



# Scottish Mountain Rescue

Glenmore, Aviemore, Inverness-shire PH22 1QU

*'Volunteering to save lives'®*

## Annual Report 2015

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**St John**  
Scotland



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*Scottish Mountain Rescue would like to thank the Scottish Government and the Order of St John for their continued commitment and financial assistance.*



## Annual Statistics Report 2015

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All enquires about the content of this report or any other matter associated with Incident Reporting should be directed to Police Scotland on whose behalf the MR statistical data is held. Any other enquiry relating to Scottish Mountain Rescue should be directed to the General Manager at:-

[info@scottishmountainrescue.org](mailto:info@scottishmountainrescue.org)





## Introduction

All Mountain Rescue in Scotland is coordinated by Police Scotland. They receive the initial callout through the 999 system and then task the most appropriate asset, which on the mountains is usually the local Mountain Rescue Team (MRT). Each MRT is an autonomous organisation who can then submit their reports to the Statistician of Scottish Mountain Rescue, the representative body for Mountain Rescue in Scotland.

These 2015 incident statistics are compiled from submissions received from the 27 Teams that are members of Scottish Mountain Rescue (SMR) during the period. The annual report covers the calendar year from January 1st to December 31st. Data was submitted via an excel spreadsheet until May 2015, from which time an online reporting system was used.

The information within this report should be taken as a summary of the operational response activity throughout 2015 of the volunteer and professional teams throughout the country.

## Numbers for the Year

- 579** Incidents
- 776** People assisted (+ 5 dogs, 2 horses and 1 sheep)
- 59%** Of mountain incidents were for Summer Hillwalkers
- 2** Avalanches requiring MRT involvement
- 12** Mountaineering fatalities
- 185** Uninjured people helped
- 3** People hit by falling rocks
- 493** Casualties in Mountaineering accidents
- 32** People stuck on snow or crags
- 1005** Activations of MRT personnel
- 39,728** Hours of time donated



## Incidents, Callouts and Hours.

An **incident** is defined as a single event which requires the services of an MRT. The resolution of this incident may need several **call outs** of a Team (or Teams) for example during a prolonged search.

The total number of **incidents** for 2015 was **579** for the period.

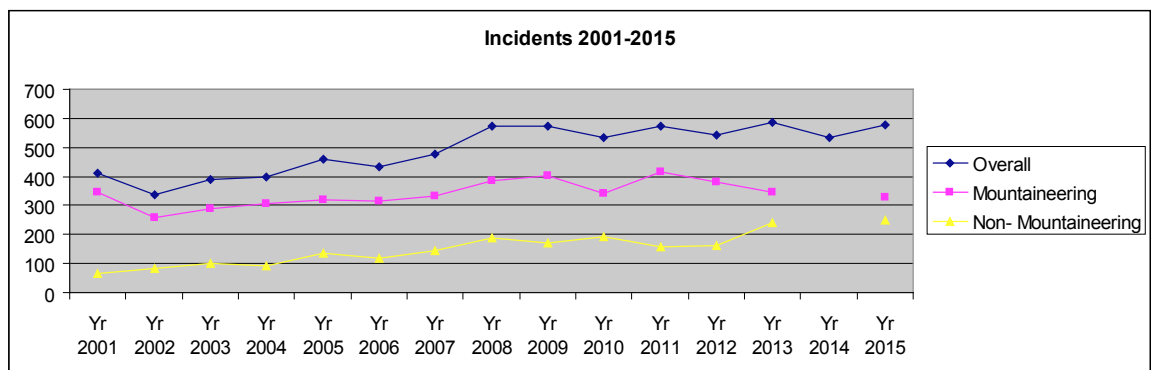
Of these 331 were involving the sport of mountaineering, with 248 non-mountaineering.

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Year	Mountaineering	Non Mountaineering	Total Incidents
<b>2015</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>248*</b>	<b>579</b>
2010	340	194	534
2005	321	137	458
2001	347	65	412

\* 248 Non-Mountaineering includes 33 incidents where activity was not recorded

Chart 1: Incident rates since 2001



Incident rates climbed steadily until 2009. Since then the number per annum has been relatively stable.

