

# Firefighters called to more than 2,300 deliberate fires leading up to bonfire night 2019

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is reminding families and communities that bonfires and the private use of fireworks can cause significant injury and present a particular risk to children, and can also upset pets.

This type of activity can further impact on the emergency services – firefighters attended more than 2,300 deliberate fires during the four-week period leading to Bonfire Night 2019.



Many large scale public events including organised displays are being cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Deputy Assistant Chief Officer (DACO) Alasdair Perry is the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's Head of Prevention and Protection.

He said: "First and foremost we would urge all of our communities to follow advice and guidelines around social distancing to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

"We know this means that people may consider hosting their own events this year but we would urge caution around doing so because every year people are injured by fireworks and



admitted to hospital – and children are particularly at risk.”

He continued: “This is already a traditionally busy period of the year for ourselves and our partners and it is very important that we maintain an ability to respond to other emergencies.

“We are therefore strongly encouraging anyone who does wish to host a private event to reduce the risk by ensuring to familiarise themselves with our firework code and fire safety guidance. Do not take risks because the consequences can be devastating.”

November 5 is traditionally a busy night for the SFRS. Last year, Operations Control received 882 calls from members of the public and crews also responded to more than 350 bonfires within an eight-hour period – with six recorded attacks on firefighters.

DACO Perry said: “We know it’s a very small minority of people who engage in anti-social behaviour, but there’s no question it can impact on our firefighters and Operations Control colleagues as well as our partners.

“A deliberate fire can also put property, resources and indeed lives at risk so it goes without saying that we will always take a zero-tolerance approach to fire-setting and attacks on our crews.”

The safety message was also backed by Community Safety Minister Ash Denham. She said: “Bonfire Night this year is going to feel very different and at this usual time for celebration I urge everyone to follow to the Scottish Government’s public health guidance on coronavirus (COVID-19). It is absolutely vital the public adhere to the rules on meeting up with other households to help stop the spread of the virus.

“The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and all emergency



service workers have my complete support, particularly over the busy bonfire season.

“If you are planning to use fireworks please ensure you do this responsibly and safely and follow the appropriate advice on the SFRS website.”

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is continuing to proactively work with communities across Scotland to highlight the dangers and this includes engaging with young people.

DAC0 Perry continued: “We are proud to work with young people wherever possible and open up positive pathways to them through initiatives like our Youth Volunteer Scheme.

“I would encourage others to consider initiatives like the YVS which not only teaches fire safety advice but equips young people with skills and ambitions for future success in life, learning or employment.”

For more on how to stay safe this Bonfire Night follow our fireworks code at [https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/2242790/sfrs\\_bonfires\\_v3.2\\_\\_ah\\_\\_digital.pdf](https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/2242790/sfrs_bonfires_v3.2__ah__digital.pdf)

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