



Safest People, Safest Places

Performance Committee

10 December 2024

Performance Report – Quarter Two 2024/25

Report of Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of report

1. This report presents a summary of organisational performance at the end of the second quarter of the 2024/25 financial year.

Background

2. Both operational and corporate performance is monitored and managed internally via the monthly Performance Board and Service Leadership Team (SLT) forums. Members of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) consider performance on a quarterly basis at meetings of the Performance Committee and the full CFA.
3. A comprehensive suite of performance indicators (PIs) is employed to measure both operational and corporate performance. Targets are set on an annual basis against SMART criteria and take account of longer-term trends and the potential for spikes in performance.
4. This robust approach to performance management enables action to be taken at an early stage if performance is not meeting expectations and provides assurance that resources are being directed towards the areas of greatest risk.
5. In addition to setting a target level for relevant PIs, the Service also employs a system of tolerance limit triggers that allow under or over performance to be highlighted to the Performance Board when the PI goes beyond set tolerances, which vary depending on the indicator. Each PI has a total of four tolerance limit triggers, two each for both under and over performance.
6. Performance is presented from two perspectives, by comparison against the annual target levels, and by comparison with performance at the same point last year.

Overview of performance across all indicator categories

7. An overview across both operational and corporate key PIs at the end of quarter two for 2024/25 shows 62% of the strategic PIs met or exceeded their target level, while 57% of the strategic PIs either maintained or improved when compared to performance last year.
8. The following sections of the report present details of specific operational and corporate indicators. An explanatory narrative is provided for each PI group along with information about how performance compares to the annual target and the previous year.

Prevention

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q2 2024/25 Actual	Q2 Target	Actual vs Target	Q2 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 01 – Deaths Arising from Accidental Fires in Dwellings	Down	2	0	n/a	2	0%
PI 03 – Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	88	108	18.5%	103	14.6%
PI 04 – Injuries Arising from Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	10	7	-42.9%	6	-66.7%
PI 05 – Total Secondary Fires	Down	1,308	1,708	23.4%	1,415	7.6%
PI 07 – Number of Home Fire Safety Visits	Up	9,039	9,000	0.4%	9,375	-3.6%
PI 42 – Proportion of Home Fire Safety Visits to High-Risk People/Properties	Up	98.6%	80%	23.3%	99%	-0.4%

PI01 – There have been no deaths arising from accidental fires in quarter two. Meaning current performance remains at two for the year to date.

PI03 – There has been 88 accidental dwelling fires (ADFs) which is 20 under the target of 108. Kitchen fires continue to be an area of focus for our targeted Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) with 51% of all incidents recorded as starting in this room. Lone occupiers and lone parent account for 45% of all incidents.

The service continues to engage with partners delivering ‘Eyes Wide Open’ training to their staff. Engagement has been very positive with the Hospital Discharge Teams with the expectation of referrals of vulnerable residents as they are returned to their homes following a stay in hospital.

See Appendix A, chart 1 for number of ADFs by room of origin and chart 2 for number of ADFs by occupier type.

PI04 – The service responded to four significant accidental dwelling fires that resulted in injuries, requiring hospitalisation, one in July, followed by one in August and two in September.

July saw a fire in Darlington involving a 46-year-old male who sustained smoke inhalation injuries. The fire started on a mattress, suspected to have been ignited by smoking materials. The casualty,

who had recently been released from prison, was transported to the hospital for treatment. Evidence of drug use was discovered at the scene.

In August, a fire in Bishop Auckland resulted in serious injuries to an adult male. The fire began in the kitchen when a chip pan ignited. The casualty attempted to extinguish the fire by placing the pan under running water, causing a deflagration. The flat was heavily smoke-logged, and the casualty, who was under the influence of alcohol, suffered severe smoke inhalation and burns. He was rescued by fire crews and provided oxygen before being hospitalised.

September was marked by two incidents. On the 8th, a fire in Murton led to serious injuries for a 74-year-old female. A fully developed fire in the front sitting room, trapped the occupant, who was rescued near the entrance by fire crews. She suffered from smoke inhalation and foot injuries sustained while attempting to escape and was transported to the hospital. Safeguarding referrals were made, and a follow-up visit was arranged.

The second incident in September occurred on the 30th, in Chilton, where a 70-year-old female experienced breathing difficulties, after a fire in an external out-house spread to her kitchen and adjoining rooms. Fire crews rescued ten cats and sadly found one dog deceased. The property sustained significant fire and water damage, and safeguarding referrals were made for the residents.