### Call outs

Including giving advice, "Stand-by's" and continuations, **1005** activations of Teams were recorded during the period

### Volunteered hours

Mountain Rescue Volunteers gave up 39,728 hours of their time during callouts.

See Team breakdown for further details.

## “Volunteering to save lives” - Persons assisted

During the year, 776 people were identified as being assisted during an incident. This is a higher annual number than in the previous 4 year period. In addition, December 2015 saw Civil Resilience support given by MRT's during the flooding. It is recorded that a further 92 people were assisted.

Table 2: Persons assisted

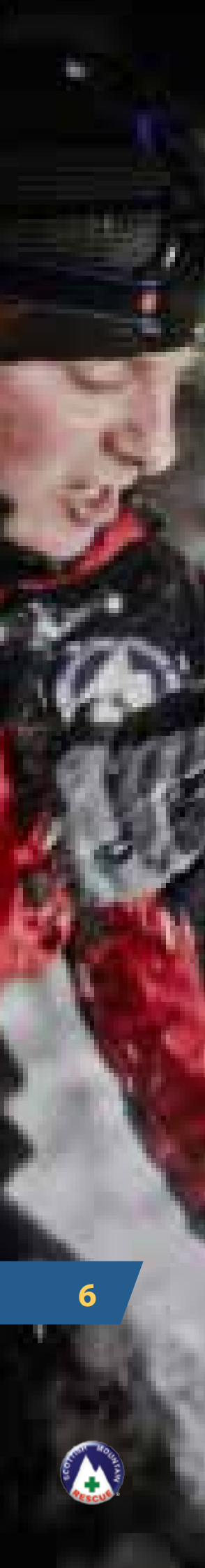
Year	Total
2015	776 (+92)
2014	655(Some data absent)
2013	721
2012	720
2011	684

## Types of Callout

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

Table 3: Incident Type

	2015	2014
Body recovery	17	16
Civil Resilience	6	3
False alarm	18	10
Medical emergency	20	17
Police Investigation	11	8
Search	133	109
Rescue	221	219
Search and Rescue	112	97
Search (water)	2	3
Technical Rescue	6	4
Water Rescue	6	1
Other	15	0
Animal rescue	7	4
Not recorded	5	62



## Mountaineering and Non-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

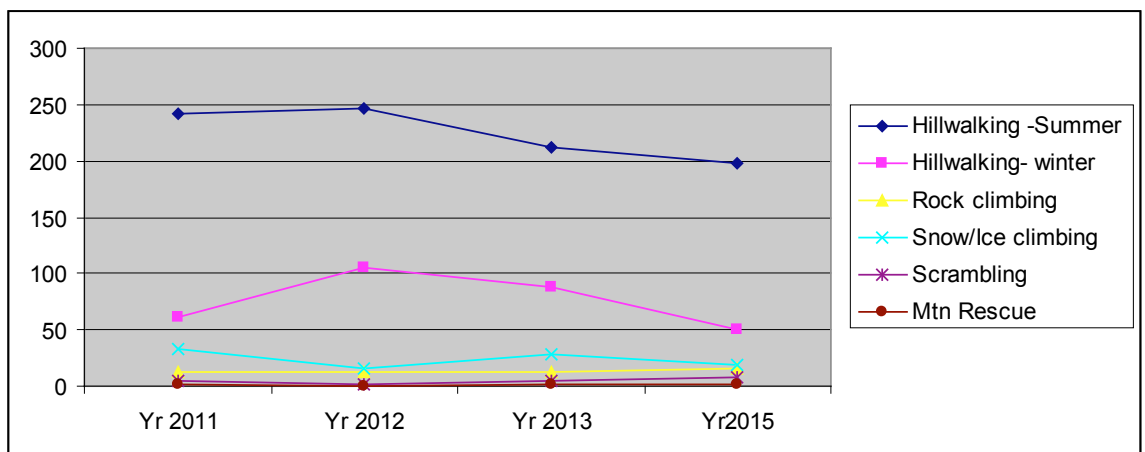
Table 4: Mountaineering incidents by type.

