

STATISTICS REPORT

2024

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April 2025



Volunteering
to save lives



PREFACE

This Annual Statistical Report is a supplement to the Scottish Mountain Rescue Review 2024.

For more information on Scottish Mountain Rescue and our member teams visit: www.scottishmountainrescue.org

This report includes data gathered from the 25 civilian member teams as well as three Police Scotland MRTs.

Scottish Mountain Rescue are proud to represent our member teams.

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



Image © Kintail MRT

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 **26** are members of Scottish Mountain Rescue. This report for 2024 is compiled from information received from the **25** civilian and **3** Police Scotland teams that were members of Scottish Mountain Rescue for the entire year of 2024. One civilian and one Police Scotland Mountain Rescue Team joined SMR over the course of 2024, and their data will be reported from 2025 onwards. The teams whose data are included in this report are listed to the right.

This annual report covers the calendar year from January 1st to December 31st 2024.

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

This complicates direct comparison of numbers with those from previous years. (Membership has been consistent since 2016 with one team rejoining in 2021 and another in 2024)

Comparison of key figures with those from previous years are provided where this is considered helpful.

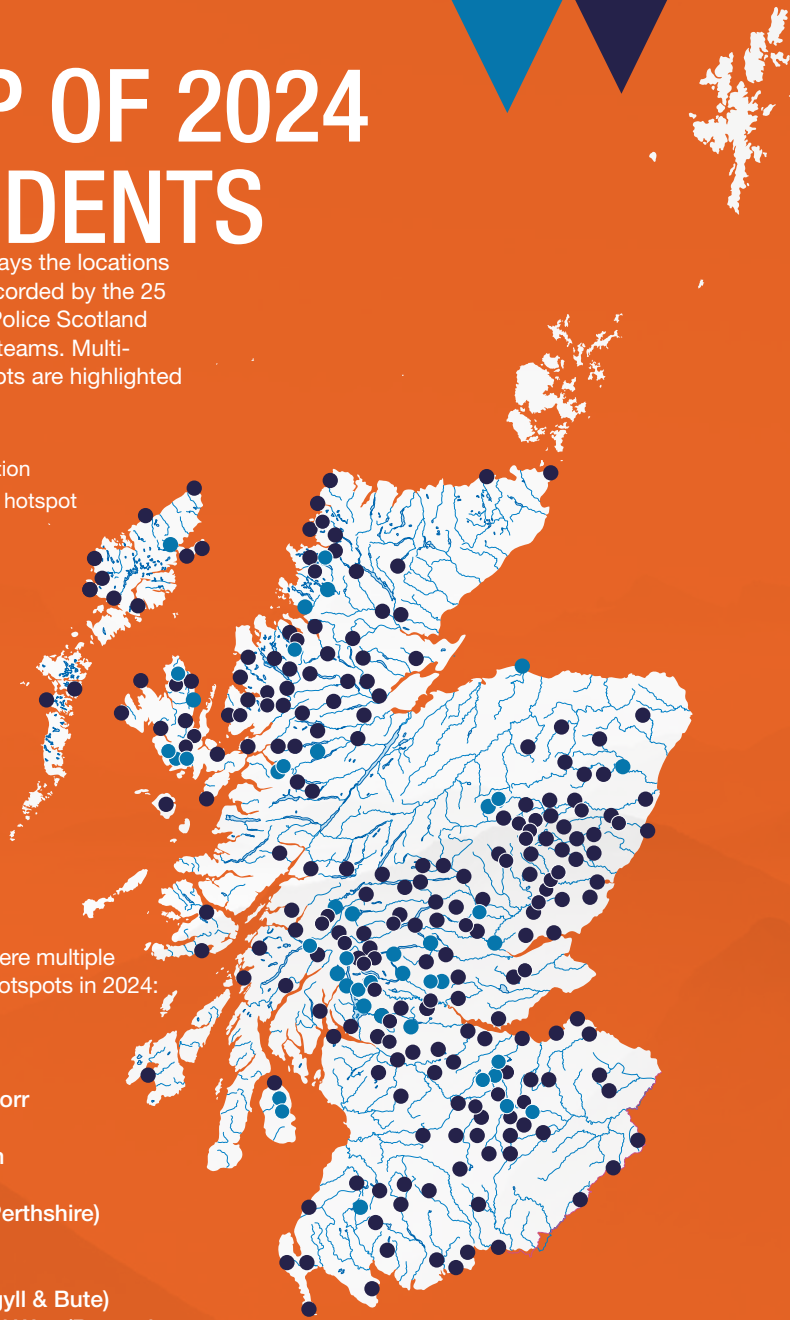
- Aberdeen MRT
- Arran MRT
- Arrochar MRT
- Assynt MRT
- Borders SAR Unit
- Braemar MRT
- Dundonnell MRT
- Galloway MRT
- Glenelg MRT
- Glenmore Lodge MRT
- Hebrides MRT
- Killin MRT
- Kintail MRT
- Lomond MRT
- Moffat MRT
- Oban MRT
- Ochils MRT
- Skye MRT
- Tayside MRT
- Torridon MRT
- Tweed Valley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

