



Mountain Rescue Council

Charity No. 222596

Mountain Rescue Council
England & Wales

Incident Report 1997

(Revised 15/10/01)

Copyright © 1998 Mountain Rescue Council

All enquiries please direct to :-

Ged Feeney
MRC Statistics Collator
57 Castlesteads Drive
CARLISLE
Cumbria
CA2 7XD
Tel: (+44) (0)1228 525709
Email: ged@gfeeney.demon.co.uk

Mountain Rescue Council – England and Wales

Incident Report 1997

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

Year	Incidents	Fatalities	Injured	Persons assisted
1997	695	19	512	925
1996	697	27	538	1059
1995	656	52	474	900
1994	634	39	486	929
1993	610	53	323	902
1992	649	62	582	998

The reader will notice major differences between this and previous reports. Incidents have been classified as Mountain or Non-mountain. Whilst this divide is not perfect, it does aid the analysis of the work of MR teams. Unfortunately, due to lack of space, it has not been possible to include comparison data from previous years. Care should be taken over comparison of some categories because the criteria for each may have changed. However, the main emphasis of each category has been retained.

This year has seen a major impact on incident made by Sponsored Charity Events, in particular, the 3 Peaks Challenge. Many participants requiring assistance are ill prepared for both the weather and the demands of navigation. Belated regulations are being considered but these events will still contribute to an increasing workload. Mobile phones are increasingly being taken on the mountains, many are being used sensibly when help is required. But there remain too many instances of their use to cover-up inadequate preparation and foolhardy decisions.

The main cause of accidents remains the slip, particularly during descent. All mountain users are reminded of the need not to relax their concentration during descent, as well as having appropriate footwear for the activity. Rock scrambling incidents are a third of the incidents for rock climbing, but the death toll is the same. Many of the injuries in this activity result directly from the subjects having no head protection. Falls are generally over rougher, looser ground leading to severe head and neck trauma. It is frequently noted in reports that had the subject been wearing a helmet, the degree of injury would have been significantly reduced.

Mountain Rescue teams make a significant contribution to the work of the statutory emergency services. This year has seen teams involved in 105 urban searches whose outcomes have ranged from euphoric to tragic, frustrating to rewarding. The 100 subjects ranged from lost youngsters, through people with mental illnesses to the elderly with dementia. Unfortunately, some of these included fatalities, 19 were recorded this year. The other main area of non-mountain incidents is that of resolving access problems experienced by the other emergency services. Typically, these could be sledging accident, horse riding, pony trekking, water sports and at times of exceptionally poor weather.

The total number of man-hours entailed with this year's workload is 58,820. Often this takes place during unsociable hours, after a day's work and/or during very poor weather. In addition, teams undertake extensive training. The mountain rescue teams can be justly proud of the service to the local community and the public at large.

Ged Feeney.

Ged Feeney
MRC Statistics Collator

Mountain Incident Report

This report covers the period from: 01/01/1997 to 31/12/1997.

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	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	0.6
	Subjects	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	0.4
Fellrunning	Incidents	2	10	0	0	1	1	0	3	17	2.4
	Subjects	2	10	0	0	1	1	0	3	17	1.8
Fellwalking - Summer	Incidents	253	10	13	81	55	16	14	25	467	67.1
	Subjects	359	19	25	133	63	22	42	27	690	74.5
Fellwalking - Summer (DoE)	Incidents	7	0	2	2	4	2	0	2	19	2.7
	Subjects	17	0	7	4	11	5	0	9	53	5.7
Fellwalking - Winter	Incidents	4	1	1	5	1	0	0	1	13	1.9
	Subjects	6	1	2	8	1	0	0	1	19	2.1
Hang Gliding	Incidents	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0.3
	Subjects	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0.2
Mountain Biking	Incidents	8	2	3	3	4	1	0	2	23	3.3
	Subjects	9	2	3	3	4	1	0	2	24	2.6
Orienteering	Incidents	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0.3
	Subjects	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0.2
Parapenting	Incidents	4	3	1	0	4	0	0	0	12	1.7
	Subjects	3	4	1	0	4	0	0	0	12	1.3
Rescue Team Exercise	Incidents	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
	Subjects	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.1
Rock Climbing	Incidents	12	4	0	15	17	0	4	3	55	7.9
	Subjects	14	4	0	20	17	0	4	3	62	6.7
Rock Scrambling	Incidents	8	0	0	5	2	0	0	0	15	2.2
	Subjects	8	0	0	5	2	0	0	0	15	1.6
Searches *	Incidents	32	9	0	6	0	8	0	2	57	8.2
	Subjects	6	6	0	0	0	2	0	1	15	1.6
Snow/Ice Climbing	Incidents	2	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	8	1.1
	Subjects	2	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	9	1.0
Totals	Incidents	336	40	20	125	90	28	18	38	695	99.8
	Subjects	430	47	38	182	105	31	46	46	925	99.8

* 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: 01/01/1997 to: 31/12/1997.

