

Abstract

Building upon a paper presented at the International Symposium on Human Behaviour in Fire 2012, this paper presents the findings of a study conducted by Kent Fire and Rescue Service and the University of Greenwich into human behaviour during accidental dwelling fires (ADFs). In order to develop an understanding of the behaviours and motivations of those experiencing a domestic fire, quantitative and qualitative data were collected through the use of a questionnaire survey that was distributed by post to those who directly experienced an ADF in Kent between April 2011 and October 2012. Using a methodology employed in the study of evacuation behaviour in the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks, 177 participants' activities were coded into a series of Information Tasks and Action Tasks and entered into a database from which statistics were produced using the software package SPSS. Results demonstrated that participants were more likely to have been affected by the flames and smoke and considered retreating from the room of origin of the fire (ROO) if they perceived the fire as being more, rather than less, serious. Additional analysis undertaken on the number and sequence of tasks undertaken revealed a large proportion of participants undertook several activities during the fire including; entering the ROO, fighting the fire, and re-entering the property. Furthermore, among the majority of those who did so, calling the fire service was the final or penultimate activity undertaken. This work is the precursor to a large-scale regional study that will begin later this year and involve Kent Fire and Rescue Service, the University of Greenwich and several other UK fire and rescue services.

Thompson, O.F., Hulse, L.M., Wales, D., & Galea, E.R. (2013). **“Get out, stay out” versus occupier independence: The results of an 18-month study of human behaviour in accidental dwelling fires in Kent.** In the Proceedings of the 13th International Fire Science and Engineering Conference, Interflam 2013 (pp. 943-954). London, England: Interscience Communications.