MAP OF 2024 INCIDENTS

This map displays the locations of incidents recorded by the 25 civilian and 3 Police Scotland SMR member teams. Multi-incident hotspots are highlighted

Count

- Incident location
- Multi incident hotspot



The following were multiple multi-incident hotspots in 2024:

- Cuillin Ridge
- Quiraing
- Loch Coruisk
- Old Man of Storr
- Beinn Eighe
- Ben Cruachan
- Ben Chonzie
- Ben Vorlich (Perthshire)
- Ochil Hills
- Ben Venue
- Ben Vane (Argyll & Bute)
- West Highland Way (Rowardennan to Beinglas Farm)
- Conic Hill
- Campsie Glen
- Goatfell
- Pentland Hills
- Glentress Forest

OVERVIEW:

INCIDENTS, CALL-OUTS AND HOURS



Number of incidents

The total number of independent incidents in 2024 was **636**.

Of these, **335 (53%)** were related to mountaineering (this includes hillwalking, scrambling, rock climbing and winter climbing, and MRT activity).

The total number of separate team callouts resulting from all incidents was **943**, or exactly **1,000** including "continuations" (linked call-outs on different days).

This is an average of **2.7 per day**, (including continuations). At least one team was called out on **287** different days this year, and on the busiest day (Saturday 7th September 2024) there were **19** call-outs of teams.

Hours

Mountain rescue team members gave up **29,986** hours of their time during call-outs. In addition to this, each of the more than **850** individual team members will spend dozens of hours each year on training activities, and most are also regularly involved in the day-to-day running of their teams, each of which is a charity in its own right.

People helped

During 2024, **740** people were assisted.

13 incidents involved the rescue of dogs, and **four** incidents the rescue of sheep.

There were **25** fatalities, **six** of which occurred in mountaineering incidents. Of those **six**, **three** were related to medical events that occurred in the mountains.

636

Total number of independent incidents.

335 (53%)

Incidents related to mountaineering.

943

Total number of team call-outs.

278

Days where at least one team was called out.

29,986

Hours of time given by mountain rescue team members.

740

People were assisted.