Hillwalking summer	Hillwalking- winter	Rock climbing	Snow/Ice climbing	Scrambling	Mtn Rescue	Other Mountaineering	Totals
198 (59%)	49 (15%)	15 (5%)	19 (6%)	8 (2%)	1(0.3%)	41	331

The Total number of casualties in Mountaineering accidents was 493, (265 male, 142 Female, 86 not recorded)

Chart 2: Mountaineering activities leading to an incident since 2011

Note 2014 data omitted as dataset incomplete.



The proportion between the activities remains reasonably consistent, although 2015 saw a reduction in Winter Hillwalking incidents and an increase in Rock climbing. Perhaps the winter storm cycles had an effect.



## Non-mountaineering incidents reported

Table 5: Non-Mountaineering incidents by type

Figures are incident numbers recorded

Activity	2015	2014	2013	2012
<b>Airsports/Aviation</b>	<b>5</b>	0	3	1
<b>4x4/ATV driving</b>	<b>0</b>	2		
<b>Canoe/Kayak/Raft</b>	<b>3</b>	3	1	8
<b>Canyoning/ Gorgewalking</b>	<b>1</b>	0	3	
<b>Caving/Mine exploration</b>	<b>2</b>	1		
<b>Civil resilience</b>	<b>13</b>	1	12	3
<b>Cycling</b>	<b>21</b>	12	15	16
<b>Duke of Edinburgh's Award</b>	<b>10</b>	Not identified	Not identified	Not identified
<b>Equestrian</b>	<b>3</b>	2		
<b>Fishing</b>	<b>1</b>	1	1	
<b>Military exercise</b>	<b>2</b>	0	2	
<b>Missing person</b>	<b>56</b>	60	76	41
<b>Motor vehicle</b>	<b>6</b>	3	3	
<b>Police investigation</b>	<b>1</b>	2	1	
<b>Running</b>	<b>9</b>	10	8	9
<b>Rural walking</b>	<b>56</b>	23	37	6
<b>Self harm</b>	<b>14</b>	15	3	37
<b>Skiing</b>	<b>1</b>	2	6	3
<b>Snowboarding</b>	<b>0</b>	1	0	0
<b>Swimming</b>	<b>2</b>	2	0	0
<b>Working</b>	<b>4</b>	7	6	9
<b>Other</b>	<b>6</b>	12	6	39
<b>Not recorded</b>	<b>80</b>	103	45	



## Information about casualties

Many people rescued are unhurt, others may suffer from an illness or injury. The primary complaint identified are shown below. There may be other injuries associated with the event.

Table 6: Primary Causes

Actual number recorded

Illness or Injury	2015 total n=411	2015 Mountaineering	2014 total n=278	2013 total n=232
Drowning	2	0	1	2
Asphyxia	1	0	2	1
Fracture, sprain, dislocation	100	71	73	78
Heart	7	7	7	6
Heat illness	1	0	0	3
Hypothermia	8	3	9	17
Internal Injury	2	1	2	3
Cuts/Bruising/Burns	34	25	25	15
Multiple injuries	3	2	8	10
Illness ,CVA, seizure, Asthma	10	9	1	8
Activity induced	12	11		
No injury or illness	185	121	109	118
Fatality	37	12	26	55
Other	9	10	15	34
Not recorded	167	23		

## Site of injury

Table 7: Site of Injury.

Actual numbers recorded.

	2015 n=172	2015 Mountaineering	2014 total n=143	2013 total n=157
Head/Neck	30	20	28	21
Arm/shoulder	17	12	10	18
Back and spinal	11	4	3	4
Chest	12	10	12	5
Pelvis/Hip	7	4	3	5
Internal/Abdomen	2	1	0	2
Thigh	4	2	3	5
Knee	16	11	6	13
Lower leg/Ankle/Foot	73	51	74	76

The predominating type and site of injury remains a fracture, dislocation or sprain to the leg below the knee. This has remained a consistent pattern over the years. An increased number injuries to the back were recorded this year, of these 5 were spinal injuries.