PI05 – The positive performance for this indicator has continued into quarter two with performance at 1,308 incidents which is 23.4% better than the target of 1,415 and improved performance by 7.6% compared to the previous year. This is the lowest number of secondary fires since 2016/17.

Rubbish/ refuse is still the top fuel source with 56% of all secondary fires, with 33% being vegetation related. 93% of all secondary fires were deliberately set. Emergency Response crews and the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team continue to work with partners to reduce these incidents. During the quarter, Emergency Response crews have delivered 4,297 deliberate fire reduction activities.

Durham and Darlington are part of the Government Anti-Social Behaviour Trailblazer and funding has been received to increase high visibility patrols in hotspot areas. The Service is using this funding for the Targeted Response Vehicle (TRV) to patrol hotspot areas for deliberate secondary fires.

See Appendix A, chart 3 for secondary fires by motive and chart 4 for secondary fires by property type.

PI07 – At the end of quarter two, 9,039 HFSVs have been delivered which is above the target, although slightly lower than the previous year's performance. This high number of visits is above the fire sector average and should continue to make the residents of County Durham and Darlington safer from fire.

As highlighted in the quarter one report, over 2,000 properties were added to the HFSV targeting list, due to the residents having similar vulnerability factors as recent fire deaths. 1,200 of these properties have been visited with the expectation to complete the list in quarter three.

The service is currently working with Durham County Council to enhance the targeting methodology with additional data sets.

PI42 – This indicator is currently performing at 98.6% which is well above the Community Risk Management Plan target of 80%. The ‘Eyes Wide Open’ programme and national risk methodology will support us to continue targeting the most vulnerable in our communities.

Protection

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q2 2024/25 Actual	Q2 Target	Actual vs Target	Q2 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 10a – Primary Fires in Non-Domestic Premises	Down	63	55	-14.5%	59	-6.8%
PI 14 – False Alarms Caused by Automatic Fire Detection Equipment	Down	335	381	12.1%	417	19.7%
PI 17 – Number of Fire Safety Audits	Up	934	1,014	-7.9%	854	9.4%

PI10a – At the end of quarter two there has been 63 incidents, which is eight over the target of 55 and 4 more compared to the performance in the previous year. This performance has been influenced by 14 fires in prisons, 11 of which were in quarter one. The Service do not have legislative responsibility for fire safety in prisons although we continue to work with these establishments with the aim to reduce fires in these premises. Positively only three prison fires in quarter two compares positively with the nine prison fire in quarter two in the previous year.

The other incidents were in a variety of premises types including nine incidents in retail premises and eight in permanent agriculture premises. The Business Fire Safety Team conduct post fire reviews of incidents in premises enforced under the Fire Safety Order by the Service and combined with our high levels of fire safety audits aims to improve the performance of this indicator.

PI14 – The positive direction of travel has continued for this indicator, with 335 incidents which is 12.1% under the target of 381. This is also 19.7% improved performance compared to the same period in the previous year. 65.3% of all incidents are in four premises types, namely education (25.2%), residential homes (17.2%), retail (11.6%) and industrial manufacturing (11.3%). 53.4% of all incidents were linked to system faults and 25.2% were caused by human intervention.

The new approach to mobilisations from automatic fire alarms is having a positive effect on mobilisations with 569 calls to Fire Control for automatic fire alarms not attended by the Service.

PI17 – Performance of this indicator is slightly under target with 934 completed audits against a target of 1014, although performance is 9.4% better than the same period in the previous year. There has been continued high performance by the Emergency Response crews, although as the central team have been slightly under their full establishment during the year, there is slight under performance against target. Recruitment and short-term secondments are planned during quarter three which should see the indicator back on track.

Positively 44.7% of audits have been unsatisfactory showing that the updated Risk Based Inspection Programme is targeting the correct premises and making a real difference to improving fire safety across County Durham and the Borough of Darlington.