Image © SARA Scotland



TRENDS OVER TIME

Trends over time

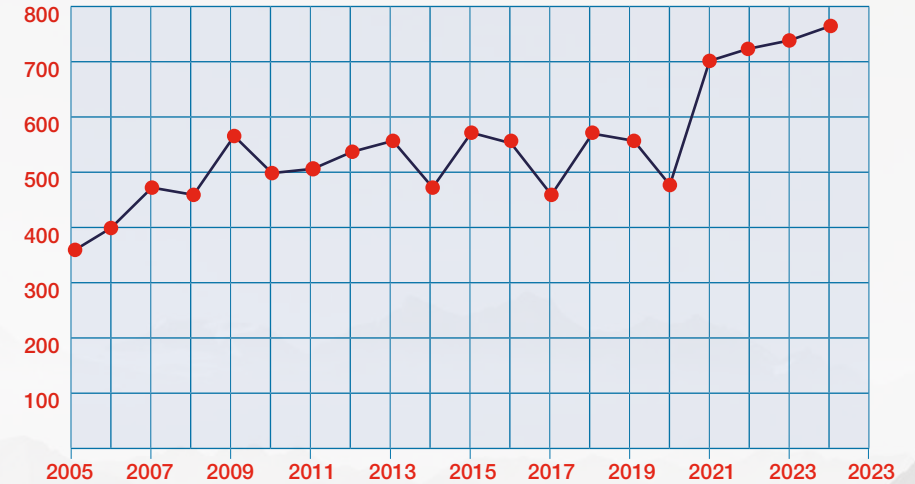
2024 saw an increase in mountain rescue activity, compared to 2023, both in terms of the independent incidents (up **11%** compared to 2023), as well as the total number of callouts across both Police Scotland and civilian teams, including continuations (up **2.5%** from 2023). The total number of hours spent by civilian teams on call outs decreased slightly when compared to 2023 (down **4.9%**); however, the number of call-outs of civilian teams increased to an all-time high of **761**.

These figures sit within an overall trend of increasing callout numbers and total number of hours spent over recent years.

Total number of hours spent by SMR **civilian** rescue teams.

Year	Callouts	Hours
2005	372	15,399
2006	396	15,263
2007	463	17,487
2008	455	14,150
2009	548	22,483
2010	501	17,663
2011	504	14,272
2012	532	21,242
2013	540	19,361
2014	472	15,141
2015	575	23,396
2016	562	19,115
2017	466	16,439
2018	563	23,209
2019	534	22,191
2020	480	19,457
2021	698	25,653
2022	709	24,545
2023	716	25,453
2024	761	24,202

Call-outs (civilian teams)



Hours (civilian teams)

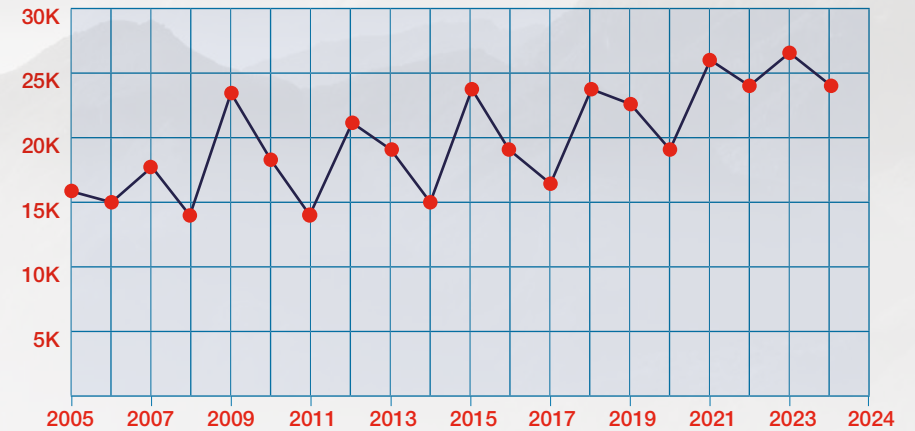


Image © SARDA Scotland



Image © Tweed Valley MRT



Image © Kintail MRT

DATA TYPES OF INCIDENT

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

	Count
Rescue	254
Search and Rescue	147
Search	76
Medical Emergency	60
False Alarm	22
Not Recorded	19
Animal Rescue	17
Police Investigation	17
Body Recovery	10
Civil resilience	4
Technical Rescue	4
Other	3
Water Rescue	2
Search (water)	1
	Total 636

636

Total number of independent incidents



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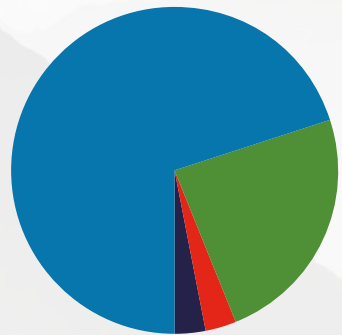


MOUNTAINEERING INCIDENTS

All incidents involving Scottish Mountain Rescue Teams are reported in two broad categories, Mountaineering and Non-Mountaineering. This classification is based on the activity being undertaken. "Mountaineering" includes climbing or hillwalking in both Summer and Winter, as well as scrambling.

