



Mountain Rescue Council

Charity No. 222596

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Mountain Rescue Council  
England & Wales

**Incident Report 1999**

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(revised 16/10/2001)

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## Mountain Rescue Council – England and Wales

### Incident Report 1999

This year's mountain incident and accidents in England and Wales are summarised as follows:-

Year	Incidents	Fatalities	Injured	Persons assisted
1999	635	37	390	835
1998	628	26	444	810
1997	695	19	512	925
1996	697	27	538	1059
1995	656	52	474	900
1994	634	39	486	929

During the year 1999, concern was expressed by a region about the number of head injuries sustained while climbing without a helmet. The evidence is very clear; the chance of receiving significant head injuries is three time greater when not wearing a helmet than when wearing one. Helmets do not eliminate head injury, but they do reduce their significance.

Amongst the other causes for concern are the increase in incident were persons are cragfast from 11 in 1998 to 31 in 1999; this may well be indicative of poor judgement as a result of lack of experience. Fatal heart attacks whilst fell walking have risen from 9 in 1998 to 17 in 1999, the highest for 5 years; awareness of the physical nature of the activity and strains placed on the unfit person are clear to see.

There has been a massive increase in use of mobile phone to alert the emergency services, from 94 in 1998 to 157 in 1999. This trend will continue to increase; whilst it is good news for the casualty of a genuine accident, it has become the bane in the life of team leaders called to assist people confronted with a minor difficulty – often so trivial as to be farcical.

This year's non-mountain incidents are summarised as follows:

Year	Incidents	Fatalities	Injured <sup>1</sup>	Persons assisted
1999	277	29	87	260
1998	250	44	71	240
1997	185	26	49	163
1996	213	21		411
1995	144	18		147
1994	106	23		116

1. comparable figures before 1997 are not available

Whilst most regions saw a decrease in the number of non-mountain searches, the large urban area in Mid Pennine reported an increase from 46 in 1998 to 82 in 1999. These days, mountain rescue team form a valued and disciplined resource for the police; they are called in at a very early stage in operations for missing persons and provide an important management function.

I do not know if this is a record, but one day in 1999, one team responded to six different accident sites; it started at 12:30 and continued until 19:30. It included a 150 ft fall off a ridge, someone separated from the main party, someone collapsed on Helvellyn, a crashed parapenter on Skiddaw, a fell walker unable to continue his walk and another parapenter who fell 25 ft when his take off failed. I dread to think of the impact of this Saturday on the families of those members involved.

*Ged Feeney.*

Ged Feeney  
MRC Statistics Collator

## Mountain Incident Report

This report covers the period from: 01/01/1999 to 31/12/1999.

The report confines itself to those leisure activities that are mountain or wilderness-related to which Mountain Rescue Teams were summoned. It lists the number of incidents and the number of persons assisted, regardless of degree of injury. The percentages are rounded to 1 dec. place. Please note that the percentage totals do not sum to 100% because of round up error in the rows.

'Fellwalking' is a general category covering all instances of walking, away from easy road or track access. The categories of 'summer' and 'winter' refer to the prevailing conditions reported at the time of the incident; it does not refer to a calendar period.

Activity		Lake District	Mid Pennine	N.E. England	North Wales	Peak District	South Wales	S.W. England	Yorks Dales	Total	%
Abseiling	Incidents	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	6	0.9
	Subjects	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	4	0.5
Fellrunning	Incidents	5	5	2	0	2	0	0	2	16	2.5
	Subjects	7	7	4	0	2	0	0	2	22	2.6
Fellwalking - Summer	Incidents	217	19	10	70	34	10	14	24	398	62.6
	Subjects	304	20	15	87	41	13	26	28	534	63.9
Fellwalking - Summer (DoE)	Incidents	8	0	1	2	3	0	1	0	15	2.4
	Subjects	18	0	1	4	4	0	5	0	32	3.8
Fellwalking - Winter	Incidents	15	0	1	6	4	1	0	1	28	4.4
	Subjects	16	0	1	10	5	3	0	1	36	4.3
Fellwalking - Winter (DoE)	Incidents	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0.3
	Subjects	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	15	1.8
Hang Gliding	Incidents	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	0.5
	Subjects	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0.2
Mountain Biking	Incidents	6	5	5	0	5	0	1	2	24	3.8
	Subjects	12	5	5	0	4	0	1	3	30	3.6
Orienteering	Incidents	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.6
	Subjects	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.5
Parapenting	Incidents	4	1	0	2	2	0	0	1	10	1.6
	Subjects	6	1	0	2	2	0	0	1	12	1.4
Rescue Team Exercise	Incidents	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0.3
	Subjects	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0.2
Rock Climbing	Incidents	5	0	0	15	17	0	3	3	43	6.8
	Subjects	5	0	0	20	20	0	6	3	54	6.5
Rock Scrambling	Incidents	8	0	0	18	4	0	0	2	32	5.0
	Subjects	9	0	0	33	6	0	0	3	51	6.1
Searches *	Incidents	20	9	0	8	4	3	4	1	49	7.7
	Subjects	12	8	0	2	2	2	3	0	29	3.5
Snow/Ice Climbing	Incidents	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0.5
	Subjects	6	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	8	1.0
Totals	Incidents	296	41	19	125	76	15	23	40	635	99.9
	Subjects	400	43	26	176	87	19	41	43	835	99.9

