

Mountain Rescue England & Wales

Patron – HRH The Duke of Cambridge



Mountain Rescue
(England and Wales)

Incident Report 2017

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Annual Incident Report - 2017

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Further copies of this report can be obtained from the Mountain Rescue (England and Wales) website –

<http://www.mountain.rescue.org.uk/media-centre/statistics>

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Summary

2396 callouts from 35 statutory agencies of which 2110 resulted in a Mountain Rescue deployment

1722 persons assisted

Total volunteer hours: 97,208 (Operational hours, not including training or administration)

Rescuer hours utilised as follows:

Rescuing: 62,026 hrs

Civil Incidents: 15,236 hrs

Searching: 19,946 hrs

There were **only 9 days** in 2017 *without* a mountain rescue callout in England and Wales.

Officer's Report

Comparing the headline numbers of incidents for 2017 against previous years it would suggest a 16% increase from 2016.

However, we must study the observations at regional (and to some degree team-level) to paint a clearer picture of the year.

The first point to mention is that a few teams have improved their reporting efforts and a more comprehensive account than was previously available for some teams (most notable in South Wales) can now be included in this national report. This brings the overall total up, and whilst this means that the number of incidents is a somewhat more reliable figure, it also implies that these increases are not – on the whole – due to an increase in demand for this period. Anecdotally however, this does appear to be the case but in real terms the increase is less than might be suggested when looking at the figures at face value.

In the Lake District we observe around a 20% increase, but this is possibly a “*reset*”, returning towards a reasonable trend following a quieter than usual year in 2016 which saw around a 20% drop from 2015.

Other regions present an incident volume that is largely the same as the previous few years.

Despite this latter observation seemingly warranting a “*business as usual*” type of statement about the endeavours of MRE&W teams in 2017, there are movements down at team level that illustrate the *extraordinary* as opposed to the *usual*.

For example, NEWSAR in North Wales and DFMRT in the Lake District nearly doubled their respective incident volumes from previous years. These particular teams indicate no specific reasons (E.g. Extended poor weather, large event, major incident, locality promotion etc) that might give rise to an increase in demand like this, but claim to have *just been generally busier*. Stories like this are lost when all the numbers are combined together at national level but are worth pointing out to remind us that a team member from a team like those mentioned above will have a different perspective on “*stats*” than might be represented elsewhere.

We can, as such, call attention to the effort that has gone in to a year's worth of search and rescue from individuals – volunteers – that make up the MRE&W teams by seeing that the total operational hours for the year is not far off a hundred thousand hours. Our total of 97'208 is the equivalent of over 50 people working full time hours for the year. Of course, search and rescue isn't *technically* a full time endeavour. However, 20% of the incidents in 2017 were over 4 hours in duration and 5% took over 8 hours to complete. For volunteers involved in such extended operations the “day job” likely plays second fiddle to this commitment to rescuing the lost, injured and vulnerable in the uplands of England and Wales.

Despite a few weather-related events and a tragic air crash – all of which required protracted operations from multiple teams over the course of many days – there were thankfully no larger extended major incidents in 2017 the likes of which we saw during storms of 2015 for example.

Thankfully we have seen a plateau in 2017 to end the upward trend of mountain biking incidents. (Although a reduction in such incidents would be a more welcome observation, of course.)

As usual, the summer holidays prove to be the busiest time for mountain rescue teams. The week of the late August bank holiday saw 80 incidents, and the week at the start of July saw 70. Whilst the warm weather and extended opportunities of public holidays and vacations typically provide the most demanding periods, the week surrounding of the 10th of December was the third busiest period in the year when MR teams in some regions supported local agencies during heavy snowfall by transporting medical staff to work and to patient visits. A similar demand of providing support to ambulance services in the early hours of new year's day gives rise to the higher than average spike in incident volume. These observations which influence the national perspective can be seen in the monthly overview chart on page 4 with higher than average spikes in January and December.

As in 2016 and before, we can see that a sizable proportion (nearly 40%) of incidents in the mountains occur where subjects are not injured. Subjects who are lost, stuck on steep ground, benighted or "*unable to continue*" all contribute to this category. As we continue to expect incident numbers to creep up, and we still hear of teams having "record years" (which is, of course, *not* a good thing) we should emphasize that this segment of the search and rescue remit should be the easiest to tackle if the burden on teams and their volunteers is to be reduced. Authorities, agencies and associates of MRE&W should strive to emphasise and improve the safety messages when mountain and upland activities are being promoted.

