

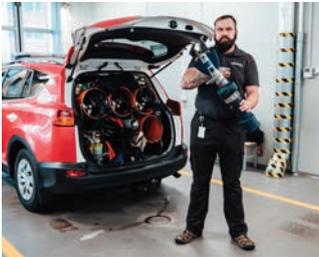
# ANNUAL RAPORT 2021



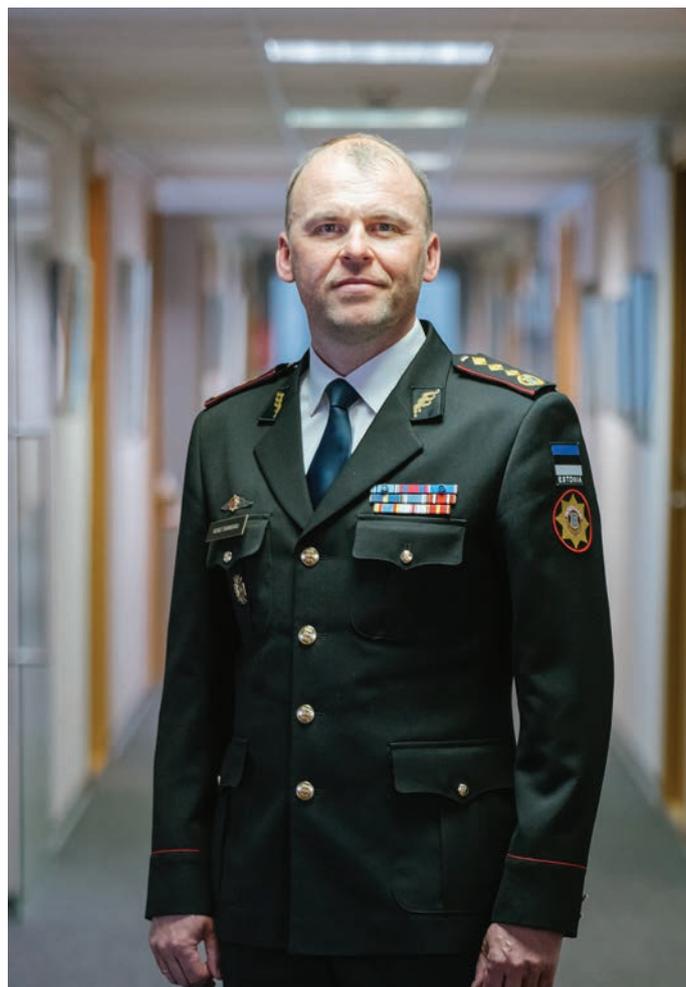
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Making  
Estonia  
**safer** with  
the help of  
everyone!



**Kuno Tammearu**  
Director General of the Estonian Rescue Board

2021 was another unprecedented year. The security situation deteriorated dramatically, the COVID crisis continued to test the whole of society, and energy prices reached new records. All of this affects us too. But this does not mean that the Rescue Board can give up in any area. On the contrary – challenging times call for even greater focus and action.

Despite being an unusual year, we managed to do a number of important things. First of all, of course, the renewal of the strategy for the rescue network. An action plan for subsequent years, which we formulated together, is now also being implemented together. Most importantly – the strategy of the Rescue Board has become the strategy for the entire rescue network, and we are not alone in implementing our goals. But we must not forget that this is both an opportunity as well as an obligation. We can bring safety to Estonians more broadly and with more partners. On the other hand, we need to understand the scope of the responsibility when involving partners.

The partnership between the Rescue Board and local governments, to increase community safety, was one of the focus themes of the past year and will be a practical output in the coming years. We need to be where the people are, in order to engage in more effective prevention and safety monitoring. The memorandum from the Rescue Board to local governments, the result of a lot of hard work, is an excellent start to even closer cooperation.

We need to be active in all of society, and 2021 gave us the opportunity to practice this in a way that was new to us. The Rescue Board also participated in local government elections, to ensure that community safety issues were included in election platforms and coalition agreements. To this end, our people actively met with representatives of political parties and electoral alliances, and published articles in local newspapers on various topics.

A common rescue network is both our reality and our goal. The contribution of volunteers to safety has become indispensable and still holds a lot of untapped potential. We are working to make it even easier to become volunteer and be a volunteer. Today, there are 117 volunteer brigades in our network, each one a different face, but all working towards a common goal.

Among other things, last year we set ourselves the goal of developing leaders in the Rescue Board. This is an area that should not be underestimated. A good leader recruits the right people for the right jobs. A good leader builds a happy team, whose members know what the goals are and know how to work towards them. Every worker deserves a good leader.

Despite the acuteness of the COVID crisis, we organised a number of much-needed and large-scale tabletop exercises last year. We dare celebrate what went well, but we must also reflect on the bottlenecks revealed by the exercises. It is their identification in particular that is crucial to better ensure safety in real-life crisis situations. Our work is not static, but highly dependent on the surrounding environment.

A changing world presents us with many challenges. We must provide the best service – a feeling of security and knowledge – to the people of Estonia under all circumstances. Preparations are already underway for the 2023 Riigikogu elections, in which we too can get involved with our messages. The policy of the Rescue Board is safety and crisis preparedness.

**Kuno Tammearu**

Director General of the Estonian Rescue Board

## ORGANISATION



# ORGANISATION

The Rescue Board is an agency within the area of government of the Ministry of the Interior. As at 31 December 2021, the Estonian Rescue Board had 2123 servants, making it the third largest public body in Estonia.

The Estonian Rescue Board has five key areas: prevention work, safety surveillance, rescue work, explosive ordnance disposal, and emergency management. The Estonian Rescue Board offers a total of 55 services, including 28 basic services and 27 support services.

The daily preparedness of the Estonian Rescue Board is based on 72 national rescue brigades, 4 explosive ordnance disposal teams, and 117 volunteer rescue brigades. Around the clock, around 300 professional and around 250 volunteer rescuers are ready to help people, able to reach 92.4% of the population within 15 minutes.

Please note that some of the statistics published in the year-book may change slightly as the facts are clarified.



