



STATISTICS REPORT 2019



Tom Adams & Andy Morgan April 2020

PREFACE

This Annual Statistical Report is a supplement to the Scottish Mountain Rescue Review 2019.

For more information on Scottish Mountain Rescue and our member teams visit:

www.scottishmountainrescue.org

This report includes data gathered from the civilian member teams as well as three Police Scotland Mountain Rescue Teams (MRTs) and one RAF MRT.

Scottish Mountain Rescue are proud to represent our member teams.

Compiled by Tom Adams (Oban MRT; **statistician@scottishmountainrescue.org**) and Andy Morgan (Scottish Cave Rescue Organisation; **statssupport@scottishmountainrescue.org**).

Scottish Mountain Rescue is a registered Scottish Charity, No. SC045003.



INTRODUCTION

Mountain Rescue in Scotland is coordinated by Police Scotland. Police Scotland receive the initial callout through the 999 system and if appropriate, contact the local Mountain Rescue Team (MRT). Each MRT is an independent organisation who submit their reports to the Statistician of Scottish Mountain Rescue (SMR), the representative body for the majority of MRTs in Scotland.

There are **28** voluntary civilian Mountain Rescue Teams in Scotland, of which **24** are members of Scottish Mountain Rescue. This report for 2019 is compiled from information received from the **24** civilian and **3** Police Scotland teams that are members of Scottish Mountain Rescue.

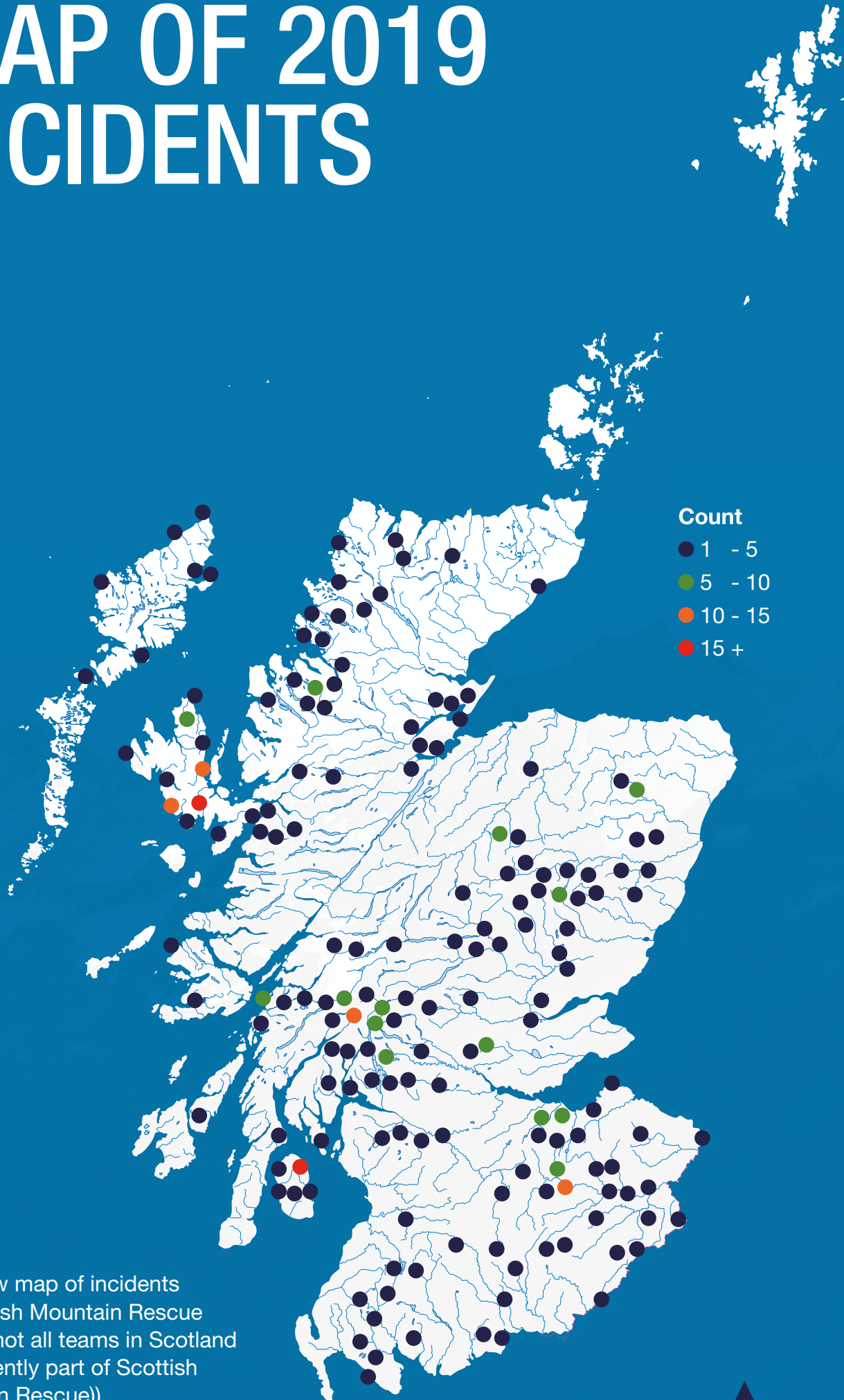
This annual report covers the calendar year from January 1st to December 31st 2019.

Important Note: *This report does not include incidents from non-member teams, except where the SMR teams have assisted these teams.*

Due to this, direct comparisons can only be drawn against values produced since the 2016 SMR report (since previous reports included teams which are now not members of SMR). Where available, figures from previous years follow the 2019 numbers for comparison.