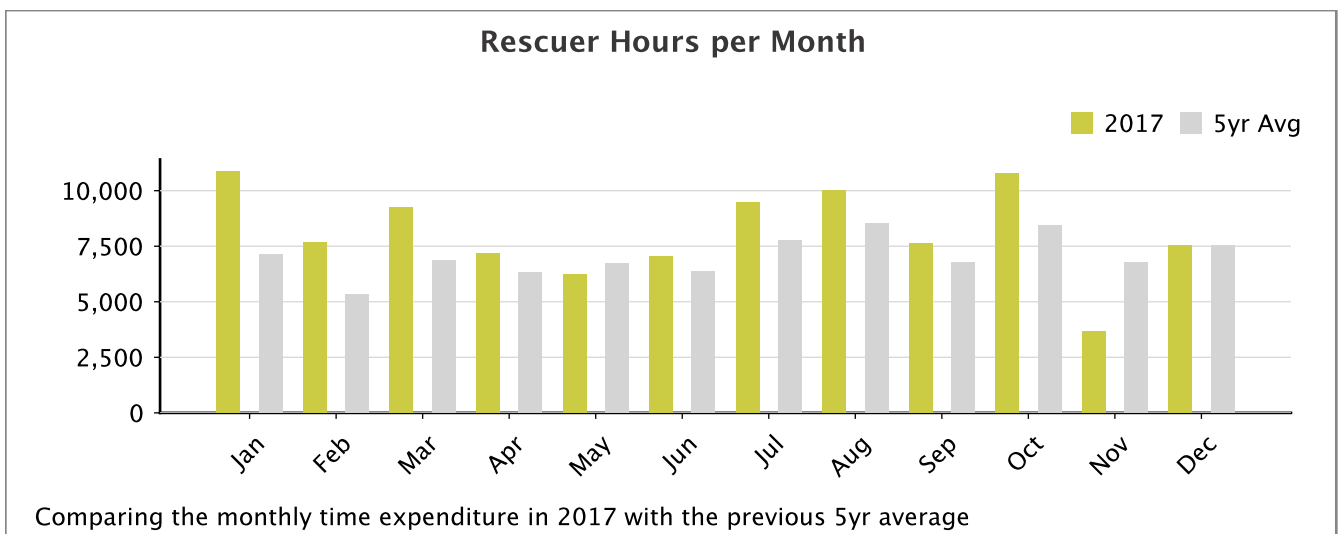
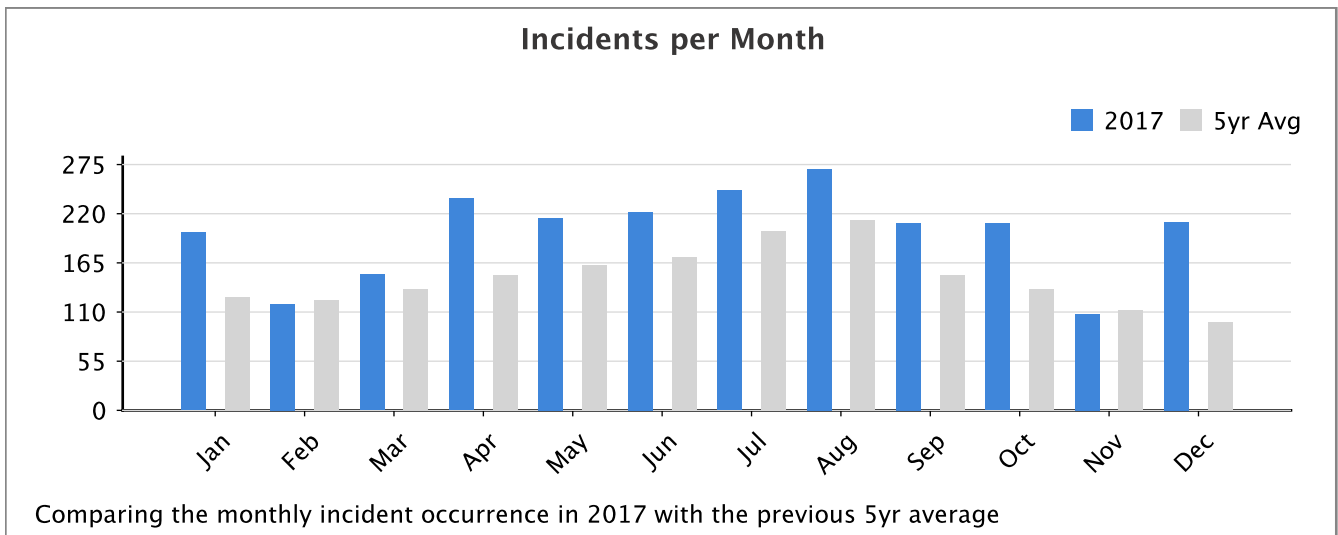
Rob Shepherd
Statistics Officer MR(E&W)
01/05/2017