## THE ESTONIAN RESCUE BOARD AS AN ORGANISATION



**2134**  
WORKERS

**1554**  
PROFESSIONAL RESCUERS



**2319**  
VOLUNTEER RESCUER



**72**  
PROFESSIONAL  
RESCUE BRIGADES



**117**  
VOLUNTEER  
RESCUE BRIGADES



**4**  
EXPLOSIVE  
ORDNANCE  
DISPOSAL TEAMS



**27 541**  
CALLS, inc.  
**14 147**  
RESCUE EVENTS



**285**  
PEOPLE  
RESCUED



**21 926**  
HOME  
COUNSELLING  
SESSIONS



THE AVERAGE TIME FOR LIFE-SAVING  
CAPABILITY TO ARRIVE AT A  
LIFE-SAVING EVENT

**7 min 29,4 s**

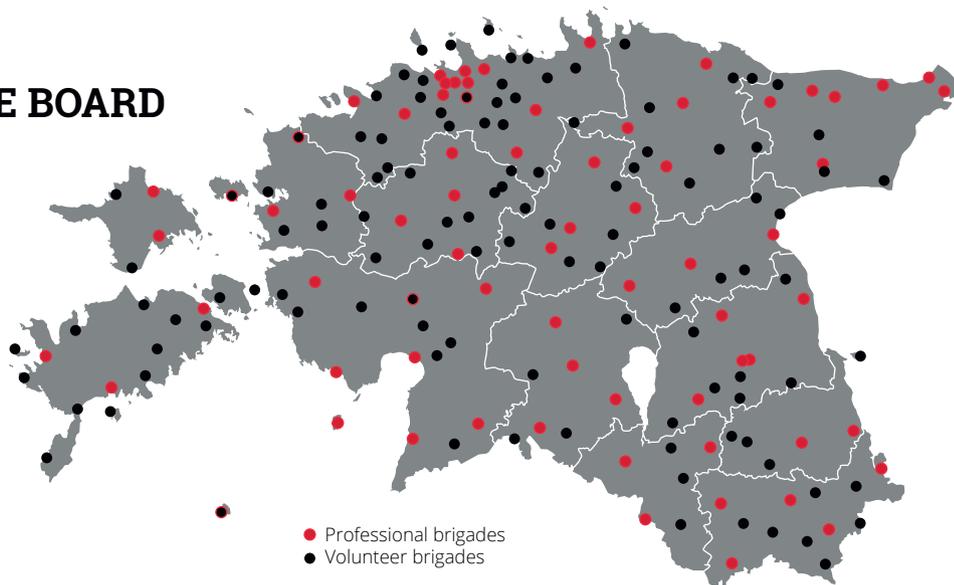
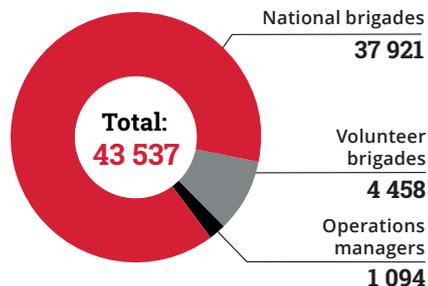
## A single network

Estonia is covered by a rescue network, one that consisted of 1554 professional and more than 2000 volunteer rescuers, or more than 3500 people in total in 2021. Last year, volunteer rescuers participated in 4458 events, slightly more than the year before.

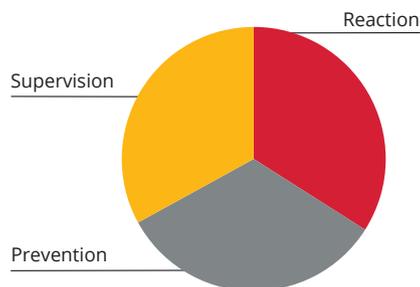
# ORGANISATION

## THE ESTONIAN RESCUE BOARD AS AN ORGANISATION

### TOTAL NUMBER OF CALLS



### AREAS OF OPERATIONS



Cover **92.4%** of Estonia's population  
in **15 minutes**



### THE KEY AREAS OF THE RESCUE BOARD



PREVENTION



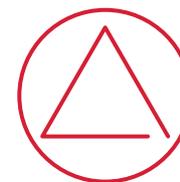
SAFETY  
SURVEILLANCE



RESCUE WORK



EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE  
DISPOSAL



EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS



## VOLUNTEER RESCUE NETWORK 2021

Volunteer activity was affected by the ongoing corona crisis in 2021. In 2021, fewer prevention activities were carried out compared to previous years, with disruptions to home visits and youth groups occurring. Thanks to the control measures agreed upon in the brigades ('brigade bubble'), volunteers were able to participate in the joint on-call service, and this possibility was also used more than before. Again, this may be linked to the availability of more free time due to the corona crisis.

Developments took place in the expansion of the special capabilities of volunteer rescue brigades, with three volunteer brigades being granted the right to engage in smoke diving in 2021. This is a pilot project, one that will result in a better understanding of the potential for volunteers to develop this special capability. An analysis of the operational capacities of volunteer rescue brigades was also completed, which will provide a basis for the future development of volunteer rescue brigades in the field of rescue work.



VOLUNTEER  
RESCUERS:

**2319**



PARTICIPATED  
IN EVENTS:

**3160**



SOLVED INDE-  
PENDENTLY:

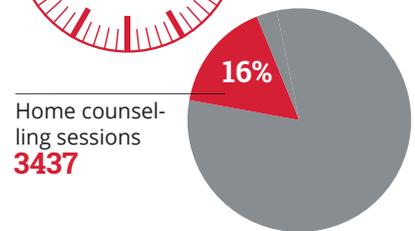
**1121**

Total number of all  
rescue events:

**14 147**



Average  
arrival time:



Home counsel-  
ling sessions  
**3437**

# YEAR IN FIGURES AND FACTS

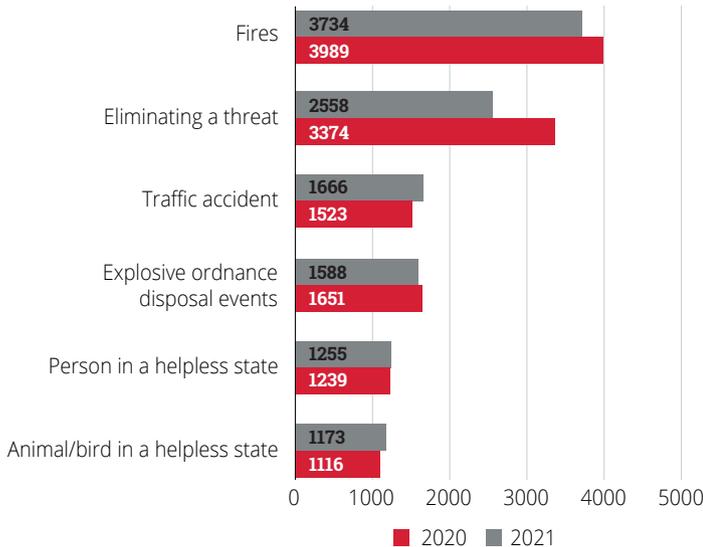


# Responding to events

Rescuers received a total of 27,541<sup>1</sup> calls in 2021, of which 14,141 were rescue events (15,123 in 2020). The number of rescue events declined compared to 2020. The most responses during the year were to fires – 3734 – and storm damage – 2558. The number of fire-related rescue events was the lowest in the period following the restoration of independence. In comparison with 2020, the number of rescue events involving animals/birds and traffic accidents and animals/birds in a helpless condition increased.

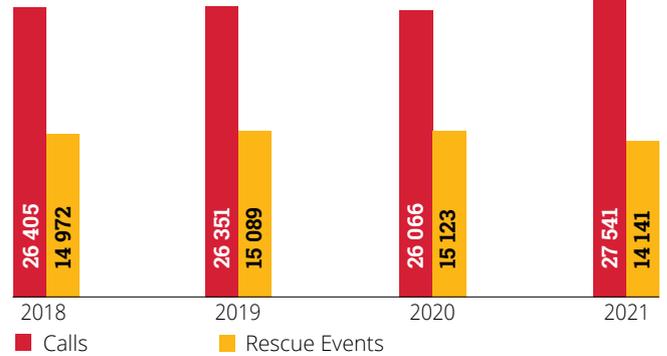
In 2021, assistance was provided to ambulance crews and/or police on 4136 occasions. For example, the help of rescuers is needed when a person has fallen at home and is unable to open the door and the ambulance crew is therefore unable to get to the victim.

## More frequent rescue events in 2021 in comparison with 2020

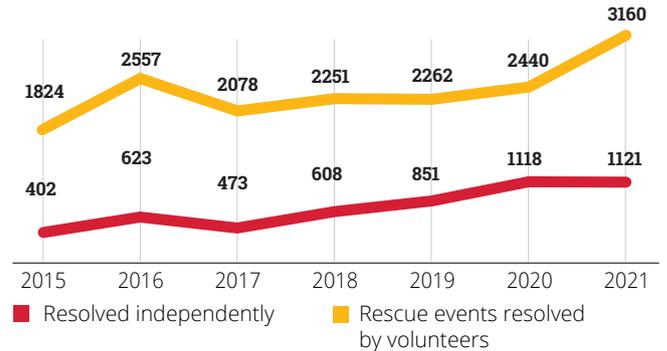


<sup>1</sup> In 2021, the methodology for calculating calls and rescue events was changed, which means that the numbers from previous years have also changed.

