

#FireCutsKill #VotingToryKills

Latest official figures show that 294 people **died in fires** in England during 2015, **an increase of 21%** compared with the 242 deaths recorded in 2014.

This was **the largest increase** since figures were published in 2001-02.

Nearly 10,000 firefighter jobs have been cut in the last 6 years.

The Conservative minister for policing and the fire service, Brandon Lewis, says there's room for **even more reductions** beyond the 30% cuts. The fire service faces cumulative budget cuts of up to 50% by 2020, from 2010 levels. "The budget cuts have seen the **loss of frontline firefighters, response times getting longer, stations closing** and **fire prevention measures reduced** too," said a statement from the chief fire officers of the six largest English cities outside London.

The Fire Brigades Union said **the outcome of a fatal fire** in Merseyside **"could have been different" if a local fire station had not been closed.** An elderly couple from the Wirral were **tragically killed** in the blaze, which broke out at their home, as fire crews missed their target response time due to five fire engines in the area attending a warehouse fire. A fire engine attended the house fire from Upton fire station but remained without any backup for more than 10 minutes until a second engine arrived.

The station at West Kirby, which was located nearest to where the blaze broke out, **closed last year** as Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service attempts to **axe £11m from its budget** by 2019-20. The FBU said that budget cuts to Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service has seen its number of fire engines available to respond to emergencies **cut from 42 to just 28.**

Fire services also deal with **floods, car crashes, building collapses, lift rescues, road traffic accidents** and **industrial disasters.**

Sources: "Fire Service cuts are 'putting lives at risk'", Daily Mirror, 13 Sept 2016
"Firefighters blame cuts for 15% increase in fire-related deaths", Sky News, 7 Apr 2017
"Fire deaths rise by 21% as chiefs issue cuts warning", The Guardian, 26 Apr 2016
"Questions raised over fire service budget cuts after fatal fire in Merseyside", FIA, 20 Mar 16

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