Monthly Overview

The following charts show the activities of the Mountain Rescue teams in England and Wales for each month of the year. The quantity of calls for assistance (both attended deployments and investigation only) and the cumulative hours spent by Mountain Rescue Volunteers in response to these calls are shown.

The efforts for 2017 are shown alongside the averages from the 5 years previous.

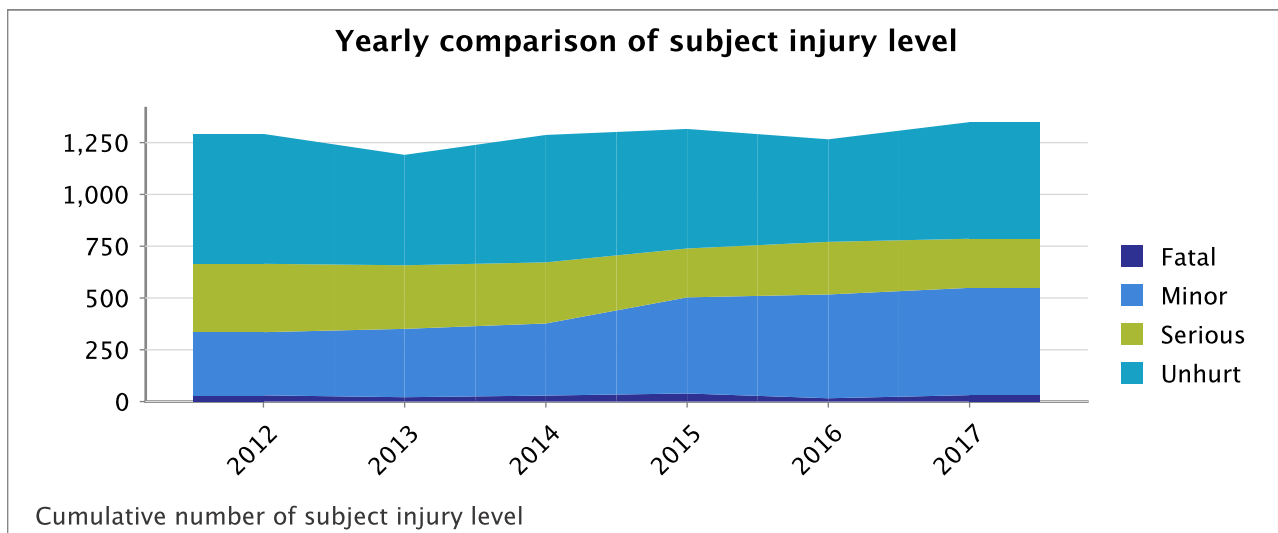
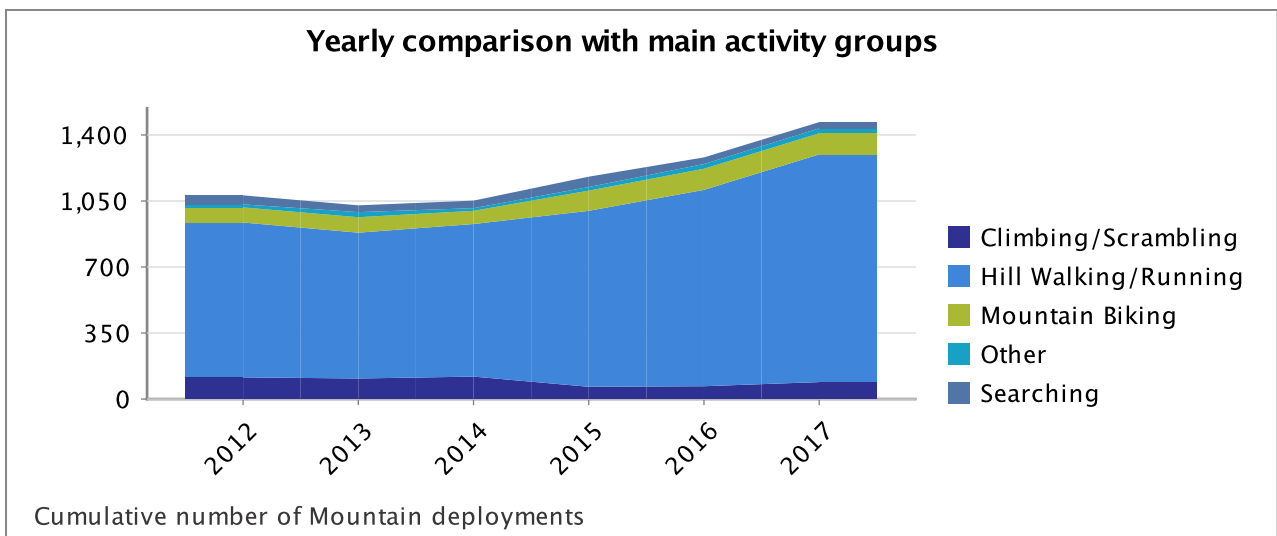
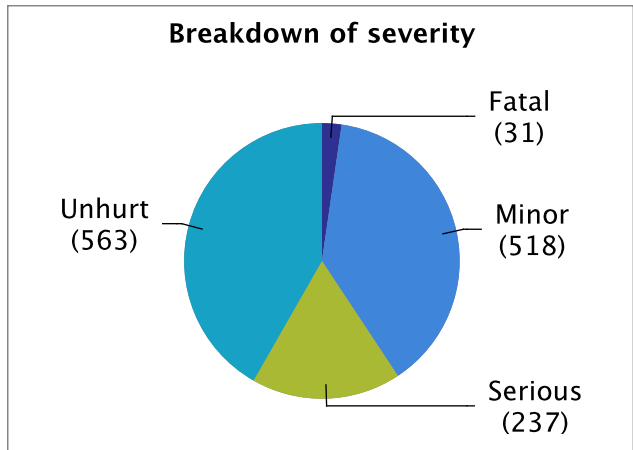
The winter demand can be seen as the values for January and December spike higher than the average over the previous 5 years.



