

# Firefighters tackle five deliberate fires each day

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service crews were mobilised to a total of 258 incidents of deliberate fire-raising within the Scottish capital between March and April 2019, double the number than during the same period in 2018, when SFRS crews in Edinburgh were turned out to 128 needless blazes during the same period.



These fires were largely comprised of outdoor incidents impacting grasslands and refuse, but also included building and vehicle fires.

This “shocking” rise in is placing lives at risk, warned SFRS Director of Prevention and Protection, Assistant Chief Officer Ross Haggart.

ACO Haggart said: “We take a zero-tolerance approach to deliberate fire setting and it is a small minority of individuals who are potentially putting themselves, our firefighters and innocent bystanders at risk of serious harm and injury.

“Make no mistake – fire can cause injury and death, it can be devastating to properties, businesses and the environment.

“Last year, witnessed a shocking rise in deliberate fire-raising during the Spring period.

“These incidents are a needless drain on our resources and can impact on our response to genuine emergencies – where lives might very well be at risk.

“The fact that our firefighters are called to thousands of deliberately set fires each year is completely unacceptable.

ACO Haggart was speaking as Scotland’s national fire and rescue services launched its #SpringSafety campaign.

Across Scotland, the SFRS recorded a staggering 3,658 incidents of deliberate fire-raising during Spring last year – an increase of 97 per cent.

ACO Haggart warned that the SFRS will continue to do everything in its power to help Police Scotland trace those risking the safety of communities across Scotland.

He said: “It absolutely goes without saying that we prefer to prevent fires – not fight fires.

“But let me be very clear – we operate a strict zero tolerance approach to deliberate fire raising. It is reckless, selfish, and can have devastating consequences.

“We will continue to work very closely with our police and local authority partners to provide evidence that will ensure those responsible are identified and held to account for their actions.

“It is vital that we continue to remind people that deliberate fire setting is a crime and that a criminal record can affect future life and job opportunities – a price that can be easily avoided.”

Anyone with information about deliberate fire-raising should contact the free and confidential Crimestoppers helpline on 0800 555 111.