In 2024 there were **335** "mountaineering" incidents, in which **469** people were assisted.

	Count	%
Hillwalking (Summer)	235	70
Hillwalking (Winter)	79	24
Rock Climbing	11	3
Scrambling	10	3
Snow/Ice Climbing	0	0
Total	335	100



- Hillwalking (Summer) 70%
- Hillwalking (Winter) 27%
- Rock Climbing 3%
- Scrambling 3%

Cause and conditions

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

	Count
Slip/Trip	95
Lost	49
Navigation Error	36
Medical	31
Fall	27
Missing Kit	27
Crag-fast	20
Overdue	19
Technology Reliance	16
Tiredness	12
Experience	12
Reported Missing	12
Weather-bound	11
Benighted	6
Kit Failure	5
Rockfall	3
River Crossing	2
Blown Over	2
Fitness	2
Food	2
Separated	1
Mental Health	1
Belay Failure	1

Image © SARDA Scotland



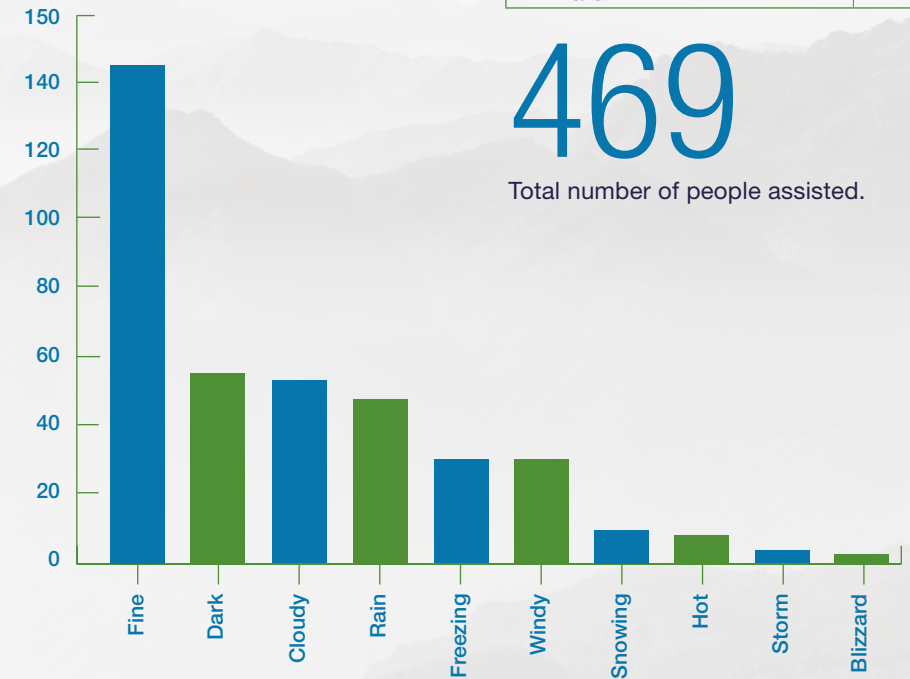
Image © SMR Rigging Group



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

335

Total number of mountaineering incidents.



	Count
Fine	142
Dark	57
Cloudy	56
Rain	48
Freezing	31
Windy	31
Snowing	8
Hot	7
Storm	3
Blizzard	2

469

Total number of people assisted.