Response

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q2 2024/25 Actual	Q2 Target	Actual vs Target	Q2 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
Total Emergency Calls Received	N/A	7,939	N/A	N/A	8,890	10.7%
Total Incidents	N/A	3,678	N/A	N/A	3,987	7.8%
Total Road Traffic Collisions	N/A	162	N/A	N/A	171	5.3%
PI 02 – Total Primary Fires	Down	556	523	-6.3%	531	-4.7%
PI 06a – Dwelling Fires Attended within 8 Minutes	Up	61.3%	70%	-14.6%	65.31%	-8.5%
PI 06b – Non-Domestic Fires Attended within 9 Minutes	Up	62.2%	70%	7.1%	72.41%	-8.5%
PI 06c – Road Traffic Collisions Attended within 10 Minutes	Up	74.7%	70%	6%	72.89%	1.8%
PI 16a Availability of on call appliances - 1st pump	Up	71.3%	75%	-4.9%	66.7%	6.9%

See Appendix A, chart 5 for total incidents.

PI02 – There have been 556 primary fires which is 6.3% over the target of 523, and 4.7% more incidents compared to the previous year's performance.

57% of all primary fires are set deliberately and the Service continue to work with Firestoppers to raise awareness and try and gather intelligence on the perpetrators. As many of these incidents are linked to crime, work continues through the multi-agency Arson Suppression Group to identify ways to reduce deliberate fire incidents. There are currently two live Police Operations linked to OCGs (Organised Crime Groups) who use fire as a weapon to target others. The Service is linked and actively working with police to mitigate the risks and reduce the associated incidents.

50% (278) of primary fires are vehicle fires with the majority (69.3%) of these vehicle fires being set deliberately. Peterlee station area continues to be the highest across the Service area for vehicle fires. This type of incident is difficult to prevent, though the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team continue to work with Police colleagues to target offenders. A new Arson Reduction and Safety Campaigns Manager, and Young Person Education Coordinator started in quarter two and will be able to provide more focus on deliberate primary fires.

See Appendix A, chart 6 for primary fires by motive and chart 7 for primary fires by type.

PI06a, PI06b and PI06c

At the end of quarter two, only one out of the three response standards have achieved their 70% performance target.

PI06a – Response time performance when attending ADF's within 8 minutes on 70% of occasions is 61.3%. This has reduced from 70% at the end of quarter one.

PI06b – Response time performance when attending non-domestic fires within 9 minutes on 70% of occasions is 62.2%. This has increased from 55.6% at the end of quarter one.

PI06c – Response time performance when attending road traffic collisions within 10 minutes on 70% of occasions is 74.7. This has reduced slightly from 76% at the end of quarter one.

Each failure for any response standard is individually reviewed and analysis shows that extended travel distances are the main reasons for failing response times. Divisional Managers continue to work with Watch Managers through the monthly performance reporting process to scrutinise and improve performance.

PI16a – Performance at the end of quarter two was 71.3% against its target of 75%. This has deliberately been set as a challenging target by the service, with 75% not being achieved for over four years, with the aim to motivate staff and the RDS Liaison roles to increase performance. This performance is 6.9% improved compared to the same period last year, when availability was only 66.7%.

At the end of quarter two, RDS 'true availability' (RDS staff only) was 68.3%. The proactive utilisation of day duty, FDOs and surplus operational personnel including the use of the TRV and SRU has increased availability by an additional 3%, to its 71.3% performance. Notable availability of RDS staff only is 97.3% at Middleton in Teesdale, 89.1% at Stanhope, 78.7% at Crook and 78.5% at Wheatley Hill.

Health and Safety

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q2 2024/25 Actual	Q2 Target	Actual vs Target	Q2 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 69 – Number of Accidents to Personnel	Down	7	4	-75%	2	-250%
PI 72 – Number of Vehicle Accidents classified as CDDFRS Driver's fault	Down	5	10	50%	12	58.3%

PI69 – At the end of quarter two, there were seven accidents which is three over the target of four and five more than the same period in the previous year.

There were three minor accidents in August with two occurring on station and one at an incident. During September a laceration occurred to a hand whilst conducting a hydrant inspection with the lack of PPE being the main factor. This incident was reportable under RIDDOR due to an over 7-day absence. All accidents have been investigated to identify any learning points.

PI72 – Following no at fault vehicle accidents in quarter one, there were five in quarter two. Performance of the indicator remains strong, 50% under the target and 58.3% better than the same period in the previous year.

In July there were three accidents during slow speed manoeuvres that resulted in minor damage to appliances – one at an incident and the other two during routine duties. In August a TRV was reversed into a station canopy whilst being repositioned resulting in minor damage to the rear light cluster. In September minor damage was caused to an appliance during a slow speed manoeuvre whilst being repositioned at an incident. All accidents have been investigated with the key learning being the improved use of banks persons.