- Aberdeen MRT
- Arran MRT
- Arrochar MRT
- Assynt MRT
- Borders SAR Unit
- Braemar MRT
- Dundonnell MRT
- Galloway MRT
- Glenelg MRT
- Glenmore Lodge MRT
- Hebrides MRT
- Killin MRT
- Kintail MRT
- Lomond MRT
- Moffat MRT
- Oban MRT
- Ochils MRT
- Search and Rescue Dog Association (SARDA) (Scotland)
- Search and Rescue Dog Association (SARDA) (Southern Scotland)
- Search and Rescue Aerial Association (SARAA-Scotland)
- Scottish Cave Rescue Organisation
- Skye MRT
- Torridon MRT
- Tweed Valley MRT
- Police Scotland (Grampian) MRT
- Police Scotland (Strathclyde) MRT
- Police Scotland (Tayside) MRT
- RAF Lossiemouth MRT

MAP OF 2019 INCIDENTS



Overview map of incidents of Scottish Mountain Rescue Teams (not all teams in Scotland are currently part of Scottish Mountain Rescue)).

OVERVIEW:

INCIDENTS, CALLOUTS AND HOURS

Number of incidents

The total number of independent incidents in 2019 was **502**.

Of these, **243 (48%)** were related to mountaineering (this includes hillwalking, scrambling, rock climbing, winter climbing, and MRT activity).

The total number of separate team callouts was **672**, or **730** including “continuations” (linked callouts on different days).

This is an average of **2.0 per day**. At least one team was called out on **263** days this year, and on the busiest day (20th July) there were **9** activations of teams.

Hours

Mountain Rescue team members gave up **26934** hours of their time during call-outs.

That’s the equivalent of one person working 673 consecutive 40 hour weeks ... Voluntarily!

People helped

During 2019, **595** people were assisted.

3 incidents involved the rescue of dogs, and **2** incidents the rescue of sheep.

There were **14** fatalities, **7** of which occurred in mountaineering incidents.

502

Total number of independent incidents.

243 (48%)

Incidents related to mountaineering.

672

Total number of team callouts.

263

Days where at least one team was called out.

26,934

Hours of time given by volunteers.

595

People were assisted.

14

Fatalities.



EXAMPLE INCIDENTS



Mountain Rescue Teams throughout the country are on standby 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They respond to a wide variety of call outs from minor incidents to life-threatening emergencies.

To give a flavour of some incidents, a selection of comments from the Team incident reports are below:

“Following a request from the Scottish Ambulance Service to assist with a female who had had a lower leg injury whilst out walking on Bennachie, Aberdeenshire. MRT were called out and assisted to stretcher the female off the hill to an ambulance.”



“The team were marshalling a marathon and a lady experienced a cardiac arrest. The team assisted in first aid, CPR and the use of a defibrillator and oxygen. Meanwhile, a second team was dealing with a second (separate) casualty who tripped and got facial injuries.”



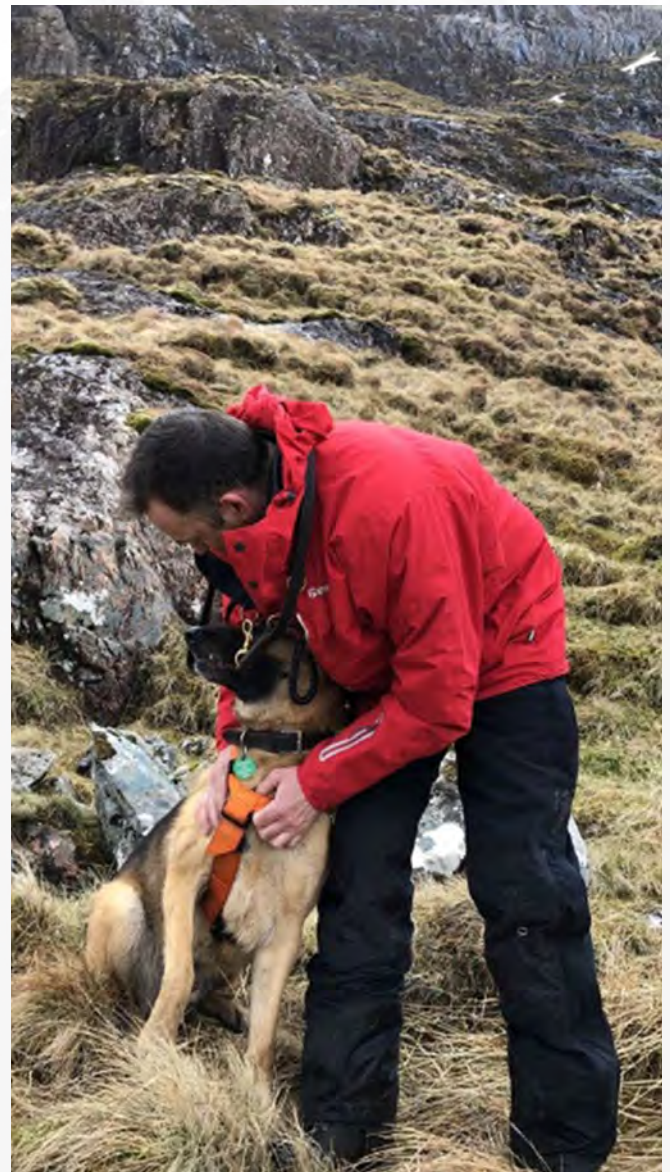
“Male descending from summit slipped and suffered a suspect broken ankle. Police SAR advisor contacted who gained grid reference via PHONEFIND. MRT and rescue helicopter attended. Casualty eventually airlifted due to break in cloud cover and conveyed to hospital.”



“Hillwalker lost descending from Cobbler. Google map navigation but no head torch. Surprised when it was snowy underfoot and it got dark.”

Police received a report of a walker having fallen down a gully at a busy tourist attraction. Multi-agency technical rescue carried out to recover casualty who had slipped about 20 feet down between rocks. Casualty complained of pain in spine / pelvic area. Recovered to track and taken to open area where helicopter picked up casualty.

“PhoneFind” is a technology via which Police can attempt to identify the geographical location of a GPS-equipped mobile phone. It relies on a casualty being able to respond to a text message.