TERRAIN

Where available, the terrain in the locality of the incident is detailed below. Most mountaineering 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	113
Grass	94
Heather	77
Steep Ground	71
Rock	54
Loose	35
Bog	22
Scree	22
Snow	20
Forest	14
Vehicle Track	14
Ice	12
River	5
Coast	2



Image © SARAA Scotland



Image © Euan Holahan

INJURY TYPES

In 2024, **128 (27%)** of the people assisted in mountaineering incidents had at least one injury recorded.

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

	Count
Fracture	71
Other	20
Sprains	16
Hypothermia	11
Illness	8
Laceration	8
Internal	5
Bruising	3
Minor Cuts	3
Multiple	3
Seizure	3
Heart	2
Hyperthermia	2
Total	155

INJURY SITE

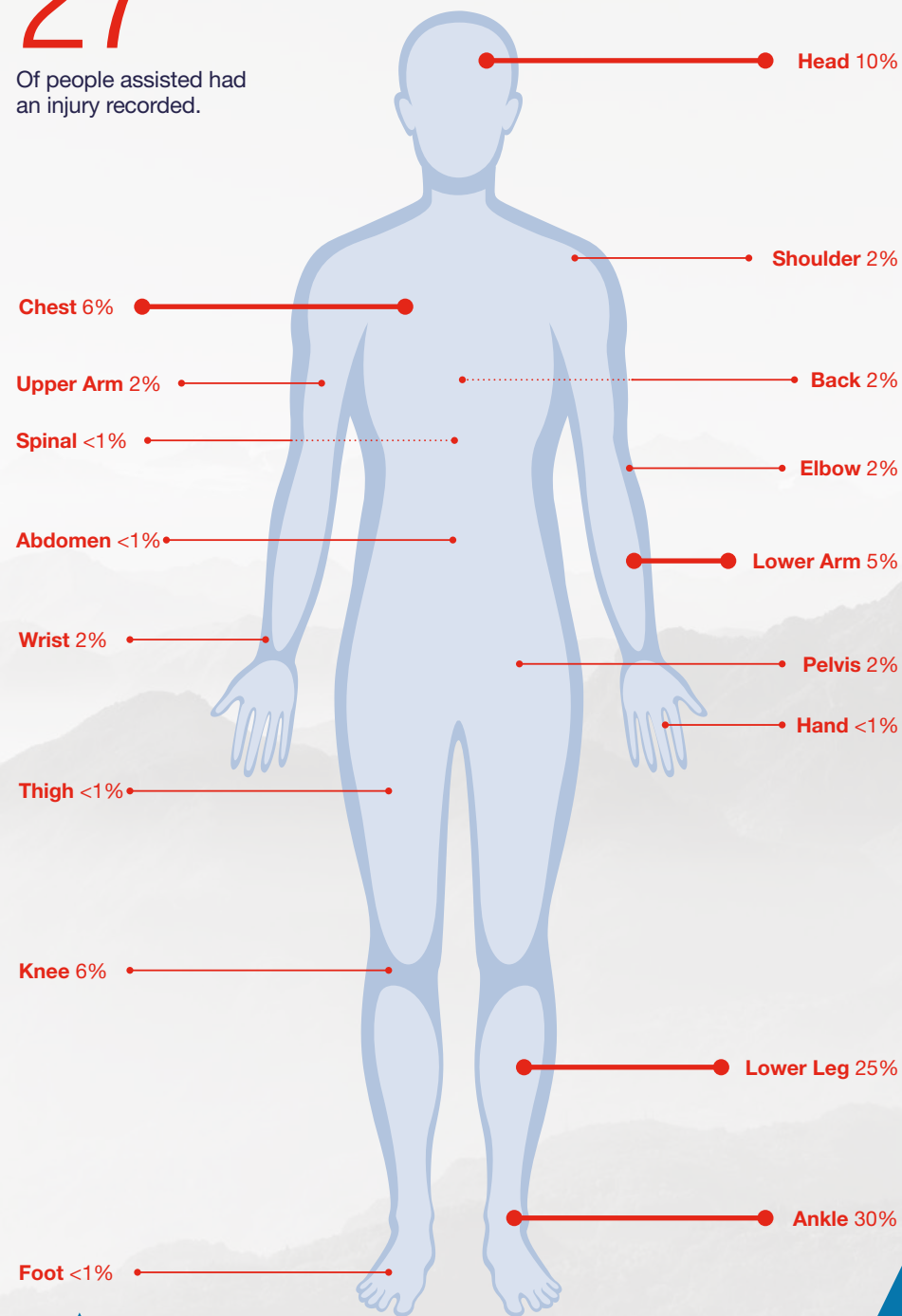
Casualties generally have a single (or no) injury site recorded.