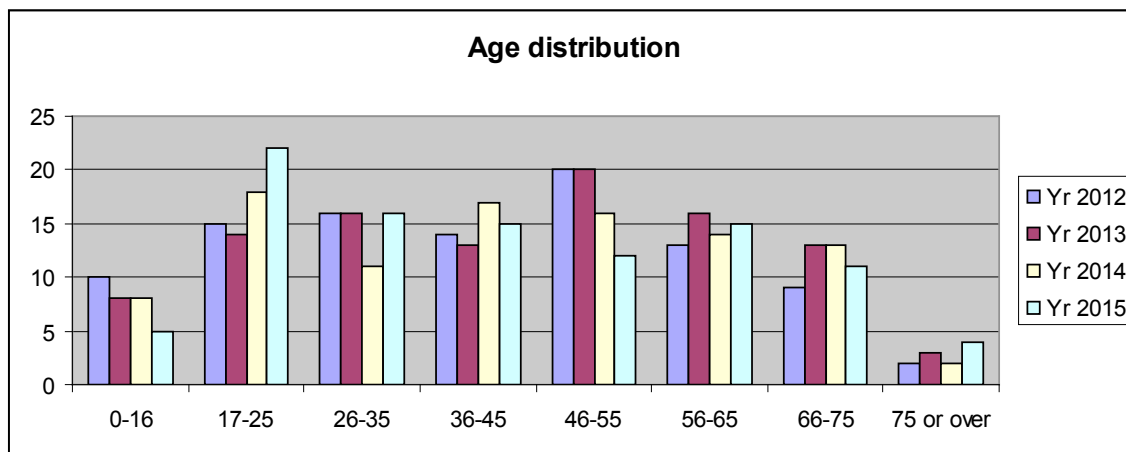
## Age range

The % of people in the age ranges is shown below.

Table 8: Age range

Age range	Yr 2015 all (%)	Yr 2015 Mountaineering only (%)	Yr 2014 all (%)	Yr 2013 all (%)	Yr 2012 all (%)
0-16	5	3	8	8	10
17-25	22	25	18	14	15
26-35	16	17	11	16	16
36-45	15	14	17	13	14
46-55	12	11	16	20	20
56-65	15	18	14	16	13
66-75	11	11	13	13	9
over	4	2	2	3	2

Chart 3: Age range of persons assisted across all incidents 2012-2015



The distribution across the age groups remains largely constant since 2012 apart from the 17-25 age group which appears to have risen in the last two years.

## Multiple casualty incidents

More than one person can be involved in an incident.

Table 9: Casualties per incident

No of Persons	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	14
No of incidents	404	80	17	11	4	8	1	0	0	2

The majority of incidents only involved one casualty.

Civil resilience activity by MRT's in the December flooding also involved large groups of 30,25,22 and 15 people during evacuations.

## Evacuation methods.

In the majority of incidents, the casualty will need to be assisted from their position to a place of safety.

Depending on the location and the nature of the injuries an appropriate method will be chosen.

With a "Talk off", the party will be directed towards safety, usually by mobile phone link. A "Self Rescue" is where a casualty evacuates themselves un-aided after the MRT has been mobilised.

Table 10: How the casualty is evacuated.

Evacuation method	2015		2014 (%)	2013(%)
Self rescue	<b>30</b>	<b>9%</b>	5%	6%
Carry off	<b>77</b>	<b>23%</b>	18%	15%
Walk off	<b>71</b>	<b>21%</b>	28%	23%
Helicopter	<b>85</b>	<b>29%</b>	33%	38%
None	<b>21</b>	<b>6%</b>	8%	8%
Talk off	<b>10</b>	<b>3%</b>	3%	2%
Other	<b>1</b>	<b>0%</b>	5%	7%
Vehicle/ATV	<b>21</b>	<b>6%</b>		
Boat	<b>4</b>	<b>1%</b>		
Abseil off	<b>1</b>	<b>0.30%</b>		

## Causes of Incidents

It is often difficult to assign a cause which leads to the calling out of a Mountain Rescue Team. If a walker slips on a mountain path, the simple cause is that they slipped. If however, a mountaineer falls a distance on broken terrain, the cause may be a slip, but may also be contributed to by a navigation error, darkness or other factors.