Mountain Incidents

This section covers those activities that are mountain or wilderness-related to which Mountain Rescue teams were deployed.

Alerts	1631
Deployments	1468
Investigation/Standby	163
Total Hours	60075
Persons Assisted	1461
Fatal	31
Injured	773
Uninjured	657



Mountain Incidents

Occurrences and Subjects Assisted in Mountain Incidents

		Lake District	Mid Pennine	N Wales	NE England	Peak District	Peninsula	S Wales	SW England	Yorkshire Dales	Totals	
Abseiling	Incidents	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	1%
	Subjects	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	1%
Cave/Mine Exploration	Incidents	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1%
	Subjects	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1%
Fell Running	Incidents	13	2	3	3	4	2	1	0	6	34	3%
	Subjects	10	2	2	1	4	1	1	0	6	27	2%
Hang-gliding	Incidents	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	5	1%
	Subjects	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	4	1%
Hill Walking	Incidents	356	65	252	60	145	30	111	3	97	1119	77%
	Subjects	418	55	301	9	131	13	50	3	81	1061	78%
Hill Walking (D of E)	Incidents	7	0	6	1	5	4	3	0	1	27	2%
	Subjects	11	0	11	0	6	0	3	0	2	33	3%
Hill Walking (Winter)	Incidents	23	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	2%
	Subjects	36	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	39	3%
Hill Walking (Winter)DoE	Incidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1%
	Subjects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Mountain Biking	Incidents	15	24	9	13	23	1	14	0	13	112	8%
	Subjects	13	23	9	1	20	0	5	0	7	78	6%
Parapenting	Incidents	1	2	1	1	3	0	4	0	1	13	1%
	Subjects	0	1	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	6	1%
Rescue Team Activity	Incidents	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	4	1%
	Subjects	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1%
River Crossing	Incidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1%
	Subjects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Rock Climbing - roped	Incidents	7	3	8	2	18	0	1	1	4	44	3%
	Subjects	7	1	8	0	18	0	2	0	4	40	3%
Rock Climbing - unroped	Incidents	0	1	2	2	2	0	1	0	0	8	1%
	Subjects	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	5	1%
Rock Scrambling	Incidents	14	0	11	0	3	0	0	1	4	33	3%
	Subjects	17	0	18	0	3	0	0	2	5	45	4%
Search - Mountain	Incidents	8	5	1	2	6	4	2	0	5	33	3%
	Subjects	1	4	1	0	4	3	1	0	2	16	2%
Snow/Ice Climbing - roped	Incidents	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1%
	Subjects	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1%
Totals	Incidents	449	105	297	84	213	43	139	5	133	1468	
	Subjects	517	89	356	11	195	18	63	5	107	1361	