	Count	%
Ankle	36	30
Lower Leg	31	25
Head	12	10
Knee	7	6
Chest	7	6
Lower Arm	6	5
Upper Arm	3	2
Shoulder	3	2
Pelvis	3	2
Wrist	3	2
Elbow	3	2
Back	3	2
Hand	1	<1
Foot	1	<1
Spinal	1	<1
Thigh	1	<1
Abdomen	1	<1
Total	126	100%

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

27%

Of people assisted had an injury recorded.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender

Gender of people assisted.

Gender	Count
Male	189
Female	161
Unspecified	119

Nationality

Nationality was recorded for **242** of the assisted mountaineers. Mountaineers rescued had **15** different nationalities.

Country	Count
United Kingdom	199
United States of America	11
Germany	7
Netherlands	7
Belgium	2
France	5
Poland	2
Ukraine	2
Argentina	1
Austria	1
Canada	1
China	1
Hong Kong	1
Italy	1
Latvia	1

British Nationality

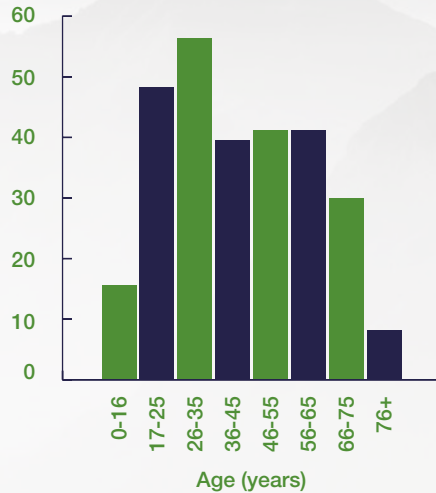
The breakdown for British mountaineers (where the specific country they were from was recorded) is shown below.

Nation	Count
Scotland	134
England	39

Age

Age was recorded for **287** mountaineers. The most frequently rescued age category was **26-35** years, although this may simply reflect that certain age groups go out into the hills more frequently than others.

Age Range	Count	%
0-16	16	6
17-25	48	17
26-35	56	20
36-45	39	14
46-55	41	14
56-65	41	14
66-75	30	10
76+	16	6
Total	287	100



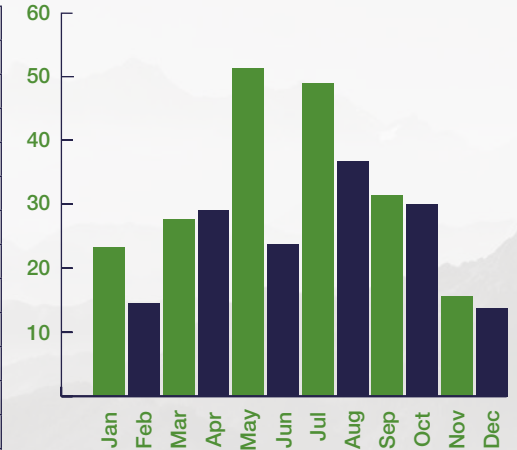
TIMING OF INCIDENTS

The busiest period for teams is generally during the summer months. Both mountaineering and non-mountaineering incidents (see later section) increase during the summer. 2024 was slightly unusual in the sense that June represented one of the quieter months.

