**FIRE AND RESCUE STATISTICS – 2021**

1. **Introduction**

The Fire and Rescue Statistical Report presents data on fire incidents, fire false alarms, non-fire incidents, fire certificates as well as fire and other emergency awareness campaigns compiled from administrative data collected by the Main Control Room and the Fire Safety Division of Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS).

Data refer to the Island of Mauritius, unless otherwise specified. The Main Control Room receives all incoming emergency calls in the country, dispatches fire crew to incident locations and monitors management of operations on incident grounds.

The fire station boundaries are different from that of district boundaries. Any turn out of fire incidents, fire false alarms and non-fire incidents cover areas beyond the station and district boundaries.

It is hoped that the data and information in this report will be useful to the public in general and in particular to policy makers, planners and researchers.

The report is available on Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service website at the following link: [https://mfrs.govmu.org/Pages/Statistical Reports.aspx](https://mfrs.govmu.org/Pages/Statistical%20Reports.aspx)

1. **Highlights**

* Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) attended 10,552 incidents in Mauritius during 2021, around 13% lower than the previous year (12,138). There were 5,782 fire incidents, 214 fire false alarms and 4,556 non-fire incidents.
* The average time taken by the fire crew to reach the incident location was 7 minutes in 2021, lower than in 2020 (8 minutes).
* The number of fire outbreaks decreased by 27%, from 7,898 in 2020 to 5,782 in 2021. The drop was driven by a reduction in the number of ‘outside fire incidents’, mainly grass (43%).
* There was a 13% increase in the number of non-fire incidents attended by MFRS, from 4,026 in 2020 to 4,556 in 2021. Of the 4,556 non-fire incidents, 1,376 (30%) were assistance to carry patient.
* The number of fire false alarms reported during 2021 was 214, of which 128 were due to bad intent.
* There were 29 fatalities and 308 non-fatal casualties reported by MFRS in 2021.
* In 2021, 3,015 applications were received for fire certificate. The number of fire certificates issued during the year was 1,720.
* Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service undertook 328 public awareness campaigns in the country during 2021.

**3. Average time taken to reach incident spot**

One of the service performance indicators of Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service is the time taken to reach an incident location, more particularly in cases of structural (residential, commercial or industrial buildings) fires where human life may be at stake. The set target time is 12 minutes. This indicator enables one to gauge the efficiency and the effectiveness of MFRS to promptly respond to an emergency situation.

From data obtained with regard to structural fires for the year 2021, the fire crew took approximately 7 minutes on average to reach the fire location, compared to 8 minutes in 2020.

The average time taken by each fire station varies according to the coverage area and the ease of accessibility. In 2021, the average time taken to reach a fire incident spot was around 6 minutes in predominantly urban areas, compared to 8 minutes in rural areas. Port Louis Fire Station took on average 5 minutes to reach the incident location and for Coromandel Fire Station, it was 6 minutes. Flacq and Tamarin Fire Stations, located in rural areas, took around 10 and 11 minutes, respectively, to reach the area of fire.

As regards dwelling (residential building) fire in Mauritius, the average time taken was 7 minutes while in England it was 7 minutes 43 seconds. The fire crew took 7 minutes to reach the incident spot of non-residential building fires while for outside fires, MFRS responded within 9 minutes.

**4. All incidents attended**

In 2021, Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service attended to 10,552 incidents, with 5,782 turn outs for fire incidents, 214 fire false alarms and 4,556 non-fire incidents. Fire incidents accounted for around 55% of the fire and rescue services, fire false alarms 2%, and non-fire incidents 43%.

From 2020 to 2021, the total number of incidents attended by Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service decreased by around 13%, from 12,138 to 10,552. This drop was due to a fall of around 27% in fire incidents (from 7,898 to 5,782) partly offset by an increase of around 13% in non-fire incidents (from 4,026 to 4,556).

1. **Fire outbreak by type of fire incidents**

In 2021, out of the 5,782 fire incidents attended, MFRS responded to 65% (3,770) of outside fires, comprising mainly of rubbish fires (43%) and grass fires (18%).

Sugar cane fires accounted for 24% of all fire incidents while for residential and non-residential building fires, it was 8%.

From 2020 to 2021, total fire incidents decreased by 27% from 7,898 to 5,782.

There was a 27% decrease in the number of outside fires attended by MFRS from 5,193 to 3,770. From the outside fires attended, it was noted that grass fires dropped by 43% from 1,766 to 1,014 and rubbish fires by nearly 21% from 3,149 to 2,490.

The number of residential building fires declined by around 15% from 421 to 358. Bedroom fires, comprising around 32% of residential building fires, was the most common type of residential fire of 2021, followed by occupied houses (11%), living rooms (10%), and kitchens (7%). Buildings under construction, occupied apartments and semi-residential buildings were the least frequent sources of residential fires.