Mountain Subjects

Subjects Assisted by severity in Mountain Incidents

		Lake District	Mid Pennine	N Wales	NE England	Peak District	Peninsula	S Wales	SW England	Yorkshire Dales
Abseiling	Injured	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cave/Mine Exploration	Injured	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fell Running	Fatal	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Injured	8	2	0	1	2	1	0	0	4
	Unhurt	1	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	2
Hang-gliding	Fatal	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Injured	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
	Unhurt	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hill Walking	Fatal	13	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Injured	218	49	125	3	86	6	23	2	47
	Unhurt	187	6	168	6	45	7	27	1	34
Hill Walking (D of E)	Injured	5	0	7	0	3	0	3	0	0
	Unhurt	6	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	2
Hill Walking (Winter)	Fatal	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Injured	13	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Unhurt	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mountain Biking	Fatal	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Injured	12	21	6	1	17	0	3	0	6
	Unhurt	0	2	3	0	2	0	2	0	1
Parapenting	Fatal	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
	Injured	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	0
Rescue Team Activity	Injured	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Rock Climbing - roped	Injured	3	1	8	0	18	0	2	0	4
	Unhurt	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rock Climbing - unroped	Injured	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0
	Unhurt	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rock Scrambling	Fatal	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Injured	9	0	4	0	3	0	0	1	5
	Unhurt	8	0	13	0	0	0	0	1	0
Search - Mountain	Fatal	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1
	Injured	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	Unhurt	1	3	1	0	2	2	1	0	1
Snow/Ice Climbing - roped	Injured	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Mountain Incident Causes