Recommendations

9. Members are requested to:
 - a. **Note** the content of the report;
 - b. **Comment** on the reported performance.

Keith Carruthers, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Ext. 5564

Appendix A

Chart 1 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires by Room of Origin

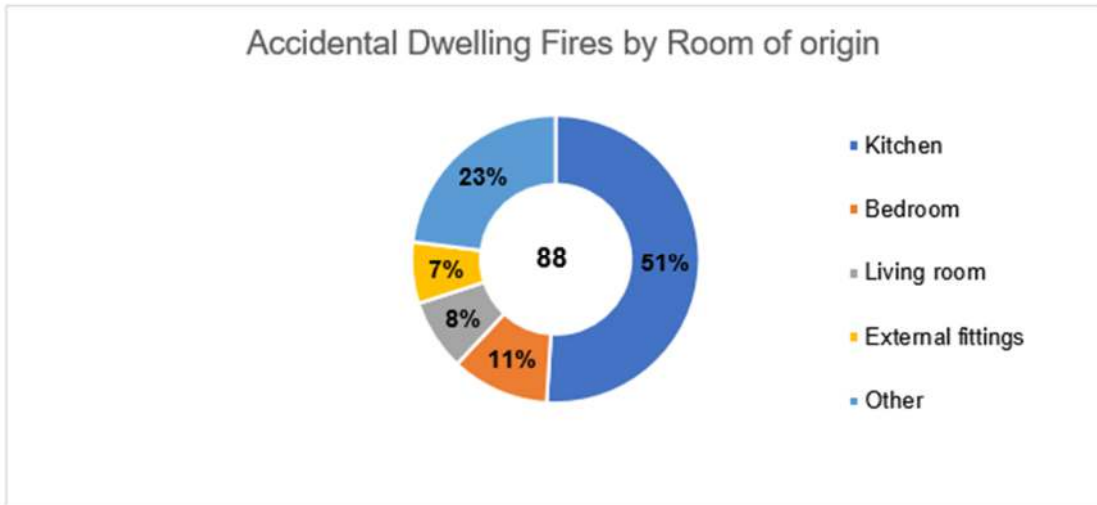


Chart 2 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires by Occupier Type