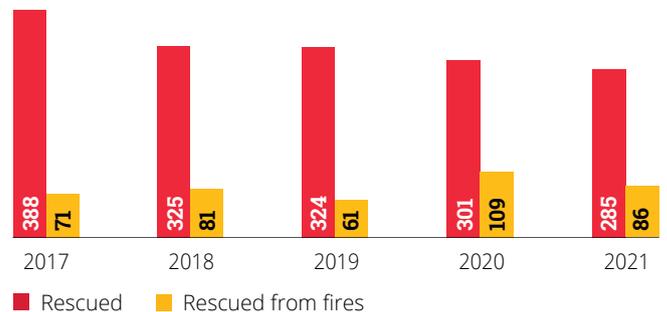
## Number of calls and rescue events during the period 2018–2021



## Volunteer rescuers at events in the period 2015–2021



## Number of people rescued at events the period 2017–2021



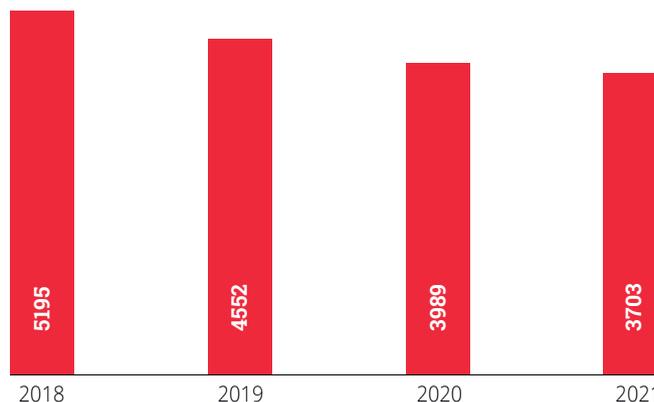
## Fires

The number of fires continues to decline – there were a total of 3703 fires in 2021, of which 1029 were building fires, 586 residential building fires (the smallest number of residential building fires in the period following the restoration of independence) and 813 forest and landscape fires.

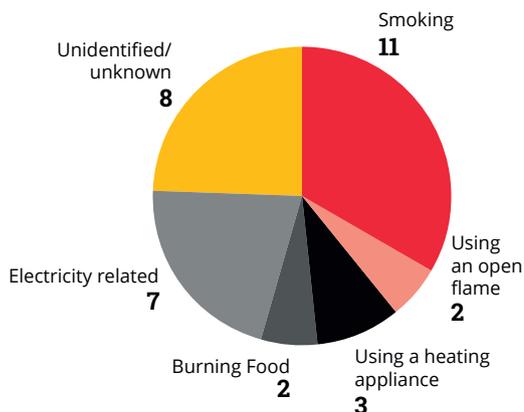
There were 33 fires ending with casualties, resulting in the deaths of 39 people (36 in 2020). A total of 32 fatal fires occurred in occupied residential buildings (24 in 2020). There were 17 fires involving fatalities in apartment buildings (12 in 2020) and 13 in detached houses (9 in 2020).

Careless smoking remains one of the main reasons for fires resulting in deaths. However, in 2021, the number of deaths fires caused by electricity increased significantly (11 people as a result of 7 fires).

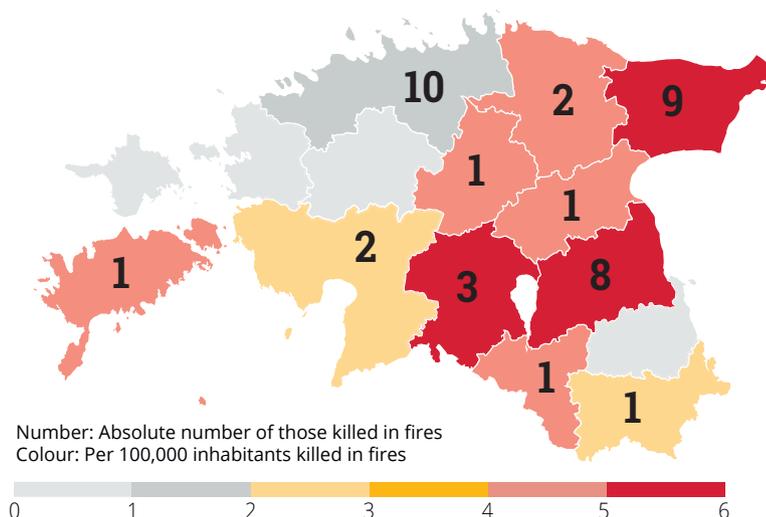
### FIRES



### CAUSES OF FIRES THAT RESULTED IN DEATHS

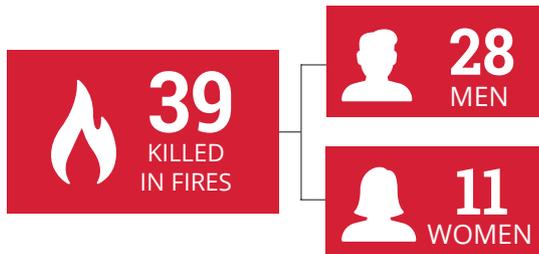


### NUMBER OF FIRE DEATHS BY COUNTIES



# With whom and why does it happen?

Of the 39 people killed in fires, 28 were men and 11 women. The average age of those killed was 66, more than half (67%) of those killed were pensioners. A total of 59% of those who were killed were intoxicated, and only nine of the men killed were sober. The average alcohol intoxication of a victim was 2.63‰, with the highest level of intoxication being 4.46‰



66 years old  
17 intoxicated  
7 with health problems

65 years old  
6 intoxicated  
3 with health problems

**78%** of the homes of those who died in a fire lacked a functioning smoke detector

# Carbonic monoxide

According to preliminary data<sup>2</sup>, at least 5 people were killed and 47 injured as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning in 2021. The average age of a victim was 56, with 6 children also being injured and 1 killed. Most carbon monoxide poisonings were related to solid fuel, with the most common cause being closing the wood stove damper too soon.

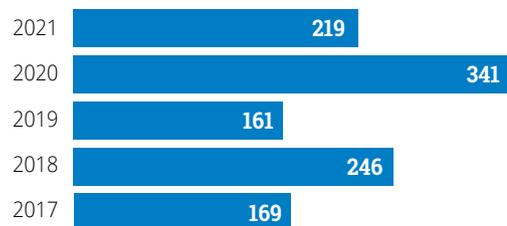
<sup>2</sup> Carbon monoxide poisonings associated with controlled combustion have been taken into account. Accidents involving solid heating systems and gas equipment have been taken into account – events involving vehicle exhaust gas and intentional poisonings have been excluded.



## Drowned in and rescued from water accidents

With 60 fatalities, 2021 had the highest number of water accident related fatalities in past six years. In comparison with 2020, the number of water accidents decreased by 36%, i.e. 122 events – the Rescue Board was summoned to 219 water accident rescue events, in which the drowning person's life could not be saved in 27 cases. Nevertheless, 38 lives were saved from 28 water accidents.

