

Freedom of Information request: Reference number FOI2026/00957

Date of request: 11th August

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 2025 and 31st July 2026?

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.

Please can you also supply a count of any Balcony fire related deaths for time periods

1st August 2022 to 31st July 2023

1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024

1st August 2024 to 31st July 2025

1st August 2025 to 31st July 2026

Response:

I refer to your request for information, received on 11 August 2026, which has been processed under the Freedom of Information Act.

In response to your request, the London Fire Brigade's Data Team searched the free text fields recorded on the Incident Management System (IMS) for the term "*balcony*". We understand that IMS does not contain a specific structured field that identifies a balcony as a distinct location type. Therefore, a free text search was used to identify relevant incidents.

Between 1 August 2025 and 31 July 2026, there were 155 fires recorded as having started on balconies at dwellings and other residential properties.

In addition, there was one fire where the compartmentation field contained the comment "*external fire on balcony*".

There was one fire-related fatality associated with a balcony fire. This incident occurred in June 2025.

A breakdown of the 155 balcony fires by main cause is provided below:

Main Cause	Fires
Accumulation of flammable material	10
Bomb/incendiary device	1
Bonfire going out of control	3
Combustible articles too close to heat source (or fire)	7
Cooking – chip pan/deep fat fryer	1
Cooking – other cooking	4
Fault in equipment or appliance	4
Faulty fuel supplies – Electricity	4
Heat source and combustibles brought together deliberately	8
Homicide/attempted: setting fire to other person/s	1
Natural occurrence	5
Other intentional burning, going out of control	7
Overheating, unknown cause	5
Pending Fire Investigation Team findings	2
Playing with fire (or heat source)	1
Unable to determine	2
Unsafe use of equipment or appliance (heat source)	4
Unsafe use of heat source - due to knocking over	1
Unsafe use of heat source - due to unsafe disposal	85
Grand Total	155

Parent Ignition Source	Fires
Cooking appliance	5
Electric lighting	2
Electricity supply	5
Fuel/Chemical	2
Heating equipment	3
Matches and candles	9
Naked flame	2
NULL	36
Other domestic style appliance	1
Smoking related	87
Vehicles only	3
Grand Total	155

We have dealt with your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. For more information about making information requests, please visit our website: <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/about-us/transparency/request-information-from-us/>