In 2021, non-residential building fires dropped by 29% from 147 to 105. Non-residential building fires mostly arose from retail shops (11%) and industrial building workshop (10%). Drug stores, hardware shops and warehouses were the least affected by fires, each comprising around 1% of non-residential fires.

From 2020 to 2021, there was a reduction of 30% in the sugar cane cultivation fires from 1,986 to 1,392. An estimated 7,881 acres of sugar cane field was damaged as compared to 12,799 in 2020. In 2021, the district of Flacq was the most affected by sugar cane fires followed by Grand Port.

Coromandel as well as Port Louis Fire Stations attended around 15% of the total fire incidents in the country followed by Flacq Fire Station (11%) during 2021.

1. **Fire False Alarms**

Fire false alarms attended are categorised as:

1. where there was good intent but no fire;
2. where apparatus such as fire alarms caused an attendance to a false alarm; and
3. malicious calls.

In 2021, Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service attended 214 fire false alarms across the island. Among these, malicious fire false alarms, that is, calls made with the intention of getting the fire and rescue crew to attend a non-existent fire event, was the most common type attended. It constituted around 128 (60%) of all the fire false alarms attended. Fire false alarms ‘due to good intent’ accounted for 86 incidents out of which 12 were ‘due to apparatus’ whereby a fire alarm operated erroneously.

The total number of fire false alarms attended was 214 in 2021 same as in 2020.

1. **Non-fire Incidents**

Officers of Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service attend many types of incidents that are not fires or fire false alarms, for example flooding incident, responding to road traffic collision or road and access clearance, human or animal rescue, assistance to carry patient and flushing of premises among others.

In 2021, non-fire incidents made up 43% (4,556) of all incidents attended by MFRS. These included 1,376 for assistance to carry patient, 1,016 turn outs for road and access clearance and 794 for accumulation of water (756 for pumping of water due to flooding and 38 for other accumulation of water).

There were 346 turn outs made in respect of flushing of premises. The majority (64%) of flushing operations were effected at religious places. The number of ‘emergency fire coverage and stand-by’ due to religious gatherings, official functions, conferences and fireworks were 102.

From 2020 to 2021, the number of non-fire incidents attended rose by 13%, from 4,026 to 4,556. The increase in non-fire incidents was mostly accounted for by an upswing in the number of assistance to carry patient, from 766 to 1,376 and the number of road and access clearance operations, from 964 to 1,016.

The number of interventions effected due to accumulation of water increased from 713 in 2020 to 794 in 2021; out of which flooding rose from 685 to 756. Accumulation of water due to flooding occurred mostly in houses and yards (34% respectively).

Road and access clearance rose by 5% from 964 in 2020 to 1,016 in 2021. The main cause of road and access clearance operations was due to fallen trees and branches (530).

1. **Fatalities and Casualties**

During 2021, there were a total of 29 fatalities reported by MFRS. Of these fatalities, there were 2 fire-related deaths and 27 non-fire-related deaths; 25 males and 4 females. Most of the non-fire related fatalities occurred in road accidents (9) and 2 fire-related deaths in residential building fires and vehicles fires (motor cycle).

The total number of non-fatal casualties reported in 2021 was 308. There were 20 casualties reported for fire incidents and 288 for non-fire incidents, of whom 177 were males and 111 females. Out of the 288 casualties, there were 101 outside building rescue operations.

**Figure VIII – Number of fatalities and non-fatal casualties in fire and non-fire incidents, Island of Mauritius, 2020 and 2021**

Fatalities Non-fatal casualties

Non-fatal c as

From 2020 to 2021, there was a 29% decrease in the number of fatalities from 41 to 29 and non-fatal casualties rose by 22% from 252 to 308.

**9. Fire Protection and Prevention**

**9.1 Fire Certificate**

Along with attending emergencies, another core duty of the MFRS is to carry out fire safety inspections and ensure that the premises satisfy the fire safety norms. And, if the premises comply with all the fire safety norms, a fire certificate is issued to the owner for operation.

Previously, Fire Certificate was issued under the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005. However, the recent revised in law, (Fire Safety Plan and Fire Certificate) Regulation 2018, mandates owners of:

* all residential premises exceeding seven storeys;
* commercial and industrial premises;
* premises where explosives and highly inflammable liquid are used or stored; and
* any premises where public has access;

to comply with fire safety norms, and to be certified by a Fire Certificate.

Moreover, prior to year 2018, Fire Certificate had a perpetual lifetime. Conversely, with the coming of the Finance (miscellaneous provisions) Act 2018, all Fire Certificate as from 13 October 2018 had a validity period of one year only, which has caused all Fire Certificate issued prior to12 October 2019 to become invalid.

Thereafter, as per Business Facilitation (miscellaneous provisions) Act 2019, applicants have 60 days before the lapse date to undergo whole process for a renewal of fire certificate. The validity period varies from one to three years depending on the fire risk assessment of the premises to which they relate.