\* This category includes those activities not covered by the rest, where the subjects had either strayed, become lost, or whose whereabouts were otherwise unknown.

## Mountain Casualty Report

This report covers the period from: 01/01/1999 to: 31/12/1999.

The report confines itself to those leisure activities that are mountain or wilderness-related to which Mountain Rescue Teams were summoned. It lists the number of persons assisted by condition of subjects. The percentages are rounded to 1 dec. place. Please note that the percentage totals do not sum to 100% because of round up error in the rows.

'Fellwalking' is a general category covering all instances of walking, away from easy road or track access. The categories of 'summer' and 'winter' refer to the prevailing conditions reported at the time of the incident; it does not refer to a calendar period.

Activity		Lake District	Mid Pennine	N.E. England	North Wales	Peak District	South Wales	S.W. England	Yorks Dales	Total	Perce
Abseiling	Uninjured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Injured	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	4	0.5
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Fellrunning	Uninjured	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.5
	Injured	3	7	4	0	2	0	0	2	18	2.2
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Fellwalking - Summer	Uninjured	167	1	4	44	13	8	22	14	273	32.7
	Injured	124	18	10	39	24	5	3	14	237	28.3
	Fatal	13	1	1	4	4	0	1	0	24	2.9
Fellwalking - Summer (DoE)	Uninjured	12	0	0	4	0	0	5	0	21	2.5
	Injured	6	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	11	1.3
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Fellwalking - Winter	Uninjured	5	0	0	8	0	3	0	0	16	1.9
	Injured	10	0	0	2	5	0	0	1	18	2.2
	Fatal	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.2
Fellwalking - Winter (DoE)	Uninjured	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0	15	1.8
	Injured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Hang Gliding	Uninjured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Injured	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0.2
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Mountain Biking	Uninjured	10	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	11	1.3
	Injured	2	5	5	0	3	0	0	2	17	2.0
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0.2
Orienteering	Uninjured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Injured	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.5
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Parapenting	Uninjured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Injured	6	1	0	2	2	0	0	1	12	1.4
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Rescue Team Exercise	Uninjured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Injured	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0.2
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Rock Climbing	Uninjured	0	0	0	9	5	0	6	0	20	2.4
	Injured	5	0	0	10	14	0	0	3	32	3.8
	Fatal	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0.2
Rock Scrambling	Uninjured	2	0	0	21	2	0	0	0	25	3.0
	Injured	5	0	0	11	4	0	0	3	23	2.8
	Fatal	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0.4
Searches *	Uninjured	11	6	0	2	1	2	0	0	22	2.6
	Injured	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	0.5
	Fatal	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	0.4
Snow/Ice Climbing	Uninjured	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
	Injured	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	6	0.7
	Fatal	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Totals	Uninjured	212	7	4	103	21	13	34	14	408	48.8
	Injured	171	35	20	66	59	6	5	28	390	46.6
	Fatal	17	1	2	7	7	0	2	1	37	4.4

\* This category includes those activities not covered by the rest, where the subjects had either strayed, become lost, or whose whereabouts were otherwise unknown.

## Non-Mountain Incident Report

This report covers the period from: 01/01/1999 to: 31/12/1999.

This report restricts itself to those incidents not directly related to mountain or wilderness related activities. It lists the number of incidents and the number of persons assisted, regardless of degree of injury. The percentages are rounded to 1 dec. place. Please note that the totals do not sum to 100% because of round up error in the rows.

The search category covers mainly urban, coastline or lowland areas with good road access. Local incidents reflect assistance given to local communities during severe weather etc.