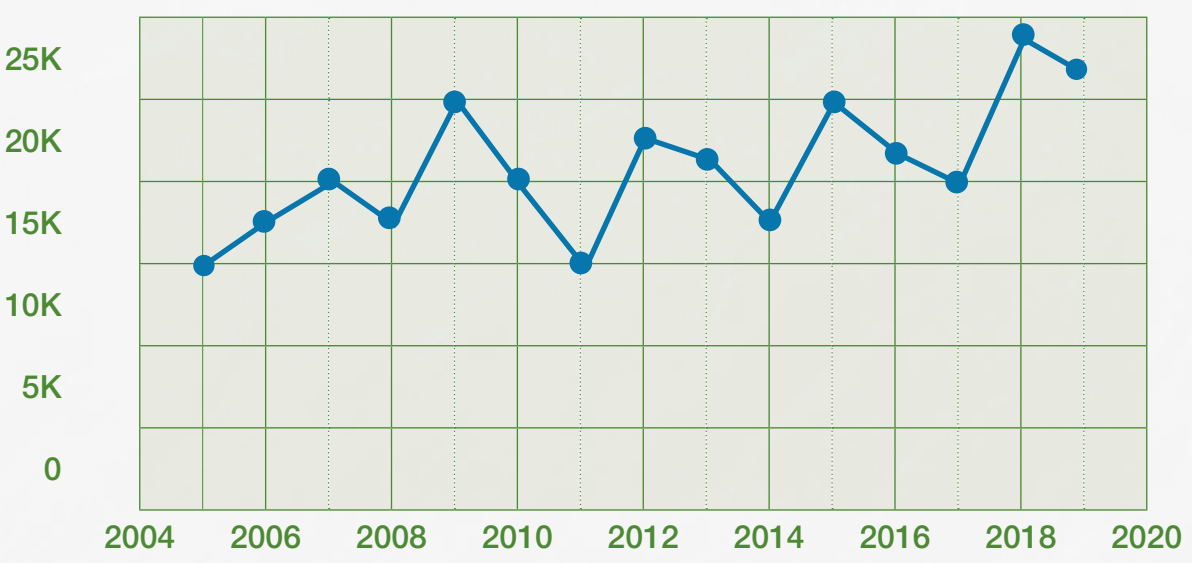
TRENDS OVER TIME

Callouts (civilian teams)



Total number of callouts of Scottish Mountain Rescue Teams (note that not all teams in Scotland are currently part of Scottish Mountain Rescue) This does not include police teams (Tayside, Grampian, and Strathclyde).

Hours (civilian teams)



Total number of hours spent by Scottish Mountain Rescue civilian rescue teams. This does not include police teams (Tayside, Grampian, Strathclyde).

DATA

TYPES OF INCIDENT

Mountain Rescue Teams are asked to respond to a variety of incident types. The breakdown by primary type is shown opposite.

	Count
Rescue	179
Search and Rescue	128
Search	94
Medical Emergency	33
Police Investigation	22
False Alarm	15
Body Recovery	9
Animal Rescue	8
Other	7
Technical Rescue	3
Water Rescue	3
Civil resilience	1
Total	502

502

Total number of independent incidents



MOUNTAINEERING INCIDENTS

All incidents involving Scottish Mountain Rescue Teams are reported in two broad categories, Mountaineering and Non-Mountaineering.

Since 2010, this classification is based on the activity being undertaken. “Mountaineering” includes Climbing or Hillwalking in both Summer and Winter. It also includes personnel on Mountain Rescue missions.

In 2019 there were **243** “mountaineering” incidents, in which **311** people were assisted.

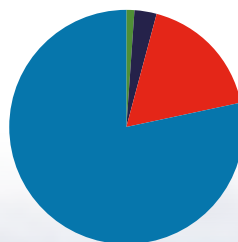
Activities	Count
Hillwalking (summer)	188
Hillwalking (winter)	41
Rock climbing	7
Scrambling	2
Snow/ice climbing	5
MRT activity	0
Total	243

243

Mountaineering incidents.

311

People assisted.



Percentage

- 77% Hillwalking (summer)
- 17% Hillwalking (winter)
- 3% Rock climbing
- Scrambling



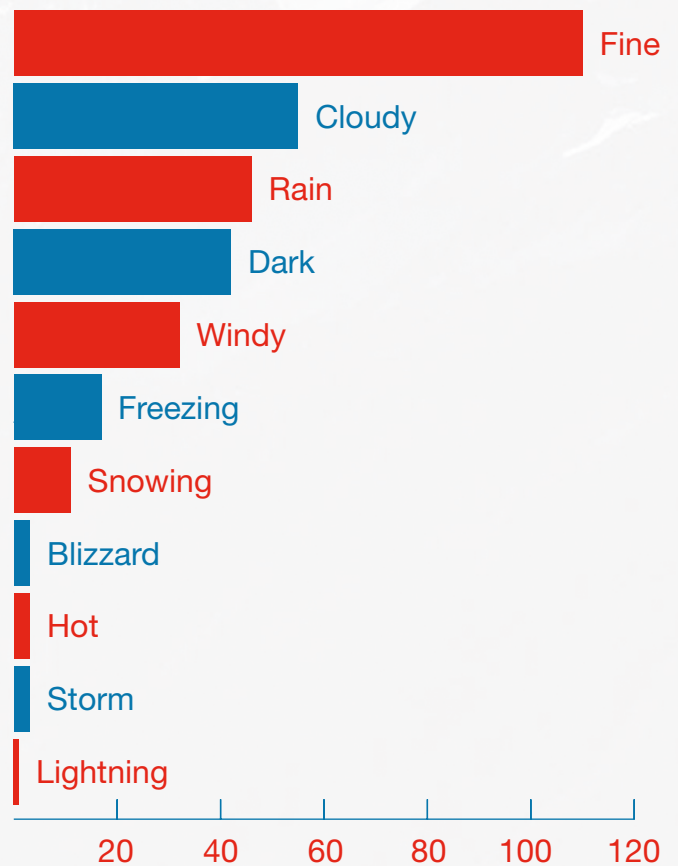
CAUSE AND CONDITIONS

The factors leading to mountaineering incidents (as described by the casualty or witnesses, or determined by the MRT) are listed in the table below. Incidents may have more than one contributing factor.