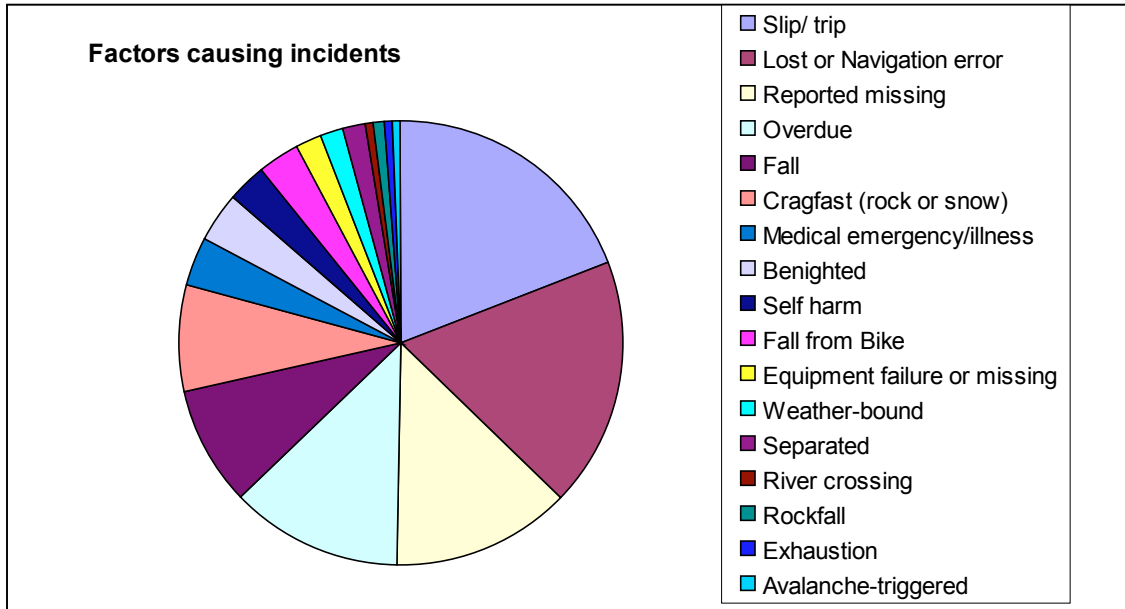
In their reports, MRT's identify the main causes where it is known, however there are other factors that may not be identified or recorded.

Table 11: Factors leading to an incident

Factor	2015	2015(%)	2014 (%)	2013 (%)	2012 (%)
Slip/ trip	<b>81</b>	<b>19</b>	21	23	17
Lost or Navigation error	<b>75</b>	<b>17</b>	16	19	21
Reported missing	<b>55</b>	<b>13</b>	15	13	18
Fall	<b>36</b>	<b>8</b>	13	12	11
Overdue	<b>53</b>	<b>12</b>	4	10	11
Cragfast (rock or snow)	<b>32</b>	<b>7</b>	4	6	3
Self harm	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	5	4	0
Medical emergency/illness	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	0	3	5
Benighted	<b>15</b>	<b>3</b>	2	2	4
Equipment failure or missing	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	1	2	0
Separated	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	2	2	3
Avalanche-triggered	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	1	1	0
River crossing	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	1	1	2
Rockfall	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	0	1	0
Weather-bound	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	5	1	0
Cornice collapse	<b>1</b>	<b>.3</b>	2		
Technology reliance	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	1		
Exhaustion	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	1		
Fall from Bike	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>			

Patterns remain reasonably consistent across the years with the slip or trip as the major single factor. "Fall from Bike" is a new category as the number of instances of cycle related injury seems to be increasing.