Action/Activity		Lake District	Mid Pennine	N.E. England	North Wales	Peak District	South Wales	S.W. England	Yorks Dales	Total	Perce
Aircrash - Civil	Incidents	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	3	1.1
	Subjects	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	0	5	1.9
Cave/Mine Exploration	Incidents	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.4
	Subjects	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.4
Horse / Pony Trekking	Incidents	1	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	7	2.5
	Subjects	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	6	2.3
Local Incident	Incidents	8	23	5	1	1	3	3	0	44	15.9
	Subjects	8	16	5	1	0	1	2	0	33	12.7
Non-Mountain Search	Incidents	2	82	25	28	32	17	22	0	208	75.1
	Subjects	1	84	24	24	31	14	21	0	199	76.5
Road Traffic Accident	Incidents	1	8	0	0	0	1	0	0	10	3.6
	Subjects	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	3.1
Sledging	Incidents	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.4
	Subjects	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.4
Water Sport	Incidents	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	1.1
	Subjects	5	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	7	2.7
Totals	Incidents	14	118	31	30	34	24	26	0	277	100.1
	Subjects	16	112	30	26	32	20	24	0	260	100.0

## Non-Mountain Casualty Report

This report covers the period from: 01/01/1999 to: 31/12/1999.

This report restricts itself to those incidents not directly related to mountain or wilderness related activities. It lists the number of persons assisted by Condition of subjects. The percentages are rounded to 1 dec. place. Please note that the totals do not sum to 100% because of round up error in the rows.

The search category covers mainly urban, coastline or lowland areas with good road access. Local incidents reflect assistance given to local communities during severe weather etc.

Action / Activity		Lake District	Mid Pennine	N.E. England	North Wales	Peak District	South Wales	S.W. England	Yorks Dales	Total	Perce
Aircrash - Civil	Uninjured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Injured	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.4
	Fatal	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	4	1.5
Cave/Mine Exploration	Uninjured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Injured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.4
Horse / Pony Trekking	Uninjured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Injured	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	6	2.3
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Local Incident	Uninjured	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	2.7
	Injured	4	12	3	0	0	0	2	0	21	8.1
	Fatal	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	5	1.9
Non-Mountain Search	Uninjured	1	63	16	15	14	10	13	0	132	50.8
	Injured	0	17	5	8	13	2	3	0	48	18.5
	Fatal	0	4	3	1	4	2	5	0	19	7.3
Road Traffic Accident	Uninjured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Injured	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	3.1
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Sledging	Uninjured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Injured	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.4
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Water Sport	Uninjured	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1.9
	Injured	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0.8
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Totals	Uninjured	10	66	16	15	14	10	13	0	144	55.4
	Injured	6	41	9	8	14	3	6	0	87	33.6
	Fatal	0	5	5	3	4	7	5	0	29	11.1

## Main Causes of Mountain Incidents

This report covers the period from: 01/01/1999 to 31/12/1999, during which 634 incidents were reported.

This report summarises the main causes of Mountain Accidents. It is based on a search of key words used in incident reports. All causes have not been listed, so the column totals may not agree with the total number of incidents. A typical report will illustrate another problem with totals:-

*"... tripped on footpath whilst walking and fell 2 metres onto rocky ground."*

This will result in contributions to the 'Slip, Trip or Stumble' and the 'Fall or Tumble' categories.

Cause	Col. 1 Fellwalking (summer)	Col. 2 Fellwalking (winter)	Col. 3 Rock Climbing	Col. 4 Snow / Ice Climbing	Col. 5 Other Activities	Col. 6 Total	Col. 7 Percentage
Avalanche	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.2
Belay / Runner Failure	1	0	13	0	0	14	2.2
Benighted	9	1	4	0	0	14	2.2
Cragfast	20	2	10	0	0	32	5.0
Fall or Tumble	79	3	50	3	16	151	23.8
Lightening	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Lost	63	4	4	0	2	73	11.5
Medical Collapse or Illness	50	2	0	0	1	53	8.4
Overdue or Missing	64	2	1	0	19	86	13.6
Rockfall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Shouts/Lights/Flares Reported	5	1	0	0	18	24	3.8
Slip, Trip or Stumble	146	12	18	0	2	178	28.1
Unable to Continue	36	3	1	0	4	44	6.9

Notes:

Col. 1 This category also includes Fellrunning and Orienteering incidents

Col. 2 This category is based on the prevailing weather and ground conditions at the time, not on a calendar period. It includes those incidents involving D of E expeditions conducted in wintry conditions.

