

# Fire service make appeal to public about deliberate fires

Figures have shown that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service fought many unnecessary fires last summer. They say they do not want a repeat of that this year.

During the hot summer months of 2016 firefighters spent a lot of time battling blazes at homes, vehicles, grassland, refuse and derelict buildings.

They say that the majority of those fires were deliberate and reckless which only adds to the pressure on firefighters when genuine emergencies arise and these fires placed lives at risk.

Assistant Chief Officer Dave McGown is the SFRS Director of Prevention and Protection.

He spoke out ahead of summer 2017 to warn that firefighters will work closely with colleagues in Police Scotland to identify those responsible for deliberately setting fires.

The ACO also appealed to parents, carers and young people as the school holidays kick off – a traditionally busy time of year for firefighters.

He said: “The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has a zero tolerance approach to deliberate fire raising because it puts our communities at great risk.



“It presents a danger to life, property and the environment.

“We will continue to work very closely with our police and local authority partners to ensure that those responsible are identified and dealt with accordingly.”

The latest figures show there were 532 deliberate primary fires such as dwellings and buildings between 27 June and 29 August, 2016. This is a rise of 38 from 2015.

There were also 1,762 deliberate secondary throughout Scotland, with 522 of these affecting fields and countryside.

And 1,259 fires involving refuse, both deliberate and accidental.

Deliberately set fires are dangerous; they waste time and money, and keep SFRS crews away from real emergencies.

AC0 McGown said: "It absolutely goes without saying that we prefer to prevent fires – not fight fires.

"As a result, our firefighters work extremely hard to engage with the public and promote safety messages in order to keep our communities as safe as possible.

"In the lead up to the school holidays we have firefighters, Community Safety Advocates and teachers delivering education to young people about the dangers of fire.

"We would ask parents and carers to help us also by discussing summer fire safety with young people. Together we can work towards a fire free summer."

SFRS is also urging anyone with information about deliberate fire-raising to contact the free and confidential Crimestoppers helpline on 0800 555 111.

AC0 McGown added: "Every deliberate fire has victims, costs – and consequences. Firesetting is an offence. Don't accept it – report it."

Meanwhile, members of the public can also flag up any illegal rubbish dumps at [www.dumbdumpers.org](http://www.dumbdumpers.org) / or by calling 08452 30 40 90.

For more information on how you can join Scotland's fight against fire visit the Your Safety section of the website <http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/safer-summer.aspx>