	Count
Slip or trip	79
Navigation error	39
Lost	38
Fall	24
Missing kit	21
Overdue	17
Reported missing	14
Medical	11
Crag fast	8
Exhaustion	8
Benighted	7
Technology reliance	6
Other	6
Weather bound	4
Natural avalanche	1
Belay failure	1
Cornice collapse	1
Kit failure	1
River crossing	1
Food	1

Where available, the weather conditions recorded at the time of the incident are detailed below. Most incidents occurred during fine weather (note that each incident may have more than one type of weather recorded).

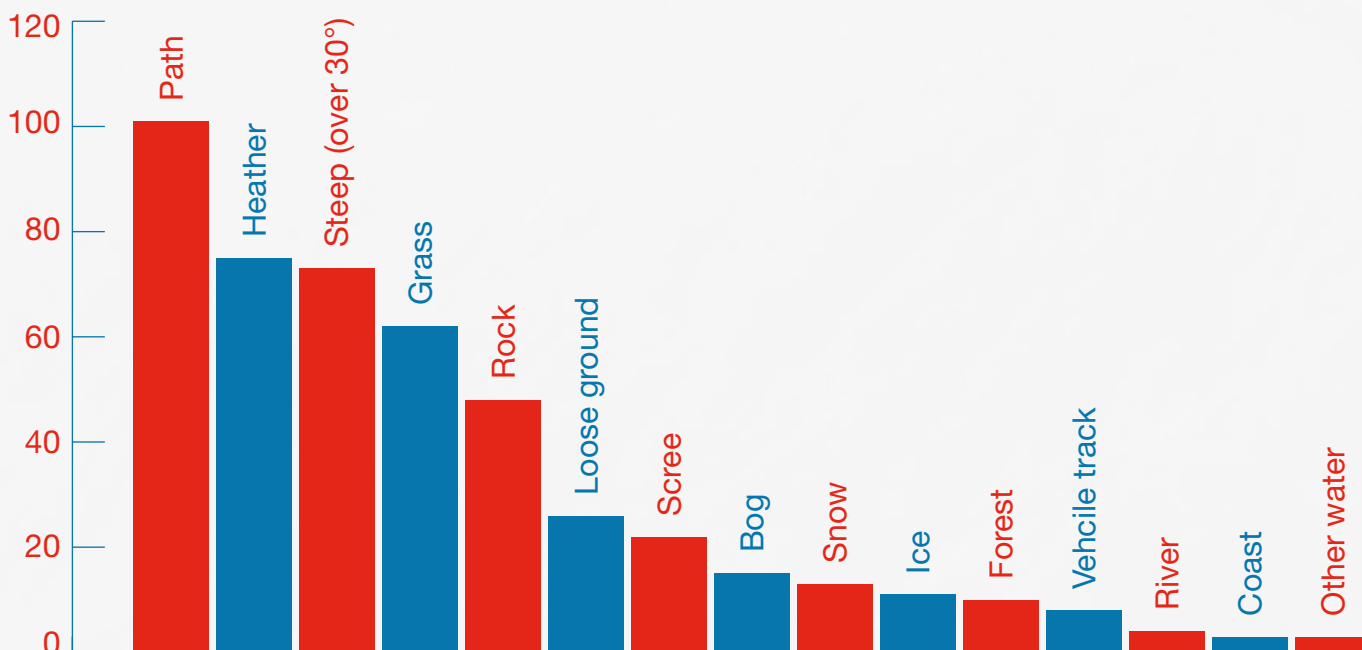
	Count
Fine	110
Cloudy	55
Rain	46
Dark	42
Windy	32
Freezing	17
Snowing	11
Blizzard	3
Hot	3
Storm	3
Lightning	1



Where available, the terrain in the locality of the incident is detailed below. Most incidents occurred near a path of some sort, often involving steep ground (note that each incident may have more than one terrain classification).

Count

Path	101
Heather	75
Steep terrain (over 30°)	73
Grass	62
Rock	48
Loose ground	26
Scree	22
Bog	15
Snow	13
Ice	11
Forest	10
Vehicle Track	8
River	4
Coast	3
Other water	3



INJURY TYPES

In 2019, **112 (36%)** of the people assisted had an injury recorded.

Casualties only have a single injury type recorded (though this may be “multiple”). The breakdown of injury types is given below.

	Count
Fracture	59
Sprains	14
Fatal	9
Other	7
Bruising	6
Laceration	6
Hypothermia	3
Multiple injuries	3
Heart	2
Hyperthermia	1
Illness	1
Minor cuts	1

INJURY SITE

Casualties generally have a single (or no) injury site recorded.