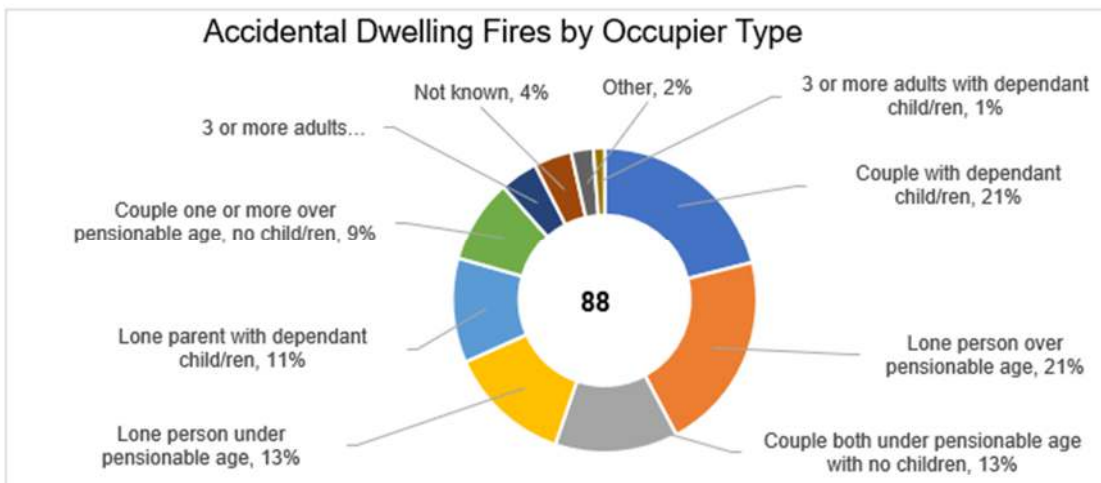


Chart 3 – Secondary Fires by Motive

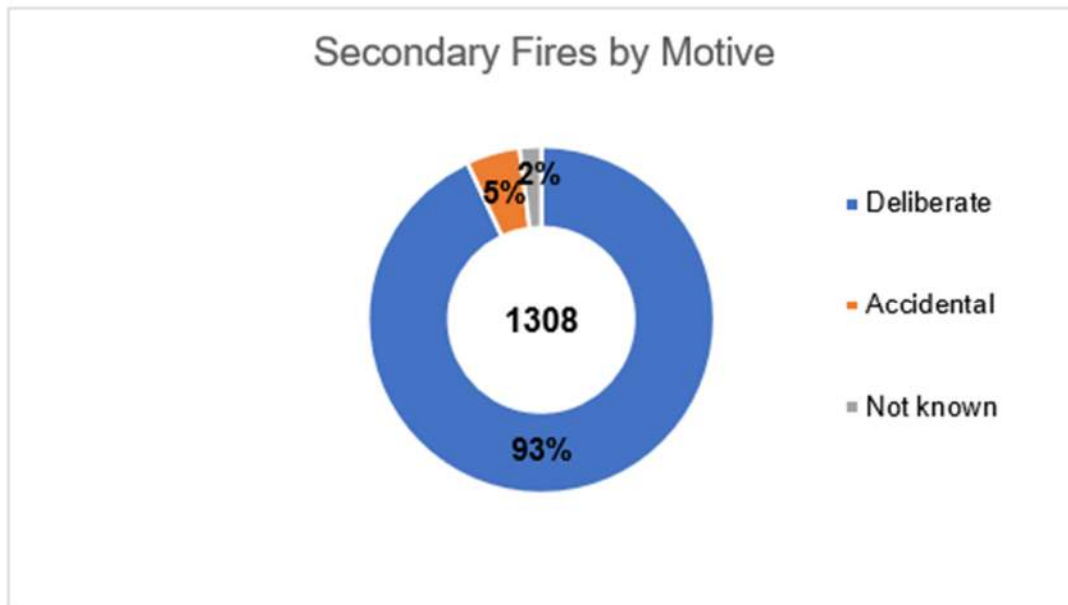


Chart 4 – Secondary Fires by Property Type

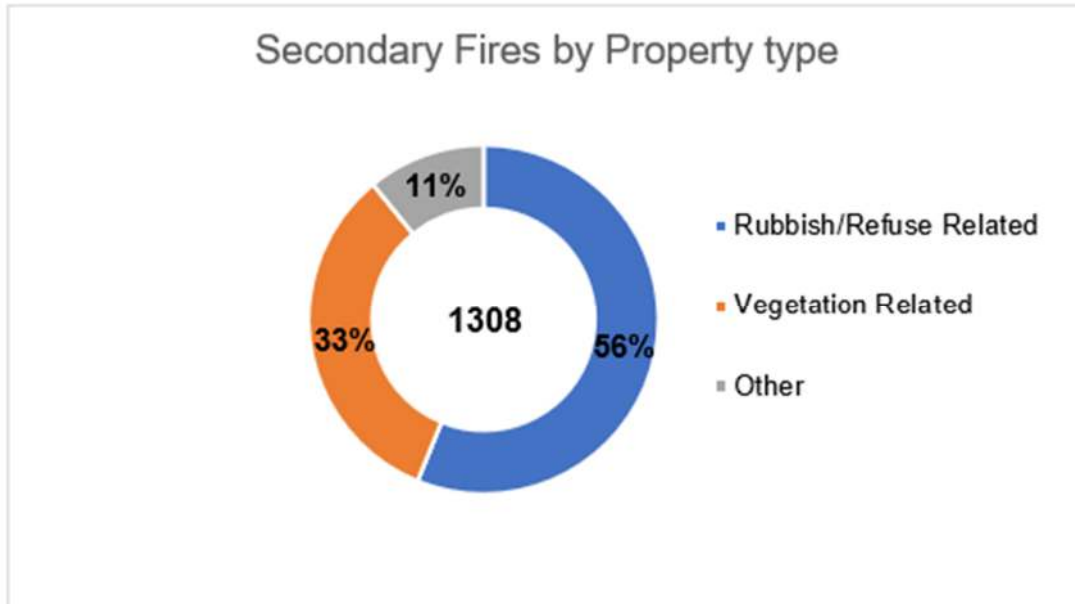