Causes of Mountain Incidents

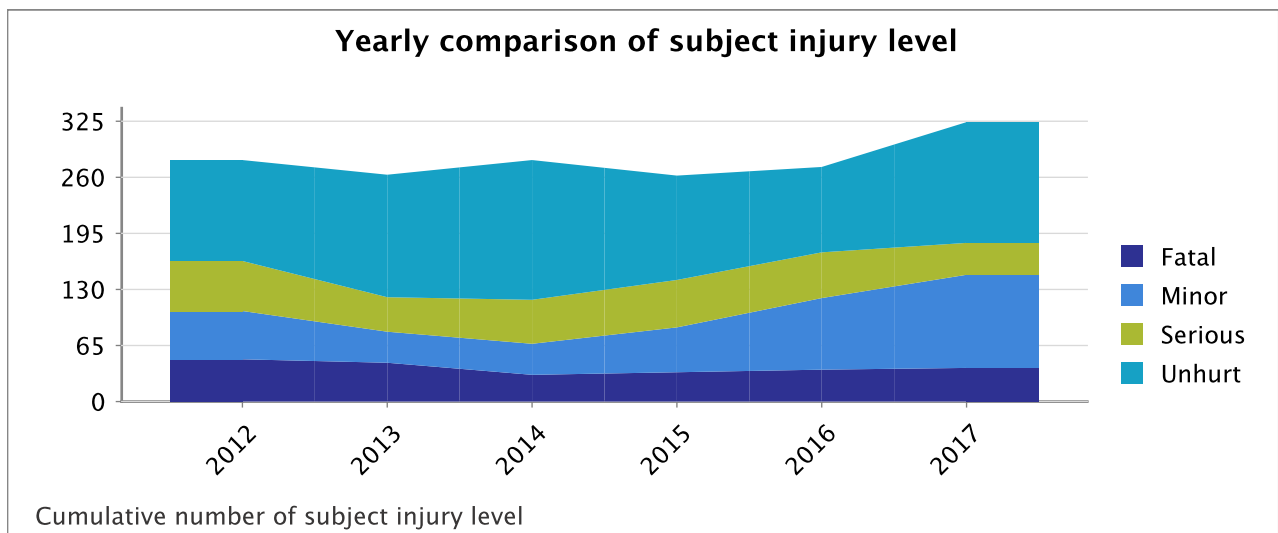
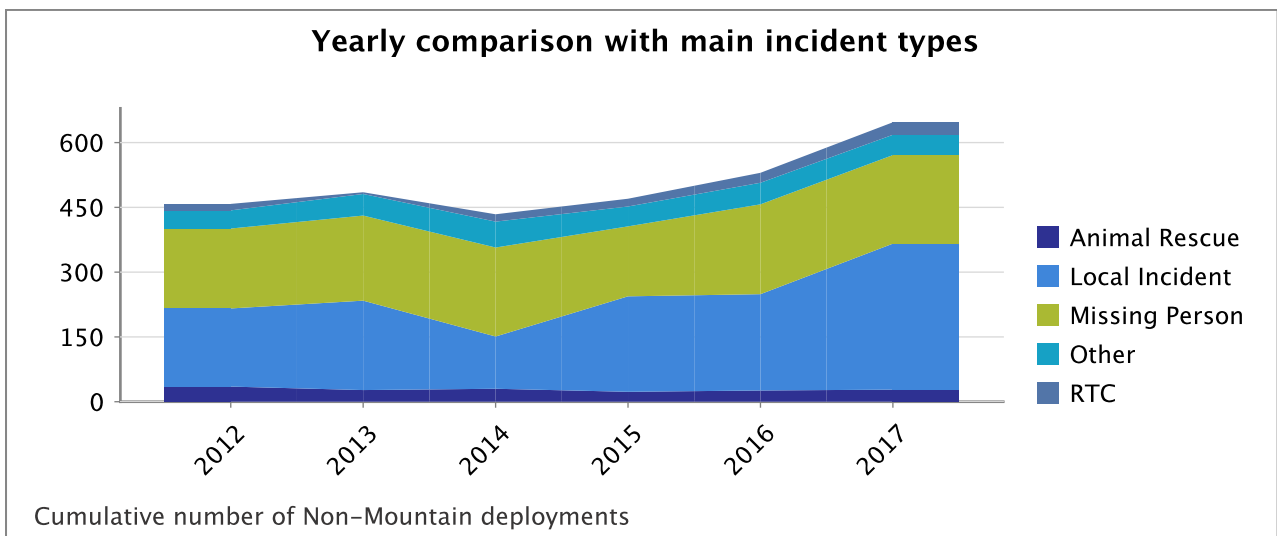
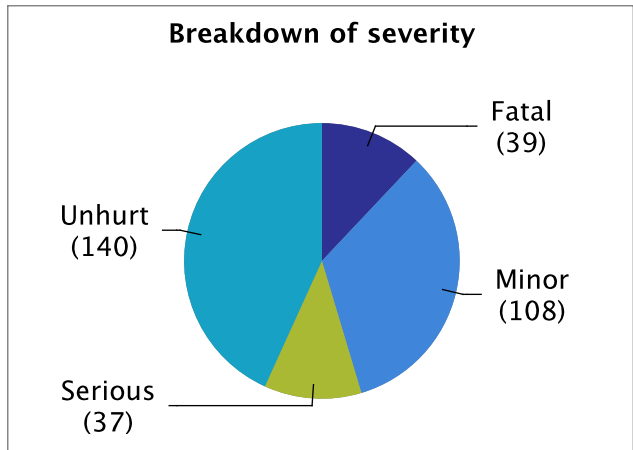
This report summarises some of the main causes of Mountain Accidents. It is based on a search of key words used in incident reports and is not definitive. All causes have not been listed, so the column totals may not agree with the total number of incidents. A typical report may mention multiple causes.