### NUMBER OF WATER ACCIDENTS



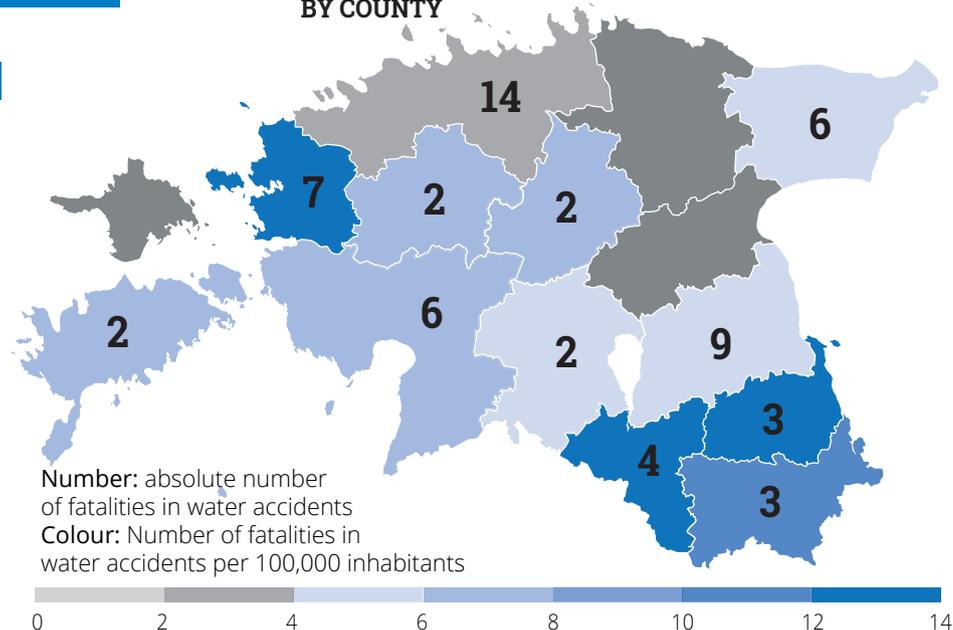
### KILLED IN WATER ACCIDENTS



For the fourth consecutive year, over half of those who drowned have been intoxicated. In 2021, 35 of the 58 adults who drowned were intoxicated (average intoxication 2.29‰), with 33 having consumed alcohol and drug intoxication identified in three. The number of fatalities in water also rose in Finland and Sweden.

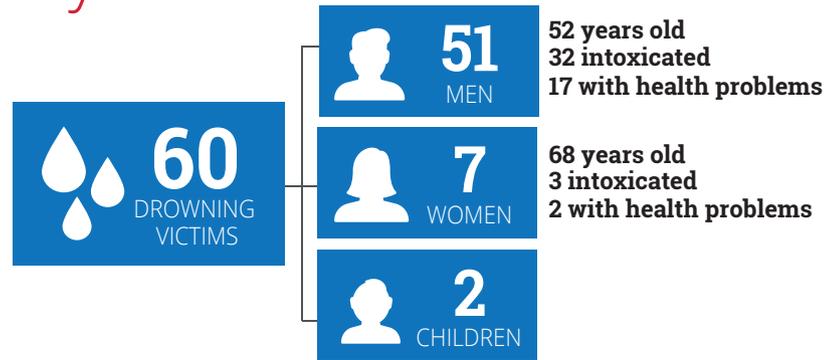
According to the Environment Agency, the summer of 2020 was the warmest on record. In July, when the heat wave lasted for two consecutive weeks (16 days), at least 3 people drowned each week. That month, 15 people left their lives in a watery grave. In spring (April and May) the number of drownings increased precisely at the expense of anglers and boat occupants. The largest loss of life while fishing took place from October to the end of the year. More than half of the water accidents were connected to ice (136), with 55 of them connected to children. There were a total of 56 events related to fishermen, 45 of which were related to staying on the ice.

### NUMBER OF FATALITIES IN WATER ACCIDENTS BY COUNTY

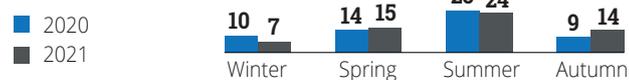


# Who drowns and why?

The majority of people drowned in the summer and spring months. The lion's share of those killed in water accidents drowned in inland bodies of water (62%, i.e. 37), while drownings in the sea set a new unfortunate record – 17 people lost their lives at sea. A total of 88% of those who drowned were male and 12% women, with two children also having drowned. Every third person who drowned was elderly (22). The average age of those killed in a water accident has declined significantly – it was 54 in 2021, and 61 the year before. Sixty-eight per cent of drownings occurred while using a body of water, which is the highest number of such drownings in the past five years. Most people drowned in the sea (17), lakes (12), ponds (12) and rivers (10).

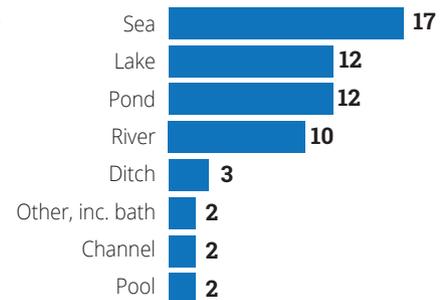


## TIME OF DROWNING

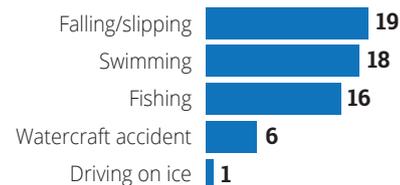


Based on the activities preceding drowning, drownings can mostly be divided into two categories: those drownings that occur when using a body of water, such as swimming, riding in boat while fishing or travelling along an ice trail, and those where a person has fallen or slipped into water (such as a pond or ditch). In 2021, 18 people, i.e. every third person, drowned while swimming. Sixteen people drowned while fishing, six of them while fishing on a boat. Four, including three fishing from a boat, were wearing a lifejacket. Six people drowned in watercraft accidents. Half of the occupants of the watercraft were intoxicated and four of them were not wearing a life jacket. Nineteen drownings occurred in 2021 as a result of falls and slips – 12 of them in the public environment and 7 in the home environment. In these cases, the events prior to drowning are not always known. Elderly people who have problems with alcohol or their health tend to drown in the home environment.

## BODIES OF WATER WHERE DROWNINGS OCCURRED



## ACTIVITIES PRECEDING DROWNING





## EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL

# 6930 explosives defused

The Explosive Ordnance Disposal Centre responded to 1588 calls<sup>3</sup> in 2021, more than two-thirds (1146) of which involved the discovery of ammunition. A total of 6930 explosives devices were found and rendered harmless, which is the third highest number of discoveries since 1992. Explosions involving explosive materials were responded to on four occasions in 2021, one of which saw a person killed and injuries occur on two occasions.

Bomb threats were responded to on 23 occasions this year. Underwater demining took place in Karujärve, Tehumardi Beach, and the Pärnu River. One response involved a call for an improvised explosive device, and a total of 80 bomb scares. There were 43 cases of explosive ordnance disposal, i.e. VIP inspections to identify potential risks of explosion or searches in cooperation with partner agencies, which involved explosive specialists. Compared to previous years, this number has declined due to the pandemic restrictions. On 22 occasions CBRN calls were responded to, one of which involved the performance of COVID-19 decontamination.

One rare and resource-intensive CBRN event in 2021 took place in Pärnu, in April, when the health of a Pärnu Nature House worker deteriorated after cleaning the aquarium. The following day, other employees in the building also experienced health troubles. The event was made unique by the fact

that the chemical likely responsible for causing the poisoning could not be identified with the measuring instruments available to rescue teams, the whole action was based on the hypothesis that it might be a case of palytoxin poisoning. Palytoxin is a highly toxic toxin found in *Palythoa* corals, exposure of only a few milligrams can be lethal to a person. The substance has a high molecular weight and exciting structure, is heat-resistant and remains relatively stable in water for a long period of time.

Throughout the event, experts including animal clinic staff, Estonian scientists and agencies played an important role in solving the mystery, ending with the Australian Poison Information Centre. The hypothesis regarding possible contamination with palytoxin was posited on the basis of symptoms and other signs. For the CBRN team, the event offered an excellent opportunity to test the operation of the decontamination line at a real event. Unfortunately, the event also claimed a victim – one dweller of the natural house, a snail, did not survive the event.

In 2021, Airasuden Noki, a German Shepherd puppy



from Finland, nicknamed Yenka, joined the ranks of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Centre. Explosive detection dogs keep an eye on visits by foreign guests, inspect suspicious bags and items, ensure safety at major events, and help police in conducting searches.

## Major events of the year

**On 11 January**, the East Estonian explosive ordnance disposal team responded to an ammunition incident in the Vaivara forest district of Narva-Jõesuu, Ida-Viru County, where explosives had been found in the forest by a detector. When checking the scene, explosive specialists found a total of 111 mortar mines, 4 shells and 6 hand grenades.

