

Firefighters dealt with 2782 blazes across Scotland over two month period



The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service crews dealt with a total of 2,782 such blazes across the country between March and April 2017.

And there were 2,830 deliberate fires over the same period the previous year.

The figures were branded “absolutely unacceptable” by Assistant Chief Officer David McGown who is the SFRS Director of Prevention and Protection.

He spoke out ahead of a Spring safety campaign to warn how firefighters will continue to work closely with Police Scotland to identify those responsible for risking the safety of communities.

ACO McGown said: “These figures are absolutely unacceptable.

“Firefighters exist to protect their communities and yet they are being put at risk by a very small minority of people

within those communities who deliberately set fires.

“Let’s be very clear – fire can cause injury, damage properties and affect the environment, not to mention the potential impact on businesses and the economy.

“The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service therefore operates a strict zero tolerance approach to deliberate fire raising.

“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 2,782 deliberate fires involved outdoor areas such as fields, refuse, and countryside.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service also works to educate young people wherever possible on the dangers and potential consequences of deliberate fire setting.

ACO McGown added: “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, and parents and carers can also help by making sure that children and young people are aware of the risks.

“Ensuring you are aware of where the children or young people you look after are and what they’re doing can help keep everyone safe from deliberate fires.”

He added: “Deliberate fires are not only reckless and dangerous, but can divert SFRS resources away from genuine emergencies where people require our help.

“However, through robust and flexible strategic planning, our crews are always ready to respond to any incident to keep our communities safe.

“I urge the public to continue to support their firefighters by reporting any fire related anti-social behaviour because there are always people out there in need of our assistance at genuine emergencies – and every second counts.”

The free and confidential Crimestoppers helpline can also be contacted on 0800 555 111 or through their website at www.crimestoppers-uk.org.

For more information on how you can join Scotland's fight against fire and keep your home and family safe, visit the [Your Safety](#) section of the website.