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	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	0.4
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Fellrunning	Uninjured	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0.2
	Injured	2	9	0	0	1	0	0	3	15	1.6
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Fellwalking - Summer	Uninjured	163	1	16	72	11	11	27	3	304	32.8
	Injured	188	18	9	58	51	10	14	23	371	40.1
	Fatal	8	0	0	3	1	1	1	1	15	1.6
Fellwalking - Summer (DoE)	Uninjured	11	0	6	3	10	0	0	9	39	4.2
	Injured	6	0	1	1	1	5	0	0	14	1.5
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Fellwalking - Winter	Uninjured	5	0	2	5	0	0	0	0	12	1.3
	Injured	1	1	0	3	1	0	0	1	7	0.8
	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	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0.2
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Mountain Biking	Uninjured	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0.2
	Injured	9	2	3	2	4	0	0	2	22	2.4
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Orienteering	Uninjured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Injured	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0.2
	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	3	4	1	0	4	0	0	0	12	1.3
	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	0	0	0	1	0.1
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Rock Climbing	Uninjured	6	1	0	10	0	0	0	0	17	1.8
	Injured	6	3	0	10	17	0	4	3	43	4.6
	Fatal	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.2
Rock Scrambling	Uninjured	2	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	5	0.5
	Injured	5	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	8	0.9
	Fatal	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0.2
Searches *	Uninjured	4	5	0	0	0	1	0	1	11	1.2
	Injured	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	0.4
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Snow/Ice Climbing	Uninjured	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0.2
	Injured	2	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	7	0.8
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Totals	Uninjured	191	8	24	94	23	14	27	13	394	42.4
	Injured	228	39	14	84	81	16	18	32	512	55.3
	Fatal	11	0	0	4	1	1	1	1	19	2.0

* 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: 01/01/1997 to: 31/12/1997.

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	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.5
	Subjects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Cave/Mine Exploration	Incidents	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.5
	Subjects	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	1.2
Horse / Pony Trekking	Incidents	5	2	1	0	2	1	1	0	12	6.5
	Subjects	5	2	1	0	2	1	1	0	12	7.4
Local Incident	Incidents	8	11	1	3	8	3	0	0	34	18.4
	Subjects	6	12	1	1	4	1	0	0	25	15.3
Non-Mountain Search	Incidents	10	23	10	11	22	25	19	3	123	66.5
	Subjects	5	25	10	10	23	23	16	3	115	70.6
Road Traffic Accident	Incidents	0	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	6	3.2
	Subjects	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	1.8
Sledging	Incidents	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	2.2
	Subjects	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	2.5
Water Sport	Incidents	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	2.2
	Subjects	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1.2
Totals	Incidents	28	41	12	17	33	30	20	4	185	100.0
	Subjects	19	42	12	14	29	26	17	4	163	100.0

Non-Mountain Casualty Report

This report covers the period from: 01/01/1997 to: 31/12/1997.

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
Cave/Mine Exploration	Uninjured	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	1.2
	Injured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Horse / Pony Trekking	Uninjured	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.6
	Injured	5	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	10	6.1
	Fatal	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.6
Local Incident	Uninjured	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	1.8
	Injured	6	11	1	1	1	1	0	0	21	12.9
	Fatal	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.6
Non-Mountain Search	Uninjured	3	21	4	5	19	17	11	1	81	49.7
	Injured	2	2	1	1	1	3	0	1	11	6.7
	Fatal	0	2	5	4	3	3	5	1	23	14.1
Road Traffic Accident	Uninjured	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.6
	Injured	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.6
	Fatal	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.6
Sledging	Uninjured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Injured	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	2.5
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Water Sport	Uninjured	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
	Injured	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1.2
	Fatal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Totals	Uninjured	3	22	4	7	22	17	12	1	88	53.9
	Injured	16	15	3	3	4	6	0	2	49	30.0
	Fatal	0	5	5	4	3	3	5	1	26	15.9

Main Causes of Mountain Incidents

This report covers the period from: 01/01/1997 to 31/12/1997, during which 695 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	0.1
Belay / Runner Failure	0	0	12	0	0	12	1.7
Benighted	14	2	5	1	0	22	3.2
Cragfast	13	2	7	0	0	22	3.2
Fall or Tumble	87	2	49	4	20	162	23.3
Lightening	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Lost	69	2	1	0	2	74	10.6
Medical Collapse or Illness	62	0	0	0	0	62	8.9
Overdue or Missing	61	3	3	0	15	82	11.8
Rockfall	3	0	4	0	0	7	1.0
Shouts/Lights/Flares Reported	8	0	1	0	26	35	5.0
Slip, Trip or Stumble	179	4	14	2	0	199	28.6
Unable to Continue	46	0	1	0	2	49	7.1

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: 01/01/1997 to 31/12/1997, during which 695 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	176	4	23	4	3	3	213
Upper Leg & Knee	36	0	6	1	6	6	55
Pelvis	6	0	1	0	4	2	13
Abdomen	3	0	2	0	0	0	5
Chest & Shoulder	21	0	10	3	9	7	50
Back & Neck	15	1	10	1	7	10	44
Arm & Hand	23	1	10	0	7	4	45
Head	48	1	19	1	4	11	84
Fractures	162	5	33	7	18	19	244
Lacerations Etc	32	0	7	1	9	7	56
Exhaustion	24	0	0	0	0	1	25
Hypothermia	45	1	0	0	0	8	54
Heart Attack (non-fatal)	10	0	0	0	0	1	11
Heart Attack (fatalities)	12	0	0	0	0	2	14
Illness	2	0	0	0	0	0	2

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: 01/01/1997 to 31/12/1997, during which time 937 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	43	25	5	69	7	18	14	2	183	19.5
2 Helicopters Used for Evacuation	36	6	3	61	5	8	3	2	124	13.2
3 Helicopters Used for Searching	6	18	2	13	2	9	9	0	59	6.3
4 Helicopters Used for Deployment	5	0	0	4	0	0	2	0	11	1.2
5 Incidents Attended by SARDA Dogs	44	22	5	23	19	31	14	0	158	16.9
6 Search Dog Finds	3	2	0	2	1	2	1	0	11	1.2
7 Incidents Attended by a Doctor	116	8	17	7	43	3	2	0	196	20.9
8 Incidents Initiated by Mobile Phone	73	3	1	25	5	2	0	0	109	11.6
9 Animal Rescues	47	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	49	5.2

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.