**On 15 April**, the South Estonian explosive ordnance disposal team responded to an ammunition incident in Nõo Rural Municipality, Tartu County, where explosives were found during forest planting. When checking the area, explosive specialists found a total of 140 mortar mines.

**On 19 April**, the West Estonian explosive ordnance disposal team responded to an ammunition incident in the forest in Saaremaa Rural Municipality, Saare County, where 67 shells, 13 mortar mines, 5 grenades, 10 boosters, 4 fuses, 1 propelling charge and 10,000 cartridges were found during inspection of the scene.

**On 11 September**, the East Estonian explosive ordnance disposal team responded to an ammunition incident in the Auvere forest in the town of Narva-Jõesuu, Ida-Viru County, where explosives were found. When checking the area, explosive specialists found a total of 82 hand grenades, 71 mortar mines, 19 shells and 5 fuses.

**On 28 September**, an East Estonian explosive ordnance disposal team responded to an ammunition incident in the village of Hundinurga, in the town of Narva-Jõesuu, Ida-Viru County, where explosives had been found in the forest. When checking the area, explosive specialists found a total of 56 shells, 48 mortar mines, 38 hand grenades, 3 rifle grenades, 8 fuses and 142 cartridges.

**On 18 October**, an East Estonian explosive ordnance disposal team responded to an ammunition incident in the village of Vaivara, in the town of Narva-Jõesuu, Ida-Viru County, where explosives had been found in the forest. When checking the area, explosive specialists found a total of 125 mortar mines, 70 hand grenades, 45 shells, 3 rockets, 3 anti-tank mines, 1 rifle grenade, and 6 fuses.

In addition, the East Estonian explosive ordnance disposal team responded on four other occasions to ammunition incidents in the forests of the town of Narva-Jõesuu, Ida-Viru County, where 110 shells, 21 mortar mines, 15 hand grenades, 5 fuses and 1 detonator were found on 14 April; 294 mortar mines, 118 hand grenades, 116 fuses, 3 shells and 2 mines were found on 20 May; 111 mortar mines, 90 hand grenades, 17 shells, 6 rifle grenades and 13 grenade detonators were found on 13 August; and 156 hand grenades, 51 mortar mines, 29 shells and 20 rifle grenades were found on 26 August.

Larger calibre finds came from various sites in Estonia during excavation works, national monitoring of maritime islands birds and planned explosive ordnance disposal works. Large-calibre ammunition was also recovered from the water twice, once from the territory of the Defence Forces. Many thanks to the father walking on the beach and detectorists in the woods who reported large finds. In total, eight 100-kilogram and three 250-kilogram aerial bombs, one 203-millimetre concrete-piercing shell and 233mm and 280 mm shells were found in 2021.

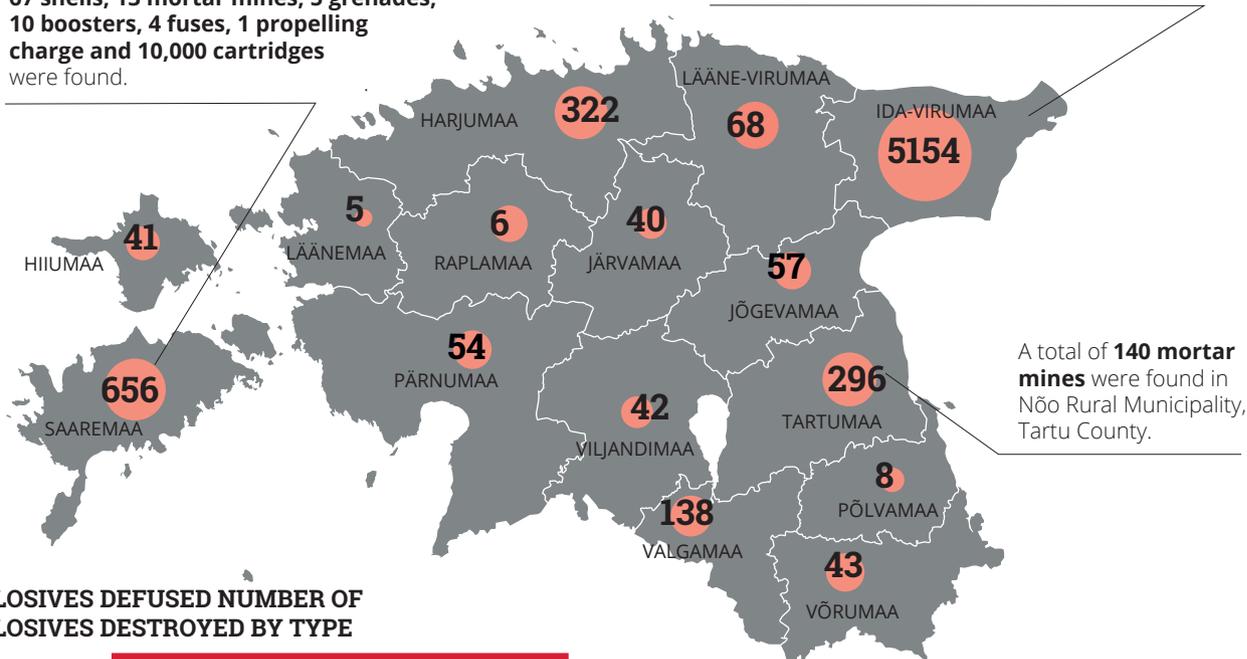
<sup>3</sup> C – ründemürgid ja muud keemilised mürgid ning lõhkeainete lähteained, B – bioloogilised ründeained ja toksiinid, R – ioniseerivat kiirgust kiirgavad ained ja N – tuumaõnnetused ja -materjalid

## IN 2021 6930 EXPLOSIVE DEVICES WERE DEFUSED

### NUMBER OF EXPLOSIVE DEVICES DEFUSED BY COUNTY AND LARGER FINDINGS

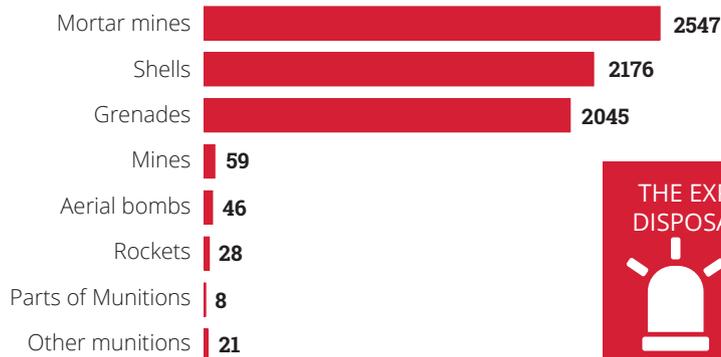
In Saaremaa Municipality, Saare County, **67 shells, 13 mortar mines, 5 grenades, 10 boosters, 4 fuses, 1 propelling charge and 10,000 cartridges** were found.

In the forests of Narva-Jõesuu, a total of **832 mortar mines, 575 hand grenades, 283 shells, 140 fuses, 30 rifle grenades, 142 cartridges, 13 grenades, 13 grenade detonators, 3 rocket assisted projectiles, 3 anti-tank mines, 2 mines and 1 detonator** were found during multiple calls.



A total of **140 mortar mines** were found in Nõo Rural Municipality, Tartu County.

### EXPLOSIVES DEFUSED NUMBER OF EXPLOSIVES DESTROYED BY TYPE



THE EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL CENTRE RECEIVED



**1588**  
CALLS

... OF WHICH



**1146**  
CONCERNED MUNITION FINDINGS



## SAFETY SURVEILLANCE

### Year of **change**

From a safety oversight perspective, the keyword for 2021 will undoubtedly be the amendments to the Fire Safety Act, their implementation, and impact in the future.