Chart 5 - Total Incidents

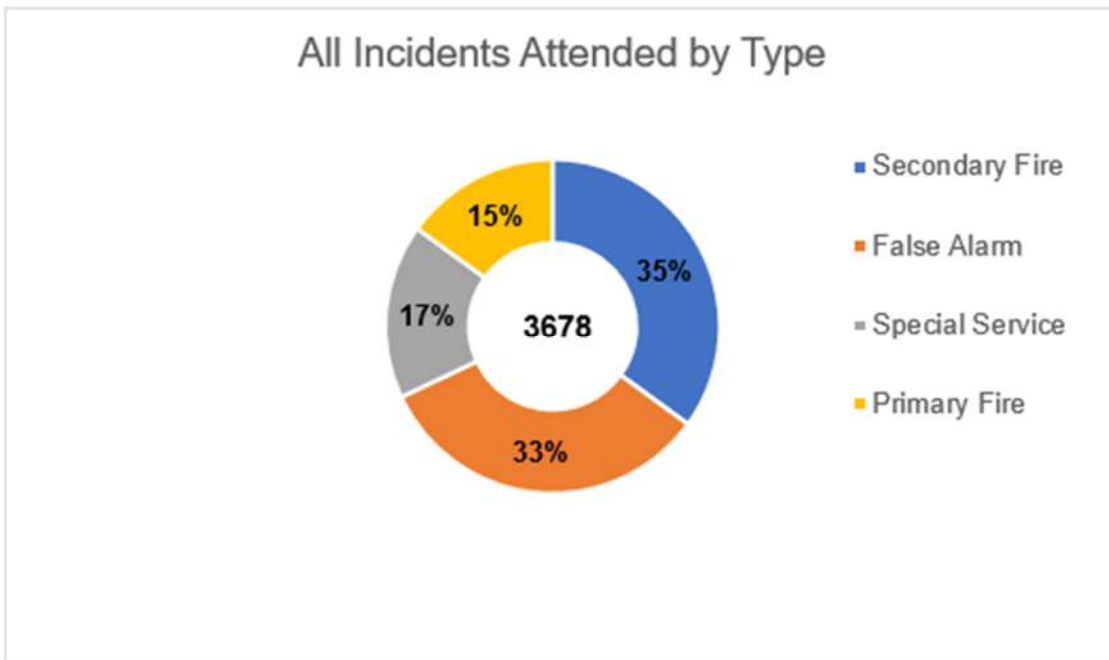


Chart 6 - Primary Fires by Motive

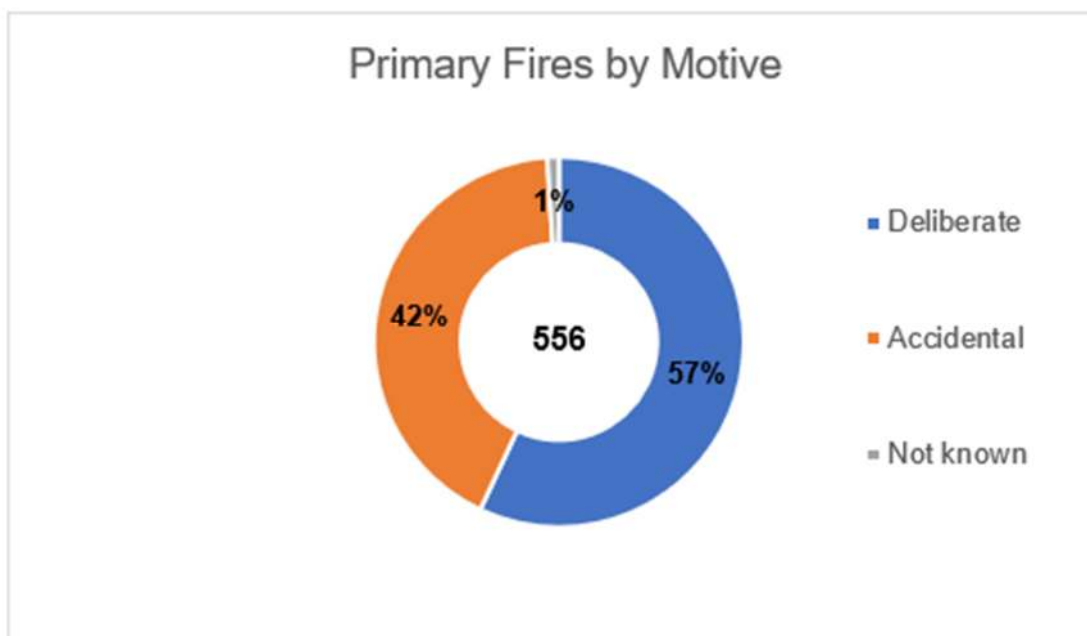


Chart 7 – Primary Fires by Type

