

Record number of hoax calls to the coastguard

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Scotland's coastguard received a record number of hoax calls in 2019, at a rate of nearly one a week.

Statistics have revealed there were 51 prank alerts made to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency in Scotland last year.

That's more than double the number of 2017, and significantly more than any other previous year.

Highlands and Islands MSP Donald Cameron said the punishment for those making the hoax calls should be severe, and that their actions put lives at risk.

The figures emerged following a Freedom of Information request by the Scottish Conservatives.

It means there have been 206 hoax calls to the country's coastguard in the last five years.

Scottish Conservative Highlands and Islands MSP Donald Cameron said:

"We know hoax calls are a problem for all emergency services.

"But it takes a particularly crass and reckless individual to take the time to make a false report to the coastguard.

"Their actions are putting lives at risk.

"This is an organisation that is constantly under serious pressure, and they simply cannot afford to have their time and resources wasted on prank calls.

"Every time these brave people go out to an emergency they are putting their lives at risk.

"Anyone who thinks that is a joke should be punished severely – it's the only way to deter others from this disgraceful practice."