One of the biggest changes will be the introduction of a mandatory carbon monoxide detector in nearly 200,000 buildings with solid fuel ovens, fireplaces, or kitchen ranges.

In another major change, chimney sweeps and plumbers will be required to enter all heating system-related activities in the heating system portal from 1 March 2021. This information will help to plan prevention and surveillance activities in a more meaningful way, thereby preventing accidents.

The biggest change for businesses and institutions is that the owners of larger office, industrial and warehouse buildings and garages will be required to commission a fire safety inspection from a private sector specialist. During the course of the fire safety inspection, the compliance of the building with organisational and structural fire safety requirements is checked. First in line will be office buildings, which will be required to order a private fire safety inspection in 2022.

In 2021, inspectors from the Rescue Board checked the fire safety of more than 7800 buildings. A sad picture emerged, with 57% of buildings being in violation of fire safety requirements. Thanks to the inclusion of the private sector in improving the fire safety of buildings, we want to reach more buildings in the future, which in turn will mean a significantly safer living environment for the residents of Estonia.

In 2021, inspectors carried out 101 inspections of dangerous enterprises and enterprises with a major accident hazard. The safety condition was good for 31% of the businesses inspected. We are not happy with this result at the moment, but we also want to show progress in this area in each subsequent year by strengthening our supervision of chemical safety and by working with other authorities.

2021 brought simplifications in the verification of compliance with fire safety requirements for new buildings, and their design and authorisation for use. Private houses, summerhouses and their outbuildings no longer need to be inspected by the fire brigade if their fire safety is well documented and the local government conducts checks.

# FIGURES AND FACTS



**RAIDS PERFORMED IN 2021. TOTAL 4**



**1247**  
INFRINGEMENTS DETECTED



A total of **219** administrative proceedings and **57** misdemeanour proceedings were initiated to correct the shortcomings detected

## INSPECTED



**163**

SOCIAL WELFARE INSTITUTIONS

of which **47%** were found to be without violations



**343**

ACCOMMODATION ESTABLISHMENTS

of which **35%** were found to be without violations



**303**

EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

of which **34%** were found to be without violations



**54**

SMALL CHEMICAL HANDLERS

of which **26%** were found to be without violations



A TOTAL OF **7814** BUILDINGS WERE INSPECTED IN 2021

with the fire safety condition of **43%** found to be good

A total of **5843** precepts were issued to building possessors and owners to rectify the discovered shortcomings, and **416** misdemeanour proceedings were initiated

## ALSO INSPECTED



**101**

ENTERPRISES WITH A MAJOR ACCIDENT HAZARD AND DANGEROUS ENTERPRISES

of which **31%** were found to be without violations



INVESTIGATED THE CAUSES OF **1030** BUILDING FIRES

with the cause being identified in **94%** of cases



A TOTAL OF **24 600** BUILDING MONITORING APPLICATIONS WERE PROCESSED AS FOLLOWS:



- **15 431** building permits
- **8714** permits for use
- **455** plans





# EVENTS OF THE YEAR



## The Rescue Board supports local governments in crisis preparedness

In 2020, a survey was carried out for the first time to assess the readiness of local governments to prepare for and respond to crises. A total of 79 local governments were assessed using 55 metrics, with the possibility of achieving either a basic, advanced or exemplary level. A repeated survey of the Local Government Preparedness Index for Crises is planned to be carried out for at least four consecutive years.

During the healthcare crisis, local governments have also had to lead and manage the crisis in real terms. Crisis management committees have been set up to coordinate the crisis at the regional level, being chaired by the heads of regional Rescue Centres. There are four regional crisis management committees in Estonia, made up of representatives from

state authorities and bigger cities. The main task of the crisis management committees is to coordinate the activities of state authorities in preventing, preparing for and responding to emergencies, as well as ensuring the continuity of vital services in the local government, the county, the region or across the country.

The Rescue Board supports local governments in preparing for crises and the operation of vital services. In addition to practical advice, the Rescue Board organised a seminar on the art of crisis management for heads of local governments and crisis managers. Together, they discussed topics related to crisis preparedness and deciphered the key to successful crisis management.

## People, i.e., the main concerns of water and fire related accidents

**The Rescue Board's Prevention Department and Development Department, in cooperation with Tallinn University, took a close look at people who find themselves in fire and water related accidents and an illuminating composite picture of the risk groups was created.**



**Viktor Saaremets, Head of the Prevention Department**

Each year, dozens of people die in fire and water related accidents. In recent years, the number of accident-related fatalities has stagnated, although steady growth can be observed. In order to obtain a better understanding of the causes and evolution of accidents, we looked inside of events, focusing on the mind-sets of people at risk, their everyday joys and concerns, their habits and values, and their activities leading up to the accidents. In the case of both fire and water related accidents, five main types of people were identified and interviewed, who exhibited a greater risk of being involved in an accident than others. There are several causes that lead to accidents: unhealthy habits, dangerous beliefs, risky behaviours, and age and health related specificities.

A personality profile can help to better understand a person that is at risk, his or her lifestyle habits and the 'path' that often leads to an accident. This, in turn, provides an opportunity to find better and more precise tools to change the physical environment within the home or to influence people's behaviour in the interests of safety, from the perspective of prevention.

## Summer sees focus placed on water safety

**In the summer of 2021, the Finnish Rescue Services paid greater attention to water safety in order to raise awareness among people regarding water related dangers and to literally provide life-saving support on bodies of water.**

At the beginning of summer, 60 safety buoys were installed in public bathing areas across Estonia, to help tired swimmers catch their breath and, if necessary, to stand out and buy time

until help arrives. The buoys are good sources of help in the case of health problems and fatigue, as well as in the case of an unexpected deterioration of natural conditions – the rescue buoy is also a source of support in the case of strong winds or waves, where one can wait for swimming conditions to improve. The sites were chosen on the basis of risk – the buoys were set up in the most dangerous and deepest bathing areas, and in bathing areas where tragic water related accidents have occurred.

With the summer media campaign 'You have a backbone', the Rescue Board urged people to be aware of the risky behaviour associated with alcohol and gave practical advice on how to prevent a friend from getting behind the wheel or going swimming under the influence at the critical moment. The Police and Border Guard Board and the Transport Administration joined the campaign, as all three agencies share a common concern. Each year, over a hundred traffic



Scene from the short film – *Torm*

accidents are caused by drunk drivers. Also of concern is the ever-growing number of water related accidents and drowning deaths in recent years, with half of these involving alcohol.

## What is seen on film is well remembered!

**In 2021 two films were made under the auspices of the Rescue Board, bringing to the screen moments from life itself – the first film spiced up the preparation for emergencies with humour, the second film brought serious stories of Estonians who have had painful encounters with fatal accidents.**

In the short film *Storm*, Märt Avandi played the role of a family man who was steadfastly aware of the fact that an emergency does not announce itself beforehand. So one day he decided to prepare for the unexpected, and he did so in a truly unpredictable way. The frenetic rush of preparation turned family life upside down, but highlighted the fact that the only way to

win is to prepare. The fun and educational short film *Storm* was screened in January.

The TV documentary *What if it Happened to Me?* set aside the staged scenes and brought to TV screens people of Estonia who have lost their homes to fire or experienced some other terrible misfortune. The story of a deaf mute whose life was saved by a vibrating pillowcase carbon monoxide detector, and a young mother who had to escape with her baby from a second floor window due to a fire. A sad but instructive story was told by a young woman whose home and pets were swallowed by flames, and a lady who survived a gas explosion. With the help of experiments the film showed how quickly a fire can develop, how valuable smart sensors are, and how important it is for everyone to remember safety in their daily activities. 'What if it happened to me?' was broadcast in December.

