**FIRE AND RESCUE STATISTICS – 2018**

1. **Introduction**

The Fire and Rescue Statistical Report presents data on fire incidents, fire false alarms, non-fire incidents, fire certificates, fire clearances 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: <http://mfrs.govmu.org/English/Statistics/Pages/default.aspx>, and can be accessed from Statistics Mauritius website at: <http://statsmauritius.govmu.org/English/StatsbySubj/Pages/default.aspx>

1. **Highlights**

* Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) attended 12,634 incidents in Mauritius during 2018, around 16% higher than the previous year (10,941). There were 6,664 fire incidents, 193 fire false alarms and 5,777 non-fire incidents.
* The average time taken by the fire crew to reach the incident location was 8 minutes in 2018, higher than in 2017 (7 minutes).
* The number of fire outbreaks decreased by 4%, from 6,940 in 2017 to 6,664 in 2018. The fall was driven by a drop in ‘outside fire incidents’, mainly grass fire.
* There was a 51% increase in the number of non-fire incidents attended by MFRS, from 3,838 in 2017 to 5,777 in 2018. Of the 5,777 non-fire incidents, 1,980 (34%) were accumulation of water.
* 193 fire false alarms were reported during 2018, which were predominantly due to bad intent.
* There were 25 fatalities and 250 non-fatal casualties reported by MFRS in 2018.
* In 2018, 1,367 applications were received for fire certificate and 1,846 for fire clearance. The number of fire certificates issued during the year 2018 was 687 while that for fire clearances was 1,354.
* Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service undertook 668 public awareness campaigns in Mauritius during 2018. This included 163 awareness campaigns conducted during the Fire Safety and Emergency Preparedness Week in December 2018.

**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 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 2018, the fire crew took approximately 8 minutes on average to reach the fire location, compare to 7 minutes in 2017.

The average time taken to dwelling fires in Mauritius was 8 minutes while in England it was 7 minutes 44 seconds. The fire crew took 8 minutes to reach the incident spot of non-residential building fires while for outside fires, MFRS responded within 10 minutes.

The average time taken by each fire station varies according to the coverage area and the ease of accessibility. The average time taken to reach a fire incident spot was around 6 minutes in predominantly urban areas, compared to 9 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, Saint Aubin and Tamarin Fire Stations, located in rural areas, took around 10 minutes to reach the area of fire, that is, two minutes above the average time.

**4. All incidents attended**

In 2018, Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service attended to 12,634 incidents, with 6,664 turn outs for fire incidents, 193 fire false alarms and 5,777 non-fire incidents. Fire incidents accounted for around 53% of the fire and rescue services, fire false alarms 2%, and non-fire incidents 45%.

From 2017 to 2018, the total number of incidents attended by Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service rose by around 16%, from 10,941 to 12,634. This increase was due to a rise of around 51% in non-fire incidents (from 3,838 to 5,777) partly offset by a decrease of 4% in fire incidents (from 6,940 to 6,664).

Since 2013, the number of incidents attended by MFRS peaked in 2018 (12,634).

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

In 2018, out of the 6,664 fire incidents attended, MFRS responded to 3,941 outside fires, comprising mainly of rubbish fires (32%) and grass fires (22%).

Sugar cane fires accounted for 30% of all fire incidents while building fires was 9%.

From 2017 to 2018, total fire incidents decreased by 4% from 6,940 to 6,664.

There was a 6% decrease in the number of outside fires attended by MFRS from 4,181 to 3,941. Grass fires dropped by 13% from 1,716 to 1,487 and rubbish fires rose by approximately 3% from 2,110 to 2,162.

With a decrease of 2% in the sugar cane cultivation fires from 2,007 to 1,969, an extent of damage of around 9,573 acres of sugar cane field was estimated in Mauritius as compared to 8,411 in 2017.

The number of residential building fires fell by around 3% from 429 to 418. However, non-residential building fires rose by 8% from 160 to 172.

Bedroom fires, comprising around 24% of residential building fires, was the most common type of residential fire of 2018, followed by occupied houses (16%) and both kitchens and electrical apparatus (11%). Buildings under construction and occupied apartments were the least frequent sources of residential fires.

In 2018, non-residential building fires mostly arose from public buildings (15%) and retail shops (11%). Hardware shops and bakeries were the least affected by fires, each comprising around 1% of non-residential fires.

In 2018, the district of Flacq was the most affected by sugar cane fires followed by Pamplemousses, same as 2017.

Moreover, Port Louis and Coromandel Fire Stations each attended around 16% of the total fire incidents in the country, similar to 2017.

1. **Fire False Alarms**

Fire false alarms attended are categorised as: (i) where there was good intent but no fire; (ii) where apparatus such as fire alarms caused an attendance to a false alarm; and (iii) malicious calls.

In 2018, Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service attended 193 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 59% (113) of all the fire false alarms attended. Fire false alarms ‘due to good intent’ accounted for 62 incidents and there were 18 ‘due to apparatus’ whereby a fire alarm operated erroneously.

From 2017 to 2018, the total number of fire false alarms attended rose by around 18%, from 163 to 193.

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 2018, non-fire incidents made up 5,777 of all incidents attended by MFRS. These included 1,920 turn outs for pumping of accumulation of water due to flooding, 1,669 for road and access clearance and 571 for assistance to carry patient.

There were 514 turn outs made in respect of flushing of premises. The majority (72%) 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 328.