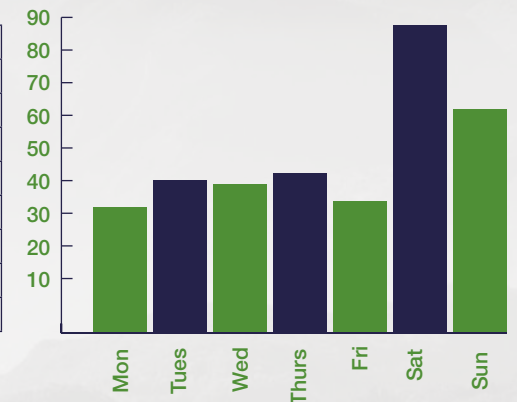
This may be explained by the weather in June 2024 having been much wetter across Scotland, even with snowfall on some mountains.

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

Month	Count	%
January	22	7
February	14	4
March	27	8
April	28	8
May	51	15
June	23	7
July	47	14
August	36	11
September	31	9
October	30	9
November	14	4
December	12	4
Total	335	100%



Weekday	Count	%
Monday	31	9
Tuesday	40	12
Wednesday	37	11
Thursday	43	13
Friday	33	10
Saturday	89	27
Sunday	62	19
Total	335	100%



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

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 **301** incidents supporting the community.

Activity

The activity leading to these incidents was recorded in **242** cases. Notable in 2024 was a **51%** increase in incidents related to mountain biking, as is also visible from the map where a distinct multi-incident hotspot was recorded at Glentress Forest.

	Count
Rural Walking	68
Missing Person	55
Mountain Biking	51
Mental Health	17
Working	10
Police Investigation	8
Running	8
Motor Vehicle	7
Swimming	4
Duke of Edinburgh Award Expedition	3
Air sport	2
Cayoning	2
Cycling	2
Medevac	2
Equestrian	1
Fishing	1
Skiing	1

Causes

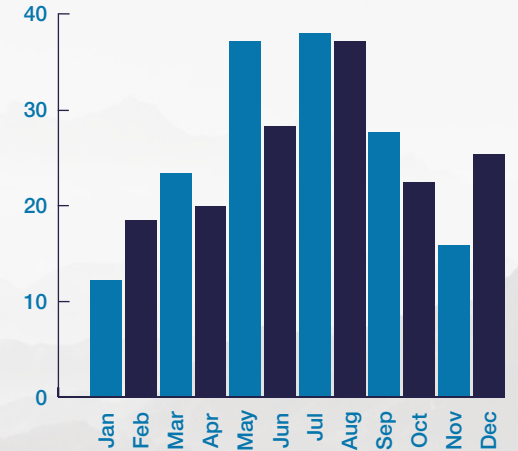
Factors leading to incidents are recorded by teams. Each incident may have several contributing factors. The most frequent specific cause of a non-mountaineering callout was reported missing.

	Count
Reported Missing	58
Mental Health	45
Slip/Trip	42
Fall	19
Lost	18
Medical	14
Navigation Error	11
False Alarm	7
Overdue	7
Kit Failure	4
Separated	4
Benighted	3
Crag-fast	3
Technology Reliance	3
Experience	2
Food	1
Missing Kit	1
Tiredness	1
Weather-bound	1

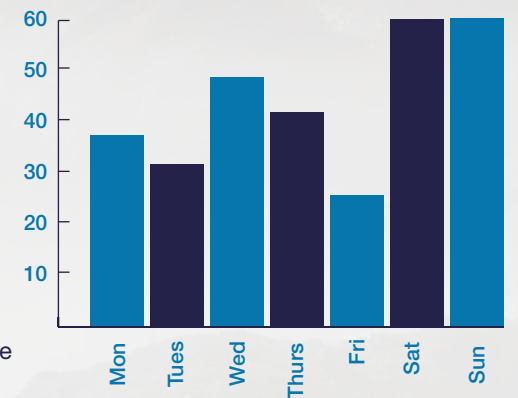
TIMING

In 2024, the busiest days of the week for teams for non-mountaineering incidents were **Saturday** and **Sunday**, whereas the busiest month was **July**.