## Let the help through, because lives are at stake!

**In 2021 the Rescue Board ran two campaigns to raise road safety awareness, as traffic has a significant impact on response times to emergencies and the lives of those in need may depend on aware road users.**

In April, the Northern Rescue Centre drew attention to parking problems. For many metropolitan brigades, whose response area consists mainly of densely populated residential areas, access to the scene of an accident has been a problem for decades. People parking in confined spaces obstruct access by emergency vehicles, putting their own lives and property and those of others at risk. A leaflet was placed on the windscreen of parked cars blocking access, drawing attention to the problem and asking vehicle owners to bear in mind that



an emergency vehicle needs at least 3.5 metres of clear space to access the building.

In October, the Rescue Board joined forces with the Police and Border Guard Board, the Ambulance Service and the Transport Board to draw the attention of road users to the need to give way to an emergency vehicle rushing to the scene of an accident. The Rescue Board, the police and the ambulance service respond to around 750 calls for help a

day across Estonia. Each year, there are around 185 traffic accidents involving emergency vehicles, which are the result of a variety of factors. It is also not uncommon for a traffic accident to happen because of the inattentiveness of fellow road users. Every second counts for the unit responding to an emergency – an alarm on a vehicle indicates that it is responding to an incident where someone is in distress and their life or property is in urgent need of help. It is therefore important that fellow road users – both drivers and pedestrians – take this into account.

## The heating systems portal collects health data on stoves and cookers

**In March, the heating systems portal, created by the Rescue Board, was completed, bringing together in one place all of the work done by potters and chimney sweeps. The portal will provide an overview of solid fuel heating systems in use in Estonia and their safety, with the aim of reducing the number of fires and fatalities caused by heating chambers.**

While in the past, chimney sweeps, potters, the client and the Rescue Board communicated largely by means of files, passports and correspondence, with the entry into force of the amendments to the Fire Safety Act, the working procedures for heating systems became much more modern. All information relating to the state of the heating systems is gradually being moved to the electronic environment. This means that chimney sweeps and plumbers will start submitting information about the work they do, including well-maintained heating systems, to the portal.



Potters and chimney sweeps can see an overview of the work done and the intervals between unfinished work on the portal. The owner of the heating system receives an excellent overview of the condition of his or her heating system and the need for cleaning. In addition, the portal also brings together contact details of chimney sweeps and plumbers. So, if you need to call a chimney sweep, you can quickly find the right person in your county.

Paper certificates for work done before 1 March 2021 will be valid until the deadline and will not be entered in the portal.

## Homes made even more fire-safe

**In the course of the Fire-Safe Homes project, 753 homes across Estonia were made safer, with more than EUR 950,000 invested.**

In 2021, 76 local governments and 3 associations representing the hard of hearing participated in the project. The state contributed EUR 600,000 to the project and local governments added EUR 350,000. A total of 157 heating systems, 75 electrical systems and 4 gas appliances were either newly installed or repaired. There were 40 homes where both the heating and electricity systems were in critical condition and had to be repaired. The procurement of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors for the hard of hearing was supported 43 times.

From year to year, hundreds of incidents of food burning



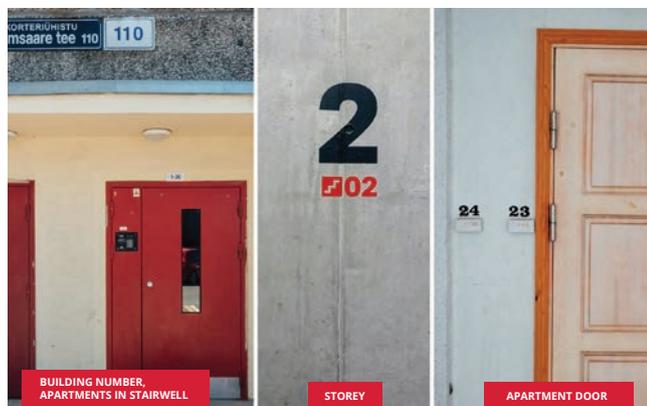
occur, where food is forgotten on the stove due to distractedness or intoxication. To prevent the worst outcome, so-called cooker guards were installed in a dozen households. It is a device that interrupts the power supply as soon as the sensor above the stove detects burning, thereby preventing the risk of further heating and fire.

Accidents with tragic consequences (where children have also died or suffered over the years) have been caused by a malfunctioning or unmaintained gas appliance in the bathroom. More than 300 carbon monoxide detectors designed for use in damp rooms were installed to monitor people's health and life.

## In apartment buildings and office buildings, doors must be marked with numbers!

Since March of last year, it is required that the route from the front door to the apartments (including the front door, intermediate doors, apartment doors) in all apartment buildings, so that operational services are able to reach the person in need more quickly. In the case of apartment buildings with more than three storeys, the floors must also be marked with a corresponding number, and this obligation extends to both existing buildings and those still under construction.

If the resident of the house recognizes his or her floor by the colour of a flowerpot, then the operational services, such as rescuers, ambulance and police, are in the building for the first time. At the same time, their actions are extremely



time-critical and we do not want to waste time finding the right door or floor.

Taking into consideration that there are many apartment buildings and the change is relatively new, it will be a long time before all apartment buildings are properly marked. At the same time, our rescue teams, preventers and inspectors constantly direct attention to existing shortcomings, and over time, by raising people's awareness, we will also achieve the desired result.

#### Exemplary labelling:

- building number
- range of apartment numbers on the front door of the stairwell
- floor number in an apartment building and office building with more than three storeys
- the range of apartment numbers on intermediate doors in the stairwell (if any)
- apartment or room number

## Flood exercise

On 16 September, a major tabletop exercise was held at the Rescue Board, in cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications and other partner agencies, to practice and test interagency cooperation in dealing with emergencies caused by coastal flooding and the resulting disruption or major disruption of vital services (electricity and liquid fuel supply, communications, driveability of national roads). The exercise took place at three different levels – the national, regional, and local – in eight different geographical locations and lasted all day. Under the scenario, vital services were disrupted: communications and electricity were cut off and coastal areas and roads were flooded. Such a large-scale exercise has never taken place before within the rescue system. There were touchstones and stumbling blocks at every turn. It was a tense and fast-paced day and, to quote the head of the national support team on the exercise: 'The tempo was so fast that my back was wet!' Based on the feedback collected by the organiser, it is safe to say that the exercise was a success and met its objectives. Although the outcome took a long time to complete, it is good to know that the paper summary can be used as a basis for further planning, to refine the system and prepare for the major exercise in 2023.



Flood exercise



# OUR IMAGE



Professional competition in Tisno

## The Rescue Board is geared for development

One of the focus topics of the Rescue Board for 2021 was developing a culture of leadership, improving the quality of leadership, and supporting the development of leaders. Despite corona restrictions, a number of management development training sessions were held during the year. The first cohort of the Leadership Development Programme, which will run for a total of eighteen months, began its studies in May. A diverse programme was attended by brigade chiefs as well as an explosive ordnance disposal team and regional commanders. The aim of the programme was to provide leaders with greater leadership knowledge, confidence in managing

their people and organising their day-to-day work, thereby contributing to their development and improving the quality of leadership within the Rescue Board as a whole. During the course of the year, the first four modules of the development programme were completed by two leadership cohorts.

An in-house mentor training programme, carried out for the first time, was also aimed at the self-development of leaders. A mentoring programme for the Rescue Board's servants was developed to support both the development of servants and the induction of new workers into the organisation, as



well as to support the development of servants when they change jobs. Last year, 12 managers from different sectors completed the basic mentor training. Participation in the programme raised the level of self-awareness of leaders and their courage to test new ideas, boosted the confidence of team members and their ability to think outside the box. The main role of mentors will be to set an example as a conveyor of the values and attitudes of the Rescue Board, to support the development of the competences of the mentored and the sharing of experiences.