	Climbing/Scrambling	Hill Walking	Other	Total
Belay / Runner Failure	3	9	0	12
Benighted	1	40	1	42
Cragfast	14	44	0	58
Fall or Tumble	32	208	29	269
Lost or Overdue	3	171	3	177
Medical Collapse or Illness	1	65	4	70
Overdue or Missing	0	49	18	67
Rockfall	1	1	0	2
Shouts, Lights or Flares	1	11	6	18
Slip, Trip or Stumble	6	249	3	258
Unable to Continue	0	29	1	30

Non-Mountain Incidents

This section covers those activities that are lowland, urban or roadside to which Mountain Rescue teams were deployed.

Alerts	767
Deployments	647
Investigation/Standby	120
Total Hours	37229
Persons Assisted	387
Fatal	42
Injured	149
Uninjured	196



Non-Mountain Incidents

Occurrences and Subjects Assisted in Non-Mountain Incidents

		Lake District	Mid Pennine	N Wales	NE England	Peak District	Peninsula	S Wales	SW England	Yorkshire Dales	Totals	
Aircrash - civil	Incidents	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1%
	Subjects	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2%
Animal Rescue	Incidents	10	0	11	1	2	1	2	0	1	28	5%
	Subjects	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1%
Fishing	Incidents	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1%
	Subjects	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1%
Gliding	Incidents	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1%
	Subjects	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1%
Local Incident	Incidents	38	74	37	44	32	31	42	2	32	332	52%
	Subjects	19	60	40	7	24	16	14	1	7	188	53%
Major Incident	Incidents	0	3	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	6	1%
	Subjects	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	1%
Motor Sport	Incidents	1	2	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	8	2%
	Subjects	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	5	2%
Occupational	Incidents	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	6	1%
	Subjects	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	2%
Pony Trekking	Incidents	1	3	0	2	3	0	0	0	1	10	2%
	Subjects	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	6	2%
Road Traffic Collision	Incidents	12	6	4	0	3	0	2	0	2	29	5%
	Subjects	4	3	3	0	2	0	1	0	1	14	4%
Search - Non-mountain	Incidents	24	33	27	2	21	41	11	33	13	205	32%
	Subjects	22	24	22	0	18	2	8	13	7	116	33%
Sledging	Incidents	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	1%
	Subjects	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	1%
Water Sport (all types)	Incidents	10	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	15	3%
	Subjects	5	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	9	3%
Totals	Incidents	101	122	84	53	63	75	61	35	53	647	
	Subjects	56	93	76	7	49	20	26	14	17	358	

Non-Mountain Subjects

Subjects Assisted by severity in Non-Mountain Incidents

		Lake District	Mid Pennine	N Wales	NE England	Peak District	Peninsula	S Wales	SW England	Yorkshire Dales
Aircrash - civil	Fatal	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Unhurt	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Animal Rescue	Injured	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Unhurt	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fishing	Injured	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gliding	Injured	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local Incident	Fatal	0	3	4	0	0	5	4	0	1
	Injured	12	44	5	0	18	0	3	0	5
	Unhurt	7	13	31	7	6	11	7	1	1
Major Incident	Fatal	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Unhurt	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Motor Sport	Injured	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	0
Occupational	Fatal	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Injured	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Unhurt	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pony Trekking	Injured	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
	Unhurt	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Road Traffic Collision	Fatal	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Injured	4	3	2	0	2	0	1	0	1
Search - Non-mountain	Fatal	1	2	1	0	3	0	2	3	1
	Injured	5	5	4	0	4	0	3	2	0
	Unhurt	16	17	17	0	11	2	3	8	6
Sledging	Injured	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Water Sport (all types)	Fatal	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Injured	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Unhurt	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

Injury Sites

Subject Injury Sites

This report summarises the main sites and types of injuries dealt with by MR Teams. It is based on a search of keywords used in incident reports and so is not definitive but indicative of the distribution of injuries amongst persons assisted by MR Teams

	Climbing / Scrambling	Hill Walking	Other (Mountain)	Other (Non-Mountain)	Total
Abdomen	0	7	1	1	9
Arm & Hand	5	24	3	4	36
Back & Neck	11	22	4	4	41
Chest & Shoulder	5	37	10	7	59
Fractures	21	133	7	9	170
Head	4	50	3	3	60
Heart Attack (fatal)	0	3	2	0	5
Heart Attack (non-fatal)	1	3	0	1	5
Hypothermia	0	15	0	5	20
Lacerations etc.	3	21	4	4	32
Lower Leg & Foot	16	162	6	6	190
Pelvis	2	8	1	2	13
Upper Leg & Knee	2	40	4	5	51