

5. SERVICE REPORT

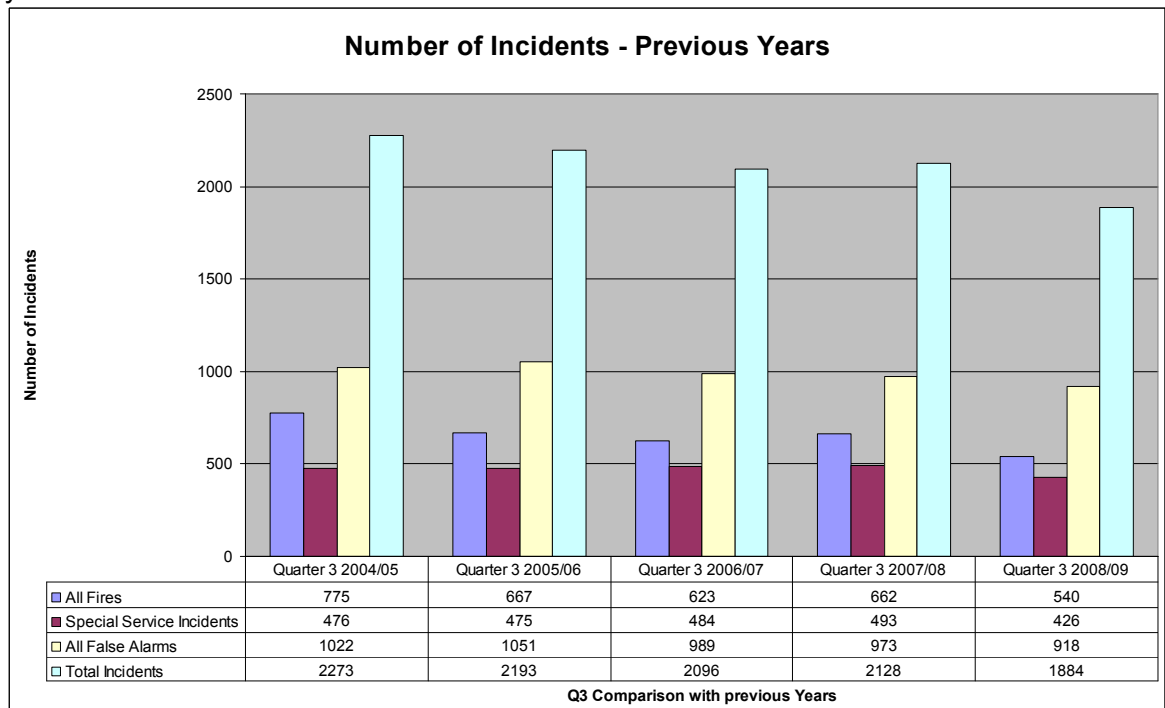
Purpose of Report

To inform Members of Service activities in the fourth quarter together with operational and statistical details for the period 1 October 2008 to 31 December 2008.

Performance

Incident Statistics

- 1 The number of fires attended during Quarter 3 was 540 compared with 662 in the same quarter last year. This equates to a decrease of 18.43% compared with the Quarter 3 2007-08.
- 2 The number of Special Service incidents attended during Quarter 3 was 426 compared with 493 in the same quarter last year. This equates to a decrease of 13.59% compared with Quarter 3 2007-08.
- 3 The number of False Alarms attended in Quarter 3 was 918 compared with 973 in the same quarter last year. This equates to a decrease of 5.65% compared with Quarter 3 2007-08.
- 4 A total of 1884 incidents were attended in Quarter 3 compared with Quarter 3 2007-08 where 2128 incidents were attended. The total number of incidents has reduced by 11.47% when compared with Quarter 3 2007-08. The total number of incidents for Quarter 3 2008-09 is 13.26% lower than the four year average for this quarter at 2172 incidents.
- 5 The following chart demonstrates this quarter's activity with the 3rd Quarter for the last four years:



- 6 We continue to perform well in excess of our current (LAA) targets relating to deliberate primary and secondary fires in South Worcestershire, Redditch and Wyre Forest.

Health and Safety Incidents and Injuries

7.

	Incidents	RIDDOR	% Rate on Establishment
October – December 2007	19	4	2
January – March 2008	27	3	3
April – June 2008	27	5	3
July – Sept 2008	31	7	4
October – December 2008	42	12	4.5

Analysis

8. The number of reported Health & Safety Incidents/Injuries this third quarter of 2008-09 has increased when compared with both the previous quarter – up from 31 to 42 – and the same quarter last year – up from 19 to 36. Furthermore, the number of incidents reportable under RIDDOR has tripled when compared with the same period last year, from 4 to 12.
9. Analysis of all reported incidents has shown a continued increase in slips, trips and falls (12 incidents), with exposure to hazardous substances accounting for 7 incidents, Manual Handling injuries accounting for 6 incidents and burns and impact injuries accounting for 5 injuries each.
10. Further analysis indicates the increase in the above statistics could point towards the Service's commitment to and delivery of training in the areas listed below. It is widely accepted that when awareness is raised statistics can also rise. The dates when the increase in statistics started to rise run in line with the dates training commenced in a number of areas. It is anticipated this area of improved reporting will signal a further rise in statistics for the next year and then will begin to fall. Further investigation on the increase in RIDDOR reporting following the publication of an improved attendance management policy will take place throughout 2009. Staff have been reminded to exercise vigilance and consider their environment to prevent slip, trip and fall injuries and the Department will continue to monitor incident details and trends.
11. Again, as identified in previous periods, a significant number of all Health & Safety incidents continue to involve operational personnel (83%) and again 60% of these occurred during operational activity, while over a quarter occurred during training activities.
12. The number of reported Near Hits and Potential Hazards continue to remain low as in previous periods and still only represent a fraction (9%) of all reported Health & Safety incidents.
13. A total of 11 Fleet Health & Safety Incidents were reported this quarter. Of these incidents 63% occurred during routine driving activities, 3 occurred whilst responding and one during training.