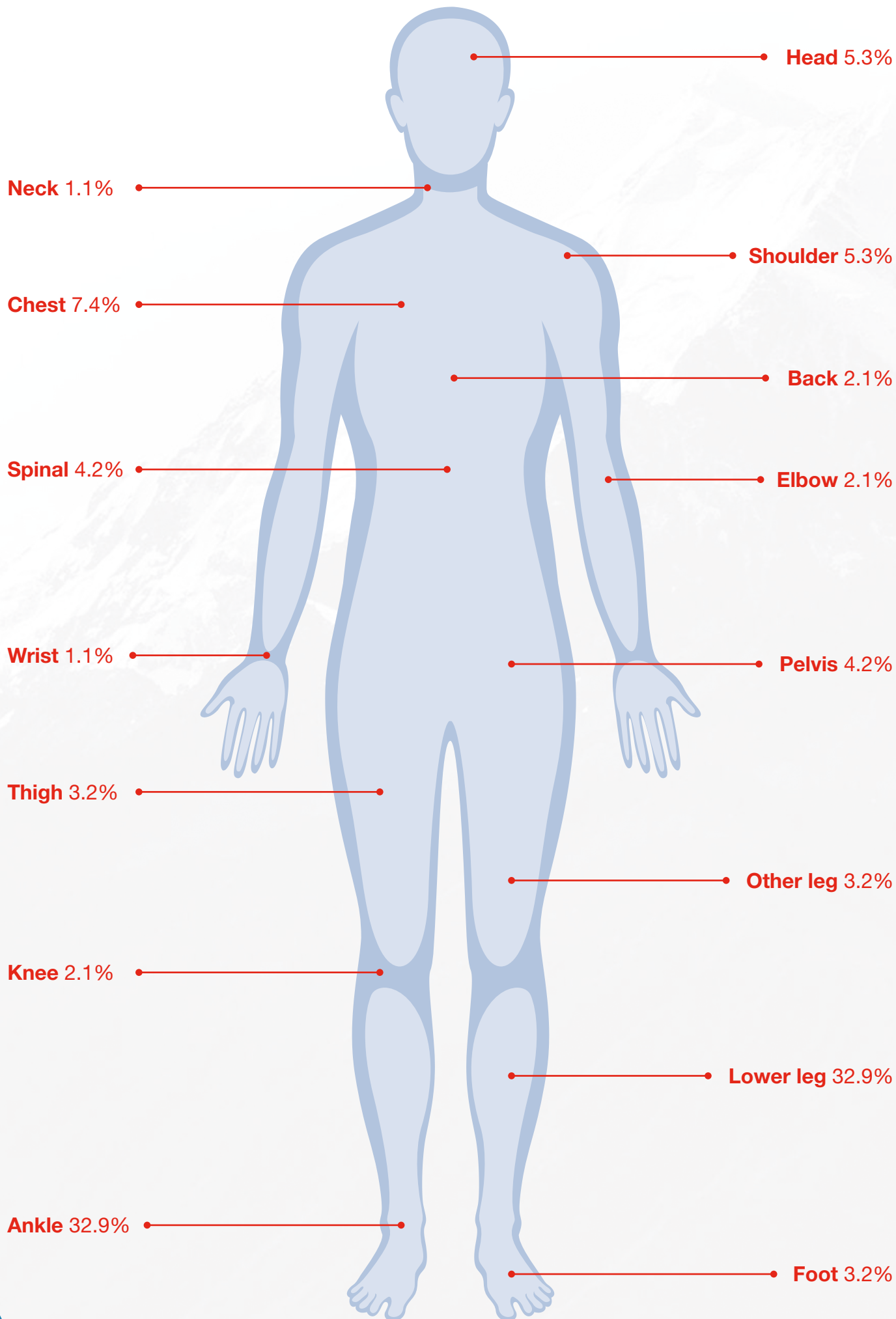
Due to rounding, percentage values in the table may not add up to 100%.

	Count	Percentage
Ankle	31	32.6
Lower leg	20	21.1
Chest	7	7.4
Head	5	5.3
Shoulder	5	5.3
Spinal	4	4.2
Pelvis	4	4.2
Thigh	3	3.2
Foot	3	3.2
Other leg	3	3.2
Back	2	2.1
Upper Arm	2	2.1
Elbow	2	2.1
Knee	2	2.1
Neck	1	1.1
Wrist	1	1.1

112 (36%)

Of people assisted had an injury recorded.





DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender of people assisted

	Count
Male	141
Female	132
Unspecified	38

Nationality

Nationality was recorded for **211** of the assisted mountaineers. Mountaineers rescued had **15** different nationalities.

	Count
Afghanistan	1
Australia	2
Belgium	2
Canada	4
Switzerland	2
China	1
Germany	7
Spain	4
France	3
Great Britain	171
Korea	1
Lebanon	2
Netherlands	3
Norway	2
USA	6

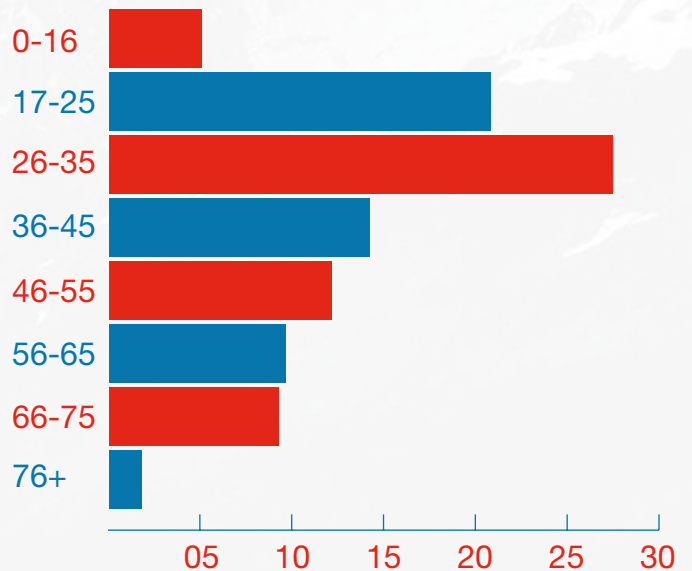
The breakdown for British mountaineers (where the specific country they were from was recorded) is shown below.

	Count
English	20
Scottish	135
Welsh	2

Age

Age was recorded for **240** mountaineers. The most frequently rescued age category was 26-35 years, although this may simply reflect that certain age groups go out into the hill more frequently than others.

Casualty Age Group	Count
0-16	12
17-25	50
26-35	66
36-45	34
46-55	29
56-65	23
66-75	22
76+	4