From 2017 to 2018, the number of non-fire incidents attended increased by 51%, from 3,838 to 5,777. The increase in non-fire incidents was mostly accounted for by a rise in the number of accumulation of water cases attended, from 681 to 1,980. The number of flooding in the month of January 2018 reached its peak with 1,068 incidents attended. This increase was likely to be weather-related.

The number of interventions effected due to flooding had tripled, from 628 to 1920. Accumulation of water due to flooding occurred mostly in houses (39%) and yards (37%).

The main cause of road and access clearance operations was due to fallen trees and branches (959).

1. **Fatalities and Casualties**

During 2018, there were 25 fire and non-fire-related fatalities reported by MFRS; 18 men and 7 women. Of these fatalities, there were 12 non-fire-related deaths which occurred in road accidents and 5 fire-related deaths in dwelling fires*.*

The number of non-fatal casualties reported by MFRS was 250, of whom 163 were males and 87 females. There were 12 non-fatal casualties occurring in dwelling fires, while 92 were from road traffic collisions.

There was a 92% increase in the number of fire and non-fire-related fatalities from 13 to 25 and non-fatal casualties went up by 64% from 152 to 250.

**9. Fire Certificate and Fire Clearance**

Application for fire certificate or fire clearance for premises is made to the Fire Safety Division (FSD) of MFRS before starting an activity. Fire safety inspections are carried out by FSD to verify whether the building satisfies fire safety norm. If the building complies with all fire safety norms, a fire certificate or a fire clearance is issued.

As from 13 October 2018, with the promulgation of the MFRS (Fire Safety Plan and Fire Certificate) Regulations 2018, all fire certificate issued will be valid for a period of one year.

As per the Finance (miscellaneous provisions) Act 2018, a fire certificate shall be valid for a period of not less than one year nor more than 3 years, depending on the fire risk assessment of the premises to which they relate. Application for the renewal of fire certificate shall be made by the owner of premises 60 days before the expiry of the validity of the fire certificate.

**9.1. Fire Certificate applications received and issued**

In 2018, the Fire Safety Division received some 1,367 applications for fire certification in respect of commercial buildings, offices, educational institutions, and fire hazardous premises, among others, throughout the Island of Mauritius. The request for fire certificates came mostly from the districts of Plaine Wilhems followed by Pamplemousses and Port Louis. After inspections made by officers of FSD, some 687 fire certificates were issued upon receipt of an appropriate fee.

From 2017 to 2018, the number of fire certificate applications made increased by 39%, from 984 to 1,367. An increase of 115 in the number of certificates issued was noted in 2018, up from 572 in 2017.

**9.2. Fire Clearance applications received and issued**

In 2018, some 1,846 applications were received for fire clearance with regard to employees lodging accommodations, commercial buildings, tourist residences and offices while 1,354 fire clearances were issued. Compared to 2017, the number of fire clearance applications received increased by 32% from 1,402 to 1,846 while the number of fire clearances issued rose by 38%, from 980 to 1,354.

**10. Public awareness campaigns**

In the context of the Fire Safety Education and Community Risk Reduction initiative, Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service undertakes a broad range of campaigns throughout the year. These campaigns aim to promote a Fire Safety and Emergency Preparedness culture to the citizens of Mauritius. They provide a proactive approach to reduce the probability of fires occurring and helping to limit the loss of life and property destruction by fires and natural calamities. They aim to sensitise the public about proper safety procedures to be adopted. These initiatives include joint projects with other ministries, media coverage, and lectures in educational institutions, amongst others.

In 2018, Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service undertook 668 awareness campaigns in Island of Mauritius. These campaigns were conducted with respect to fire and other emergency safety measures through talks, lectures, demonstrations and broadcasts to the population. In addition, 55 schools, with more than 2,600 students and staff, throughout the island visited their local fire stations, for educative purposes.

December was the month with the largest number (173) of campaigns undertaken by MFRS, especially due to the Fire Safety and Emergency Preparedness Week in 2018. Sensitisation campaigns were carried out by all fire stations within their respective areas. 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 Island of Mauritius increased by 38% from 483 in 2017 to 668 in 2018.

**11. Operational staff**

The Fire Department is headed by the Chief Fire Officer and three Deputy Chief Fire Officers. For the year ending 2018, the total number of persons employed by Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service was approximately 1,098. The administrative and non-administrative staff consisted of around 56 persons while there were some 15 skilled and non-skilled workers. The technical fire cadre constituted of around 1,027 officers, the majority (850) being firefighters. In Mauritius, firefighters are predominantly male (98%).

**12. Incidents attended in Rodrigues**

In 2018, the total number of incidents attended by Rodrigues Fire and Rescue Service (RFRS) in the island was 365. Of these incidents, 105 (29%) turn outs were effected for fire incidents, 255 (70%) for non-fire incidents and 5 for fire false alarms.

Compared to 2017, fire incidents attended in Rodrigues decreased by around 7% from 113 to 105 and non-fire incidents increased significantly from 52 to 255. The increase in non-fire incidents was mostly accounted by a rise in the number of accumulation of water cases attended, from 17 to 137.

In 2018, Rodrigues Fire and Rescue Service attended 105 fire incidents; of which 75 were outside fires and 28 residential building fires. There were 255 non-fire incidents, of which 137 were flooding cases, 38 stand-by operations and 25 road and access clearances.

The number of fire certificate applications received in 2018 was 12 and 7 fire certificates were issued, while 207 applications were made for fire clearances and 136 were issued.

The Rodrigues Fire and Rescue Service employs 55 people, 40 of whom are firefighters.

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