As from 13 September 2021, according to Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service (Fire Safety Plan and Fire Certificate) Amendment Regulations 2021, an application for a Fire Certificate should be made through the National Electronic Licensing System (NELS).

NELS is a centralised platform enabling online:

* application, determination, payment and issuance of various Electronic permits and licences;
* monitoring and tracking of applications.

**9.2 Fire Certificate applications received**

In 2021, the Fire Safety Division (FSD) received some 3,015 applications for fire certification in respect of dormitories, day care centres, offices, commercial buildings and halls among others, throughout the Island of Mauritius. Out of 3,015 applications, some 143 applications for fire certificates were for government premises and 2,872 for private premises. The request for fire certificates came mostly from the districts of Plaines Wilhems followed by Pamplemousses and Port Louis.

There were 3,015 applications of fire certificates in 2021, a 17% decrease compared with 3,624 in the previous year.

**9.3 Fire Certificate issued**

After inspections made by officers of FSD, some 1,720 fire certificates were issued upon receipt of an appropriate fee, in 2021. These fire certificates were issued to dormitories, day care centres, offices, commercial buildings and liquefied petroleum gas stores, among others.

Out of 1,720 fire certificates issued, 176 certificates were issued for government premises and 1,544 for private premises.

A decrease of 1,240 in the number of certificates issued was noted in 2021, a drop from 2,960 in 2020.

**9.4 Public awareness campaigns**

Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service undertake prevention activities which provide information and advice, and aim to encourage fire safety behaviours. They educate people on the steps to be taken to prevent the occurrence of a fire, increase the survivability when involved in a fire and limit property destruction. These initiatives include joint projects with other ministries, media coverage, and lectures in educational institutions, amongst others.

In 2021, Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service undertook 328 awareness campaigns in Island of Mauritius. These campaigns were targeted towards the members of the local communities, school children, working people and senior citizens. These campaigns were conducted with respect to fire and other emergency safety measures through talks, lectures, demonstrations and broadcasts to the population.

Cooking Safety Campaign was also conducted in Social Welfare Centres and District Councils. The aims of these campaigns were to inform and educate the public about reduction of the risk of fires and other emergencies during the festive period, to ensure people at home are free from potential risks of fire, and to assist them in preparing an escape plan.

The total number of public awareness campaigns conducted in the Island of Mauritius went down by 20% from 410 in 2020 to 328 in 2021.

**10. COVID-19 impact on incidents**

Due to COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, lockdown restrictions came into effect in Mauritius from 10 March to end of April, and imposed strict limits on daily life. During the lockdown, the MFRS has been monitoring fire incidents, non-fire incidents and fire false alarms to ensure that all incidents occurred, were recorded in the country.

In 2021, there were a total of 10,552 incidents, representing a downturn of 13% from 12,138 compared with the previous year. The number of fire incidents attended by MFRS also fell from 7,898 to 5,782. This was predominantly driven by a reduction in the number of outside fires from 5,193 to 3,770, and sugar cane fires from 1,986 to 1,392. The number of fire and other emergency safety awareness campaigns also fell from 410 to 328, with no prevention activity conducted in April and only one in May.

In contrast, a boost in the number of non-fire incidents was observed from 4,026 to 4,556, and this increase in non-fire incidents was mainly due to assistance to carry patient as well as road and access clearance.

**11. Operational staff**

The Fire Department is headed by the Chief Fire Officer and three Deputy Chief Fire Officers. For the year ending 2021, the total number of persons employed by Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service was 1,133. The administrative and non-administrative staff consisted of 51 persons while there were some 14 skilled and non-skilled workers. The technical fire cadre constituted of 1,068 officers, the majority (890) being firefighters. In Mauritius, firefighters are predominantly male (98%).

**12. Incidents attended in Rodrigues**

In 2021, the total number of incidents attended by Rodrigues Fire and Rescue Service (RFRS) in the island was 228. Of these incidents, 104 (46%) turn outs were effected for fire incidents and 124 (54%) for non-fire incidents.

The number of fire incidents attended was 104, of which 82 were outside fires, 15 residential building fires and 7 others. There were 124 non-fire incidents, of which 29 were for both assistance to carry patient and emergency fire coverage and stand-by, 19 flooding cases, 12 for both flushing of premises and road traffic collision and 23 others.

Compared to 2020, fire incidents attended in Rodrigues escalated by around 6% from 98 to 104. The rise in fire incidents was mostly accounted by an increase in residential building fires attended, from 9 to 15. Non-fire incidents rose significantly from 57 to 124. The ascent in non-fire incidents was due to a considerable increase in emergency fire coverage and stand-by, from 2 to 29.

The number of fire certificate applications received in 2021 was 292 and 240 fire certificates were issued.

In December 2021, Rodrigues Fire and Rescue Service employed 47 persons, 26 of whom are firefighters.

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