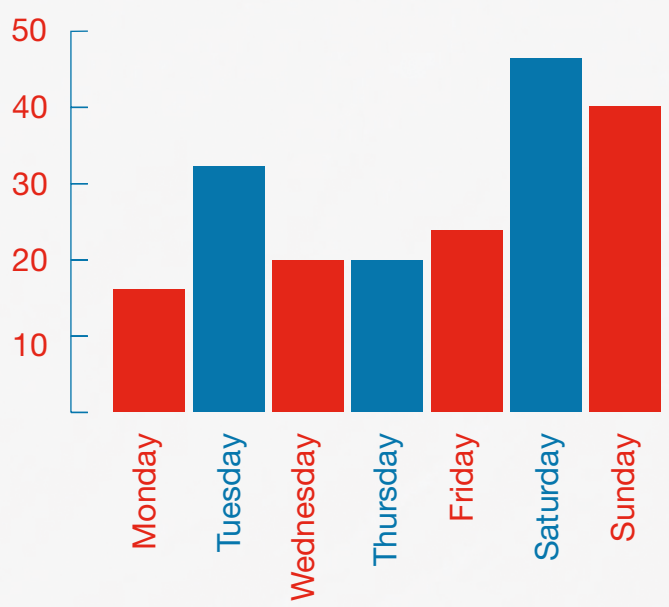
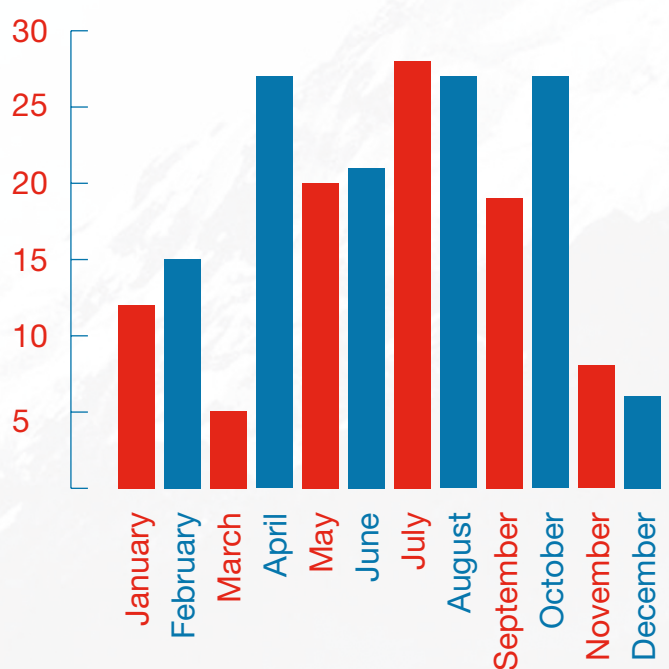


15

Different nationalities rescued.

Timing of incidents

The busiest period for teams is generally during the summer months. Both mountaineering and non-mountaineering incidents (see later section) increase during the summer. The busiest day of the week for teams for mountaineering incidents tends to be a Saturday or Sunday.



NON-MOUNTAINEERING INCIDENTS

Mountain Rescue Teams grew locally as a result of a need in their community. Over time, the needs of the community change, and with it the capabilities of the MRTs to respond to these needs. Throughout the period, teams continued to respond to a wide variety of calls for help and their activity is recorded in this section.

Teams were engaged in **259** incidents supporting the community.

Activity

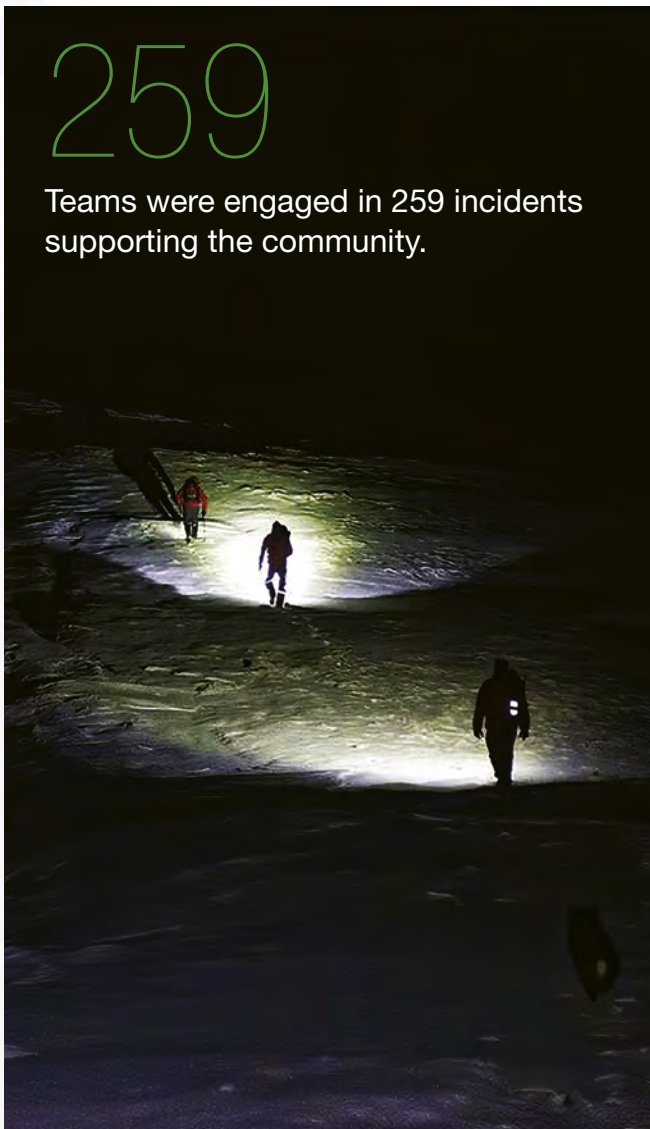
The activity leading to these incidents was recorded in **85** cases.

Count

Missing person	19
Rural walking	19
Cycling	10
Self-harm	7
Equestrian	4
Working	4
Abseiling	3
Air sport	3
Civil resilience	3
Fishing	3
Motor vehicle	3
Running	3
Canoe/Kayak/Raft	2
Medevac	2
Police investigation	2
Swimming	2
Duke of Edinburgh's Award Expedition	2
4x4/ATV	1
Canyoning	1
MRT activity	1
Skiing	1
Snow boarding	1
Train	1

259

Teams were engaged in 259 incidents supporting the community.



