norfolk	1	13
Brecon/Radnorshire	–	3	Northumberland	–	13
Buckinghanshire	–	1	Nottinghamshire	–	5
Caernarvonshire	–	1	Somerset	1	–
Cambridge/Ely	–	1	Staffordshire	1	6
Cheshire	4	3	Suffolk and Ipswich	1	6
Cornwall	1	5	Surrey	–	1
Cumberland	–	2	Sussex, East	–	4
Derbyshire	1	3	Sussex, West	–	5
Devon and Torbay	3	1	Warwickshire	1	6
Durham (Co.)	2	–	Wight, Isle of	–	5
Essex	1	9	Wiltshire	1	2
Gloucestershire	–	2	Worcester City/County	1	–
Hertfordshire	–	1	Yorkshire (East Riding)	–	2
Huntingdon/ Peterborough	–	9	Yorkshire (North Riding)	1	2
Kent	2	11	Yorkshire (West Riding)	2	15
Lancashire	1	–			
Lincolnshire (Kesteven)	–	1			
Lincolnshire (Lindsey)	1	6			
London (Greater)	22	172			

(C) Scottish Fire Brigades

Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal
Glasgow	2	40
Lanarkshire	-	7
Central	1	6
Western	3	16
South Western	1	2
South Eastern	-	10
Fife	1	6
Angus	-	3
North Eastern	-	2
Northern	-	6

(D) Northern Irish Fire Brigades

Brigade	Fatal	Non-fatal
North	1	-
Belfast	-	6