To support the development of leaders, the Rescue Board also began providing needs-based coaching in 2021, to better address work-related challenges, which helps the leader to overcome obstacles, establish clarity, find and implement

solutions, develop in their professional and personal lives, and raise their self-awareness.

In addition to mental development and wellbeing, it is also important for the Rescue Board to pay attention to the physical health of its staff. It is good to see that, despite the long year filled with corona restrictions, the athleticism of the Rescue Board's servants has not diminished and many of our workers have also been able to test themselves in a number of international competitions.

The Firefit competition took place in September, in Tisno, Croatia, where the Rescue Board was represented by a 14-member team, which included both servants who are in daily contact with the rescue sector and two partners from the Ministry of Interior and the Tax and Customs Board. All in all, they came home with seven sets of medals.

A three-strong team took part in an international competition of the same name, Firefit, in June, in Toruń, Poland. In addition to the Rescue Board, the team also included a Polish competitor, with whom they placed a respectable third in the tandem competition. Competitions taking place away from home allow the Rescue Board's staff to test themselves in international competition, while introducing Estonia and raising the international profile of our rescue service.

Instagram has become one of the most attractive channels for recruiting new staff. By reaching out to this target group through social media, we have received recognition from many of our candidates. In 2021 we showcased the work of the different positions and our cool people on Instagram with the 'What Do You Do?' campaign, which featured short video clips of passionate professional rescuers and office workers alike, telling us more about what makes them really shine and passionate about their work at the Rescue Board. The aim was to bring the Rescue Board's heartfelt message to its followers – all of our trained rescue professionals work every day towards achieving a common goal – protecting the lives, property and environment of the Estonian people!

# INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Package No.	Package	Weight bruto kg	Dimensions cm	Contents / Items	Volume m <sup>3</sup> total	Value EUR total
2	1 Box	282	120 x 80 x 191	Sleeping bags 110 pc	1,83	4 373
					1,83	4 373



**ESTONIA**  
HUMANITARIAN AID

## Rescue Board to lead the European Explosive Ordnance Disposal Network

In 2021 Arno Pugonen, advisor at the Rescue Board, was elected Chairman of the European Explosive Ordnance Disposal Network (EEODN). 'My role as chairman is a bit ceremonial in nature, being mainly responsible for chairing the regular conferences; however, I also plan to contribute more to substantive activities, to help make our network even better,' explained Arno Pugonen.



**Identifying secondary explosive threat**

The main event of the European Explosive Ordnance Disposal Network (EEODN) each year is a week-long conference and training course. The conference is usually attended by specialists from all EU Member States, as well as various international organisations and partners from third countries. The event was held in Croatia in 2021, with participation including 26 Member States plus two non-EU countries: Montenegro and North Macedonia, about 80 people in total. Among the international organisations represented and giving presenta-

tions were the EC (European Commission), Interpol (International Criminal Police Organization), Europol (European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation), OPCW (Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons), ECDC (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control), IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency), and the JRC (Joint Research Centre).



**Analysing x-rays**



## Estonia sent **Lithuania** help to cope with the crisis

In the summer, Lithuania appealed for international help with the migratory pressure resulting from Belarus, and Estonia was one of many to provide assistance. In July and August, several truckloads of equipment packed at the Rescue Board's logistics centre were sent to Lithuania.

Under the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism, large tents, beds, heaters and air conditioners, tables and chairs and other essential furniture were sent to Lithuania. Pillows, blankets and mattresses were also sent to Lithuania.

All 27 EU Member States are members of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, along with Iceland, Norway, Serbia, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Turkey. The principle of the Mechanism is that a country in need of assistance in a crisis makes a request for assistance and other Member States indicate how they can help. The beneficiary will then indicate whether it is necessary to take up all the offers.

In addition to Estonia, Lithuania accepted offers of assistance from Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Greece, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Croatia, Finland, Poland, Sweden, and Slovenia through the Mechanism.

## Standing together against emergencies

In the last two or three years, the Rescue Board has actively participated in discussions at the European Union level, aimed at establishing a Union-wide rescue capability within the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which is named rescEU. In essence, it is a common European reserve, which will be introduced as a last resort after the resources voluntarily provided by Member States have been exhausted. Its creation gives the European Union additional levers to deal with various crises, disasters and emergencies.

RescEU reserve funds are managed by Member States, although funding is largely guaranteed by the EU. Initially, it was agreed that collective capabilities would include aircraft designed to extinguish wildfires, as well as medical supplies,

trained medical staff and field hospitals, and the capacity to clear contaminants<sup>1</sup> from the CBRN field.

However, discussions in EU-level working groups revealed the need for the creation of new, additional collective capabilities. In addition to the above, logistics and transport capabilities, CBRN monitoring and detection capability, mobile laboratories and asylum provision capabilities are also planned to be included in the collective reserve.

It has been in Estonia's interests that the capabilities to be created would offer added value in dealing with various crises, and we are ready on our part to consider creating CBRN monitoring and detection capability in Estonia.

<sup>1</sup> CBRN — Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Threat





## Europol supports European Union Member States

Arno Pugonen, an adviser at the Rescue Board Explosive Ordnance Center, won Europol's European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) job competition, which allowed him to work directly at Europol for a year. 'Unfortunately, I can't be specific regarding my duties; however, the experience, connections and knowledge I have gained from working there are in some ways invaluable. One of the ECTC's best-known public reports is the annual TE-SAT (Terrorism Situation and Trend Report), which is also available online,' said Pugonen.

Europol, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, aims to support and strengthen the activities of the competent authorities of Member States and their mutual cooperation in preventing and combating organised

crime, cybercrime, terrorism and other serious forms of crime affecting two or more Member States.

Europol is Headquartered in The Hague, the Netherlands, and brings together law enforcement agencies from the 27 EU Member States, as well as various international organisations (Eurojust, OLAF, Frontex, CEPOL, the European Central Bank, etc.) and representations from third countries with which cooperation agreements have been concluded (at least 25 countries worldwide). More than 1000 staff, 220 Europol Liaison Officers and around 100 crime analysts are employed in the headquarters. Each year, Europol supports more than 40,000 different investigations.



# HISTORY

## Estonian Firefighting Museum travelling exhibitions in 2021

In 2021, two travelling exhibitions from the Firefighting Museum toured different parts of Estonia:

1. In 2020, **Female Firefighters**, completed by the end of 2006 and primarily intended for display in museums;
2. Completed in September 2021, **Where There's Smoke, There's Fire**, will travel mainly through shopping centres.

Through the travelling exhibition *Female Firefighters* we reflect on the importance of the role of women in Estonian firefighting and rescuing through the ages. As one of the aims was to provide the viewer with an introduction to the role of women in society in general, we were joined in putting the exhibition together by historian Janet Laidla, who had previously researched female students. It is through her that we have mapped the changes in women's occupations in the 20th century,



**Exhibition at the Estonian National Museum, author Arp Karm**

and it gives the viewer a broader context and overview of different periods and occupations.

The *Female Firefighters* exhibition, we are display of historical photos of women's activities in the fire service, uniforms and work clothes from different eras, as well as video footage of



**Exhibition at the Estonian National Museum, author Arp Karm**



**Exhibition at Võru Kagukeskus shopping centre, author Triin Kerge**

everyday life in the fire brigades. The aim of the exhibition is to draw attention to women who, throughout history, have been engaged in a field that has been primarily associated with men and masculinity.

The travelling exhibition *Where There's Smoke, There's Fire* focuses on smoking-related fires. As the drawn out corona crisis left a significant impact on the number of visitors to our museum, as well as to other museums, we had to think about public space, to ensure that the exhibition would still reach people even in the event of temporary museum closures. The exhibition is based on the statistics of the Rescue Board, the recollections of Viktor Saaremetsa, Head of the Prevention Department, and the true stories that rescuers have encountered in their work. The exhibition uses historical fire safety posters and cartoons found in the collections of the Estonian Firefighting Museum.



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