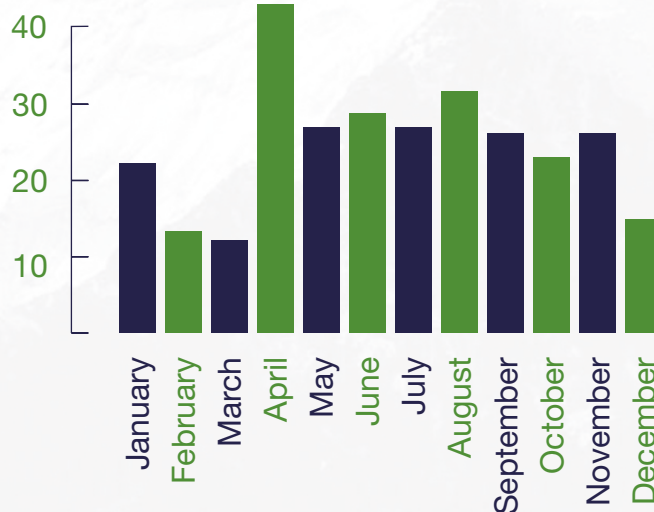
Causes

Factors leading to incidents are recorded by teams. Each incident may have several contributing factors.

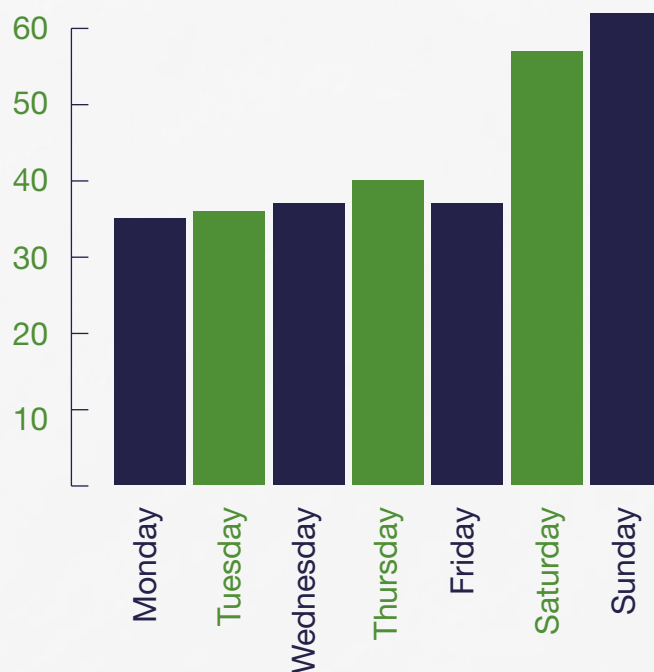
The most frequent specific cause of a non-mountaineering callout was “reported missing”.

	Count
Reported missing	49
Fall	42
Slip trip	38
Self-harm	31
Lost	21
Navigation error	15
Overdue	11
Medical	10
Missing kit	6
Benighted	4
Cragfast	4
Weather-bound	4
Exhaustion	4
River crossing	2
Kit failure	1
Rock fall	1
Technology reliance	1
Food	1

Timing



The busiest day of the week for teams for non-mountaineering incidents tends to be a Saturday or Sunday.



ALL INCIDENT TYPES

Joint working (all incident types)

Mountain Rescue Teams are called out by and work closely with Police Scotland to resolve every incident. In **36%** of incidents, teams worked closely with a number of other partner agencies (in addition to helicopters, which are covered in the next table).

	Count
Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS)	136
Maritime and Coastguard Agency	44
Loch Lomond Rescue Boat	7
Police Search Teams (NOT Police MR)	4
SAS Special Operations Response Team	3
Royal National Lifeboat Association	3
Scottish Charity Air Ambulance	2
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	1
Northumberland MR service	1
Border Search And Rescue Unit	1
Recovery garage	1
Medic One	1

Joint working (all incident types)

MRTs work closely with helicopter services across the country.

The number of activations of specific aircraft is detailed below (**210** in total).

	Count
Rescue 199	62
Rescue 948	61
Rescue 951	34
Rescue 151	22
Helimed	16
Police	13
Other	1
Rescue 152	1

Details on the specific aircraft used e.g. S92 etc.

Helicopters performed a number of roles in assisting teams. In many cases aircraft performed more than one role (while in some instances the helicopter was unable - or not required - to perform any of these roles).

Role	Count
Search	72
Transport	41
Rescue	64
Evacuation	109

210

Total aircraft activations.

36%

Of incidents were collaborations with teams and other partner agencies.

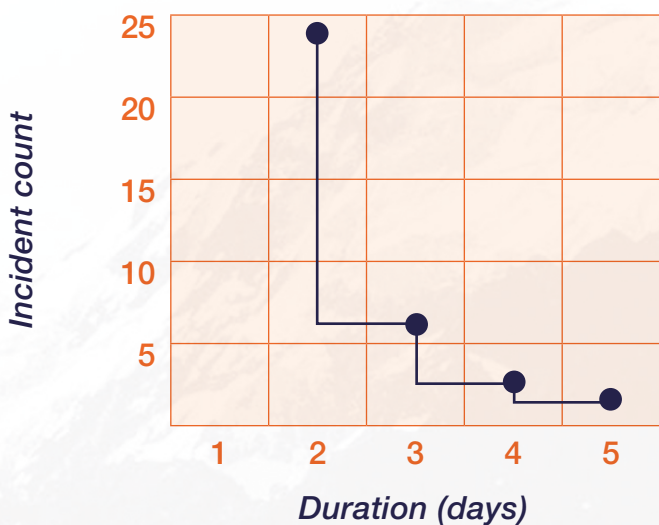
38

Incidents lasted more than one day.



Multi-day incidents

38 incidents lasted more than one day. These are summarised below.