Col. 3 This includes incidents of Rock Scrambling and Abseiling.

Col. 5 This groups all the remaining mountain activities of Mountain Biking, Hanggliding, Parapenting, Ski-ing and Mountain searches.

Col. 7 This is a percentage of all Mountain Incidents reported.

## Main Sites & Types of Injury

This report covers the period from: 01/01/1999 to 31/12/1999, during which 634 casualties were reported.

This report summarises the main types and sites of injuries dealt with by MR Teams. It is based on a search of key words used in incident reports.

Injury Type / Site	Col. 1 Fellwalking (summer)	Col. 2 Fellwalking (winter)	Col. 3 Rock Climbing	Col. 4 Snow / Ice Climbing	Col. 5 Other Activities	Col. 6 Non - Mountain	Col. 7 Total
Lower Leg & Foot	112	10	14	2	8	10	156
Upper Leg & Knee	38	1	8	0	2	8	57
Pelvis	8	1	5	0	1	2	17
Abdomen	2	1	1	0	0	1	5
Chest & Shoulder	16	1	13	1	3	8	42
Back & Neck	13	1	16	1	6	8	45
Arm & Hand	13	0	11	1	2	5	32
Head	29	3	22	1	4	7	66
Fractures	111	11	29	3	10	17	181
Lacerations Etc	28	1	13	2	8	9	61
Exhaustion	17	2	0	0	3	0	22
Hypothermia	7	3	0	0	1	14	25
Heart Attack (non-fatal)	10	0	0	0	0	1	11
Heart Attack (fatalities)	15	2	0	0	0	2	19
Illness	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Notes:  
 Col. 1 This category also includes Fellrunning and Orienteering incidents  
 Col. 2 The category of Fellwalking (winter) is based on the prevailing weather and ground conditions at the time, not on a calendar period.  
 Col. 3 This includes incidents of Rock Scrambling and Abseiling.  
 Col. 5 This groups all the remaining mountain activities of Mountain Biking, Hanggliding, Parapenting, Ski-ing and Mountain searches.  
 Col. 6 This groups all the non-mountain incidents as detailed on pages 4 & 5 of this report.

## Specialist Resources & Other Details

This report covers the period from: 01/01/1999 to 31/12/1999, during which time 955 incidents were reported.

This report summarises the specialist resources used during incidents dealt with by MR Teams. It is detailed on a regional basis, with explanations given as footnotes to each row. The percentage calculations (rounded to 1 dec. pl.) are based on the total number of incidents reported by MR Teams.

Category	Lake District	Mid Pennine	N.E. England	North Wales	Peak District	South Wales	S.W. England	Yorks Dales	Total	Perce
1 Incidents Attended by Helicopters	59	49	5	93	37	12	10	2	267	28.0
2 Helicopters Used for Evacuation	48	7	3	58	13	4	5	2	140	14.7
3 Helicopters Used for Searching	8	42	3	35	19	8	7	0	122	12.8
4 Helicopters Used for Deployment	11	0	0	7	2	0	0	0	20	2.1
5 Incidents Attended by SARDA Dogs	22	54	12	45	33	8	16	0	190	19.9
6 Search Dog Finds	2	0	2	2	1	0	1	0	8	0.8
7 Incidents Attended by a Doctor	109	12	17	3	57	5	4	0	207	21.7
8 Incidents Initiated by Mobile Phone	101	2	1	41	6	5	2	0	158	16.5
9 Animal Rescues	25	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	29	3.0

### Notes:

Row 1. The number of incidents where a helicopter (military, police or ambulance) was called to or attended the scene of an incident.

Row 2. The number of times the helicopter was used to evacuate the casualty(ies) from the scene of the incident.

Row 3. The number of occasions when the helicopter was employed to search for the missing subject(s).

Row 4. The number of times the helicopters were used to deploy personnel and/or equipment to remote locations.

Row 5. The number of incidents where MR Search Dogs was called to or attended an incident.

Row 6. The number of instances where the subject was located by a Search Dog and handler.

Row 7. The number of incidents where a doctor attended the scene of the incident - in most cases, these doctors were members of MR Teams.

Row 8. The number of incidents initiated by the person(s) requiring assistance using a mobile phone. In addition, the mobile phone may also have been used by this person during the course of the incident, especially in a search.

Row 9. The number of animal rescues where a Team has been requested by the police, local farmer or owner - these include cragfast sheep, dogs stuck on crags or down sink holes or larger animals unable to exit a deep gorge or stream bed.