Month	Count	%
January	13	4
February	18	6
March	24	8
April	20	7
May	36	12
June	28	9
July	37	12
August	36	12
September	27	9
October	23	8
November	15	5
December	24	8
Total	301	100%



Weekday	Count	%
Monday	37	12
Tuesday	31	10
Wednesday	48	16
Thursday	42	14
Friday	25	8
Saturday	59	20
Sunday	59	20
Total	253	100%



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

Image © SAFDA Scotland



ALL INCIDENT TYPES

Joint working

Mountain Rescue Teams are called out by, and work closely with, Police Scotland to resolve every incident. In **6%** of incidents, teams worked closely with at least one other partner agency (in addition to helicopters, which are covered in the next table). Please note that some incidents had more than one partner agency recorded.

	Count
Scottish Ambulance Service Special Operations Response Team	17
RAF MRT	7
Loch Lomond Rescue Boat	6
Nith Inshore Rescue	2
Northumberland Mountain Rescue	2
BASCIS Doctor	1
Pentland Ranger Service	1
Police Search Teams (NOT Police MR)	1

Helicopter usage

MRTs work closely with helicopter services across the country.

Helicopters were recorded as attending **161** incidents. The number of activations of specific aircraft is detailed below (**171** in total, as more than one helicopter can attend an incident).

	Count
Rescue 199	52
Rescue 151	47
Rescue 948	35
Helimed	21
Police	14
Rescue 152	1
Rescue 999	1

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).

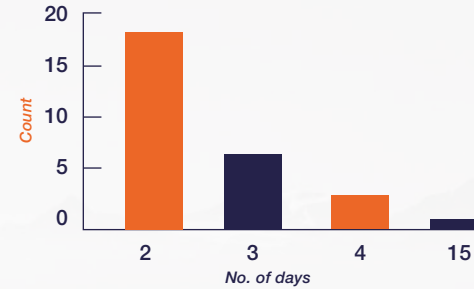
	Count
Evacuation	67
Search	65
Rescue	38
Transport	25

Image © Oban MRT



Multi-day incidents

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



Days	Count
2	19
3	6
4	2
15	1

Multiple teams working together

Number of Teams	Count
2	167
3	44
4	10
5	2
6	2
8	1
9	1

Police areas

Name	Count
Highlands & Islands	192
Lothians & Borders	81
Forth Valley	74
Tayside	73
Argyll & West Dunbartonshire	69
Aberdeenshire and Moray	57
Dumfries & Galloway	28
None	19
Ayrshire	18
Lanarkshire	8
Edinburgh	7
Fife	4
Glasgow	4
Aberdeen	1
Renfrewshire & Inverclyde	1

Image © SARAA Scotland



Image © Evan Holahan



NO OF CALL-OUTS AND HOURS BY TEAM

	Incidents	Hours
Aberdeen	25	830
Arran	12	474
Arrochar	33	853
Assynt	28	1,239
Borders	15	855
Braemar	34	1,089
Dundonnell	44	2,292
Galloway	20	722
Glenelg	1	28
HebSAR	36	991
Killin	30	1,282
Kintail	16	781
Lomond	41	1,401
Moffat	15	521
Oban	32	1,361
Ochils	27	1,386
Skye	78	2,246
Tayside	61	1,067
Torrison	17	679
Tweed Valley	81	2,364
Police Scotland (Grampian)	51	1,001
Police Scotland (Strathclyde)	112	3,471
Police Scotland (Tayside)	76	1,312
SARDA (Scotland)	58	1,105
SARDA (Southern)	32	207
SARAA-Scotland	24	356
SCRO	1	74
Total	1,000	29,986

Total does not match values in table due to rounding.



Footnote

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



Volunteering
to save lives