Number of days	Count
1	464
2	26
3	7
4	3
5	2



Multiple teams working together

Number of teams	Count
1	389
2	87
3	17
4	6
5	2
6	1

Police areas

Area ID	Name	Count
None	None	0
A	Aberdeen	0
B	Aberdeenshire & Moray	47
C	Forth Valley	83
D	Tayside	41
E	Edinburgh	9
G	Glasgow	4
J	Lothians & Borders	58
K	Renfrewshire & Inverclyde	3
L	Argyll & West Dumbartonshire	54
N	Highlands & Islands	143
F	Fife	0
L	Lanarkshire	1
A	Ayrshire	36
V	Dumfries & Galloway	23



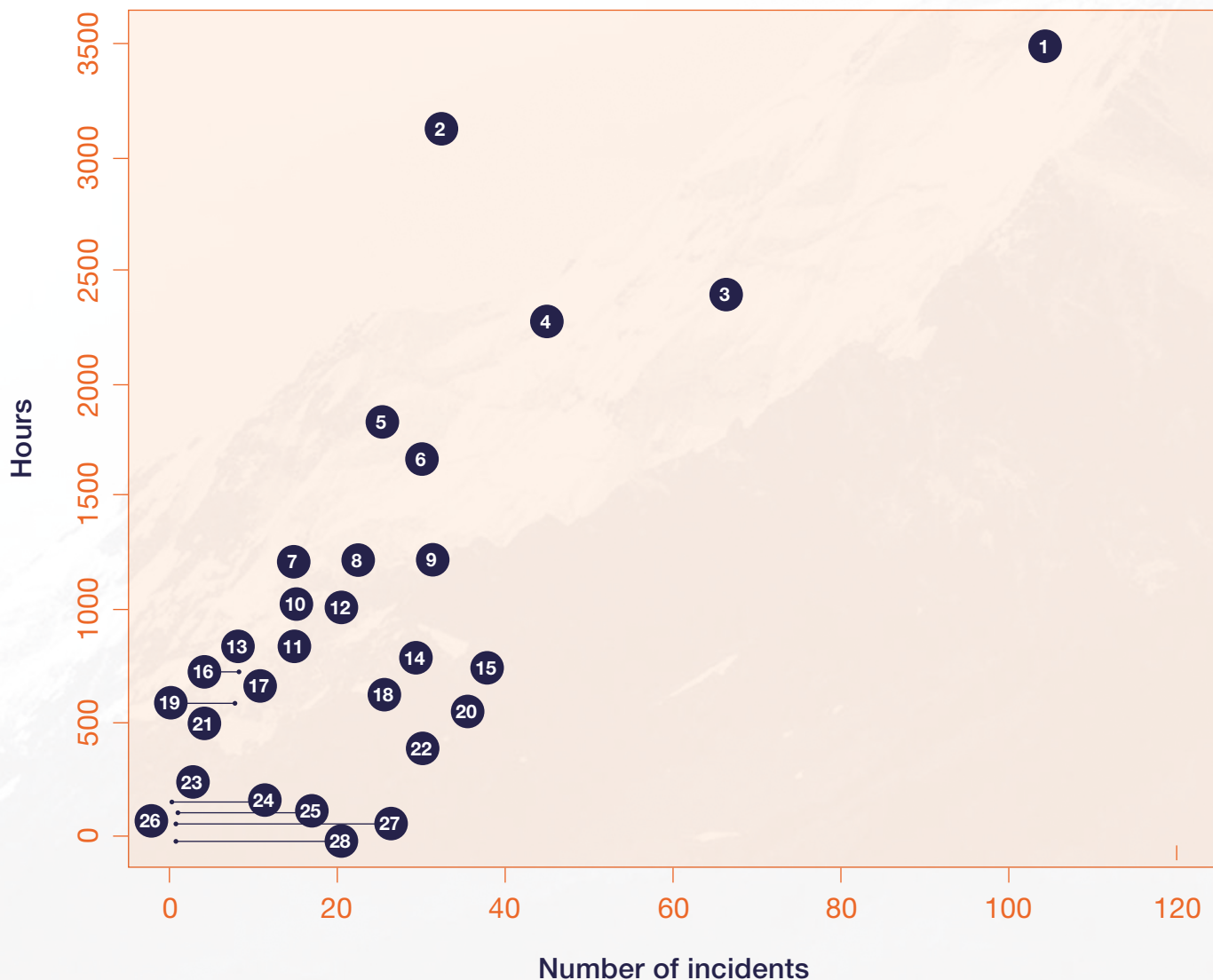
ALL INCIDENT TYPES

Callouts by team

	Count	Hours
None	0	0.0
Aberdeen	13	730.0
Arran	30	1838.8
Arrochar	22	1211.5
Assynt	16	652.0
Braemar	36	778.0
Borders	26	1014.0
Dundonnell	41	3123.0
Galloway	14	599.0
Glenelg	4	100.0
Glenmore Lodge	2	53.0
Hebrides	8	236.0
Killin	34	1674.0
Kintail	4	161.0
Lomond	37	1224.1
Moffat	9	489.0
Oban	19	1037.4
Ochils	17	779.4
Skye	70	2399.9
Torricon	12	774.0
Tweed Valley	50	2276.0
Police Scotland (Grampian)	42	530.5
Police Scotland (Strathclyde)	110	3479.0
Police Scotland (Tayside)	44	711.5
SARDA (Scotland)	30	628.0
SARDA (Southern)	36	382.3

Scottish Cave Rescue	0	0.0
RAF Kinross	0	0.0
SARAA-Scotland	4	53.0
Other	0	0.0
Total	730	26934.4





- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Police (Strathclyde) | 11 Ochils | 21 Moffat |
| 2 Dundonnell | 12 Borders | 22 SARDA (Southern Scotland) |
| 3 Skye | 13 Torridon | 23 Hebrides |
| 4 Tweed | 14 Braemar | 24 Kintail |
| 5 Arran | 15 Police (Tayside) | 25 Glenelg |
| 6 Killin | 16 Aberdeen | 26 Glenmore Lodge |
| 7 Braemar | 17 Assynt | 27 SARAA |
| 8 Arrochar | 18 SARDA (Scotland) | 28 SCRO |
| 9 Lomond | 19 Galloway | |
| 10 Oban | 20 Police (Grampian) | |

Scatterplot of teams, showing the number of incidents they attended, and number of hours they spent on callouts, in 2019.

Footnote

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Any other enquiry relating to Scottish Mountain Rescue should be directed to info@scottishmountainrescue.org



Volunteering to save lives