Chart 4: Factors



**Annual distribution of incidents**

Chart 5: Incidents by month

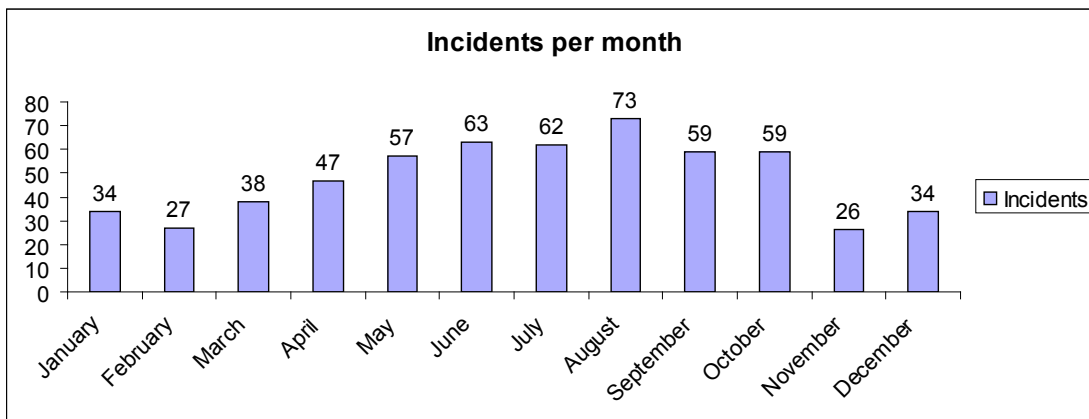
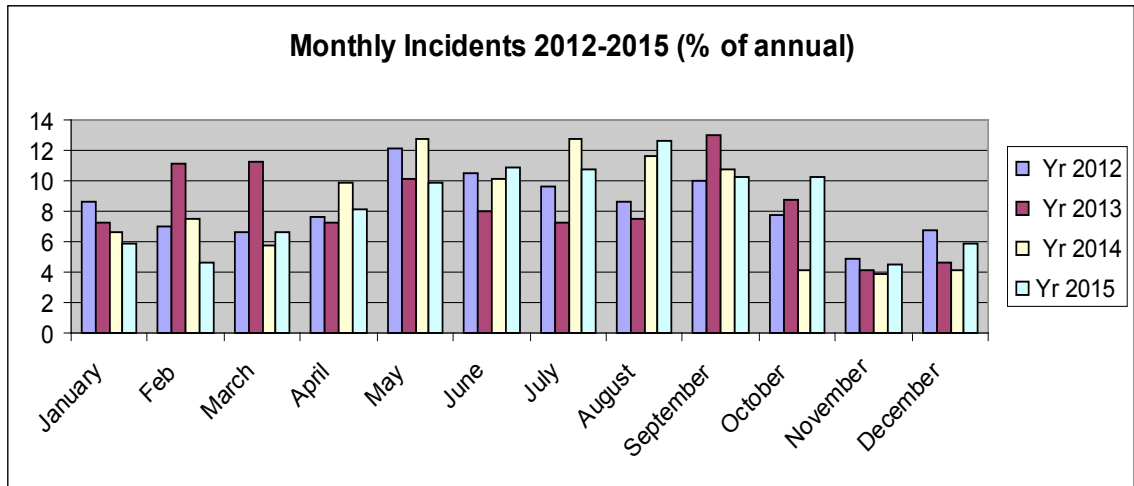


Chart 6: Incidents per month 2012-2015



November and December are consistently the quietest months.

### Day of the week

Table 12: Callouts on particular days of the week (%)

	2015	2014	2013
Monday	14	12	12
Tuesday	15	14	13
Wednesday	14	9	10
Thursday	10	14	12
Friday	12	13	10
Saturday	17	23	24
Sunday	17	15	19

There is a more even distribution across the days than in previous years with more incidents occurring mid-week.

## Callouts by Team

### Total for Scotland

Table 13

Combined for all Teams	Callouts	Incidents	Hours
	1005	871	39,728

Note: In some areas, there is a joint response from two Teams to an incident. The sum of number of incidents is therefore greater than the headline figure.

### Volunteer Civilian Teams

Table 14

	Callouts	Incidents	Hours
Aberdeen	6	6	119
Arran	28	27	1098.9
Arrochar	25	25	1368
Assynt	10	9	403
Braemar	22	22	625
Borders	14	14	850.1
Cairngorm	34	34	1175
Dundonnell	35	32	1953
Galloway	14	14	1183
Glencoe	79	49	2580.5
Glenelg	4	4	98.5
Glenmore Lodge	1	1	32
HebSAR	7	6	263
Killin	28	26	1625.5
Kintail	8	8	393.5
Lochaber	133	101	7384
Lomond	33	29	1615.5
Moffat	19	16	841.5
Oban	25	25	1247
Ochils	26	25	599.4
SARDA (Scotland)	78	64	1864.3
SARDA (Southern)	49	45	415
Scottish Cave Rescue	2	2	6.5
Skye	53	52	2934.6
Tayside	39	32	1215
Torridon	25	21	947
Tweed Valley	24	24	1698
	821	713	34535.8

### Police Scotland Mountain Rescue Teams

Table 15

	Callouts	Incidents	Hours
Police Scotland (Grampian)	23	23	432.5
Police Scotland (Strathclyde)	117	100	3631
Police Scotland (Tayside)	44	35	1129
	184	158	5192.5

## Extended Incidents

In the event of a protracted incident such as a Search, Teams may be out over a number of days. In 2015 there was a number of long term missing persons searches conducted.

