

**Freedom of Information request reference number:** 7782.1

**Date of response:** 05/09/2023

**Request:**

Please supply me with data relating to fires on balconies on residential buildings in your area, as follows;

How many fires involving balconies occurred in total between 1st August 2022 and 31st July 2023?

In the same period, how many fires occurred where balconies were found to have contributed to the spread of the fire across the external walls?

Please provide data on the causes of any fires that started on balconies in the period (ie; barbecue, discarded cigarette, electrical appliance fault, etc) and please provide the number of occurrences for each cause.

If your incident recording system does not include "balcony" as a recorded location, could you please perform a search on free text fields in your database for the term, as I have found in the past that this often returns useable data.

**Response:**

Please see below for a response to your request.

How many fires involving balconies occurred in total between 1st August 2022 and 31st July 2023?

The below table shows the number of fires between 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023, where the location of the fire started on a balcony.

| <b>Count of Incident Number</b>   | <b>01/08/2022 – 31/07/2023</b> |             |                    |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| <b>Location of fire start</b>     | <b>2022</b>                    | <b>2023</b> | <b>Grand Total</b> |
| Communal balcony/Elevated walkway | 17                             | 20          | 37                 |
| Private balcony                   | 42                             | 69          | 111                |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                | <b>59</b>                      | <b>89</b>   | <b>148</b>         |

In the same period, how many fires occurred where balconies were found to have contributed to the spread of the fire across the external walls?

Unfortunately, we are unable to identify if a balcony contributed to the spread of a fire but we can identify elements that may have caused rapid fire growth in balcony fires.

| Rapid Fire Growth                     | 01/08/2022 – 31/07/2023 | Total Fires |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| No rapid fire growth                  | 2022                    | 55          |
| Other - Bone dry conditions           | 2022                    | 1           |
| Yes, gases                            | 2022                    | 1           |
| Yes, paint, varnish, resins, creosote | 2022                    | 1           |
| Yes, petrol/oil products              | 2022                    | 1           |
| No rapid fire growth                  | 2023                    | 83          |
| Other - LITHIUM BATTERY               | 2023                    | 2           |
| Other - not currently known           | 2023                    | 1           |
| Yes, cooking oil or fat               | 2023                    | 1           |
| Yes, strong wind                      | 2023                    | 2           |

Please provide data on the causes of any fires that started on balconies in the period (ie; barbecue, discarded cigarette, electrical appliance fault, etc) and please provide the number of occurrences for each cause.

| Count of Incident Number        | 01/08/2022 – 31/07/2023 |      |             |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------|-------------|
|                                 | 2022                    | 2023 | Grand Total |
| Barbecue                        | 2                       | 4    | 6           |
| Batteries, generators           |                         | 3    | 3           |
| Battery charger                 | 1                       | 1    | 2           |
| Candles/Tea lights - Social use | 2                       | 1    | 3           |
| Cigarette                       | 24                      | 53   | 77          |

|   |           |           |            |
|---|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Cigarette lighter                           | 3         | 5         | 8          |
| E-Bike                                      | 2         |           | 2          |
| E-Scooter                                   | 1         |           | 1          |
| Fairy lights                                | 1         |           | 1          |
| Fireworks                                   | 1         |           | 1          |
| Iron  |           | 1         | 1          |
| Lighted paper or card, or other naked flame | 4         | 2         | 6          |
| Liquids; petrol/oil related                 |           | 1         | 1          |
| Matches                                     | 3         | 5         | 8          |
| Natural occurrence                          | 3         | 4         | 7          |
| Not known                                   | 6         | 5         | 11         |
| Oil/Incense burners                         | 1         |           | 1          |
| Other                                       | 3         |           | 3          |
| Other appliance or equipment                |           | 1         | 1          |
| Smoking materials                           |           | 2         | 2          |
| Solids; coal, coke, wood, card              |           | 1         | 1          |
| Vehicle electrical fault                    | 1         |           | 1          |
| Wiring, cabling, plugs                      | 1         |           | 1          |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                          | <b>59</b> | <b>89</b> | <b>148</b> |

We have dealt with your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. For more information about this process please see the guidance we publish about making a request on our website:

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/about-us/transparency/request-information-from-us/>