Table 16: Number of incidents extending

Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
22	9	7	7	6	4	3	3	2
Day 15	Day 29							
2	1							

## Multi Team incidents.

Teams work closely together with their neighbouring Teams to assist as required.

Table 17:

2nd Team involved	3rd or more teams
145	31

## Location of Incidents within Police Scotland divisions

Table 18

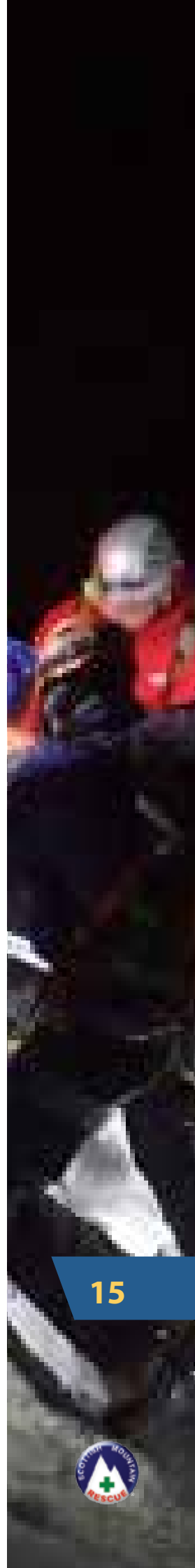
Location of incidents by Police division

Police Division	2015	2014
A - Aberdeen	1	0
B - Aberdeenshire and Moray	20	33
C - Forth Valley	67	52
D - Tayside	34	35
E - Edinburgh	1	10
G - Glasgow	2	2
J - Lothians & Borders	30	32
K - Renfrewshire & Inverclyde	0	0
L - Argyll & West Dumbartonshire	48	29
N - Highlands & Islands	305	286
P - Fife	3	1
Q - Lanarkshire	7	2
U - Ayrshire	30	25
V - Dumfries & Galloway	31	25



## Samples of incidents from reports submitted by Team.

- A hill goer and reported seeing 'distress lights' MRT advised against taking any action as no one was reported missing and the grid was in 'safe' ground.
- Male fell in small pool while trying to get a better photo; got wet through, as did his wife both of whom could not swim.
- Lost geology student phoned Grandma in Liverpool, who in turned phoned the police. Casualty soon turned up in xxxx
- Missing person separated from group and made navigational error coming off summit of Ben and ended up falling into Coire Eoghainn
- Initially alerted by ARCC who had been tasked by the Metropolitan Police (bypassing Police Scotland and ourselves who were put on the back foot) by messages on Facebook.....
- MR were advised that a female with two horses and a dog had become lost in the Glen Tilt area. A joint rescue response was commenced from the North and South. She was traced cold but safe and well.
- A party of 2 were stuck in a blizzard on the summit of Cairngorm at the igloo. Talked them off.
- 2 males developed "altitude sickness" when they saw helicopter in area. They were encouraged to walk down after being told that there was no way either the team or the helicopter was coming to get them.
- Hillwalker suffered slip / trip / fall 150m on steep ground. Rescue Helo tasked to attend. MRT lifted to casualty to help with rescue/wincing.
- Kira the 6 month old pup fell down a gorge while chasing a hare, her owner alerted MRT and 4 members responded and lowered a person down to the dog and they were brought back up, dog feeling a bit ruff but otherwise safe and well!
- Injured mountain biker with severe wound to lower leg had to be stretchered out of woods to waiting ambulance.
- Female walking with a group went over ankle on rough footpath. Group attempted self rescue but found this to difficult and phoned police for help.
- 2 lost walkers/crag fast, located by team and argo used for safe extract.



*'Any Hour, Any Day, Any Weather'*<sup>®</sup>



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