Improving Health and Safety across the Service

14. In order to assist in the understanding and management of risk and drive down the number of injuries to staff, the Department continues to build and develop a comprehensive Health & Safety training strategy, which will provide training for a large proportion of the workforce. Between April 2008 and January 2009 - 345 candidates were trained across the Service in the following areas:
- IOSH Managing Safely training for Watch Managers and Non operational Managers;
 - Control of Substances Hazardous for Health Assessment training to one representative of each Station;
 - Risk Assessment training for one representative of each Station;
 - Managing Display Screen Equipment for appropriate locations;
 - Corporate Manslaughter for both operational and non-operational managers;
 - Behavioural safety seminar all operational and non-operational managers;
 - Conflict Resolution and Personal Safety to key staff.
 - Raising H & S awareness (Hindsight).
15. Externally the Health and Safety Advisor for the Service is closely engaged in developing the 2009-10 Annual Plan for the Regional CFOA Health & Safety Committee. In January 2009 our advisor is the lead auditor on a RoSPA QSA Audit of Warwickshire Fire Service, in tandem with representatives from West Midlands Fire Service and Staffordshire Fire Service.

Complaints, Concerns, Compliments and Donations

16. During the period 1 October 2008 to 31 December 2008 the Service received 6 complaints, 7 concerns, 11 compliments and 14 donations. All letters will be made available for Members' perusal at the meeting.

Information Management

17. **Requests for Information**
Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)/Data Protection Act (DPA)/ Environmental

Q3	FOI Requests received and completed	DPA Requests received and completed	EIR Requests received and completed	Monthly Totals for Quarter 3
October 2008	24	0	1	25
November 2008	16	1	0	17
December 2008	15	3	0	18
TOTALS	55	4	1	60

Information Regulations (EIR)

18. The Service continues to manage Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and Data Protection Act (DPA) requests in line with current legislation. 60 requests were received during Quarter 3; there are no significant areas of concern for this period.

Items of Interest

Regulatory Reform Order (Fire Safety) 2005

19. In January 2008 proceedings were issued by Herefordshire Council against the landlord of a property in Aylestone Hill, Hereford on two counts, firstly one of operating an unlicensed house in multiple occupation and, secondly, breach of a prohibition notice issued in January 2008. H&WFRS attended the property with Herefordshire Council and undertook a full audit against the provisions of the RRO; the decision was made to prosecute and subsequently 5 summonses were issued. The Fire Authority's case will be heard jointly with Herefordshire Council on 9th March 2009.

Use of 0845 Number for Complaints, Concerns and Compliments

20. Following the enquiry made at the last FRA Meeting, the Service has considered the use of the 0845 by the public for complaints, compliments and concerns. The number first came into use for operational reasons when the Authority moved to its new Headquarters in November 2005. Should a member of the public wish to make a complaint by telephone about the Service, they are directed to use the SHQ 0845 telephone number. The complaints are then directed to Fire Control and a management process is initiated. Callers from a British Telecom line to the 0845 number are charged no more than 4 pence per minute. The FRS pays British Telecom for the 0845 service and no income to the FRS is generated by the 0845 number.
21. The Service receives about 6 Complaints, concerns and compliments per month, and about half of these are in writing. It is possible to provide an 0800 (free) telephone number but the cost to the FRS would increase beyond that currently paid for the 0845 number. The change of number would also require changes to stationery, letterheads, directories, etc. In view of the very small numbers involved, and the fact that the 0845 number offers an effective and efficient service to the public, it is felt that such a change is not warranted at the moment.

IRMP 2009/10 Action Plan

22. Principal Officers have concluded the detailed review required to identify back office efficiencies as agreed at the December FRA. Overall efficiencies of £211,000 will be made through:
- a restructuring of the delivery of the Committee Services function within PPP
 - the removal of 3 posts from PPP structure
 - an increase in private mileage charges for use of service vehicles
 - a reduction of spend in support service revenue budgets
23. Detailed work has also progressed to ensure that we are able to maintain a full establishment and strengthen attendance management arrangements. This will ensure that we can accommodate the reduction of 12 operational posts and improve the delivery of operational training as proposed. In support of these changes, plans are in place to deliver a central staffing function from within existing resources to coordinate attendance on a day-to-day basis, ensure crewing levels are maintained, and levels of sickness absences, "off watch" training courses and temporary promotions are monitored.

24. A new training strategy is being developed to make most effective use of the additional training staff delivered through the IRMP. The development of a flexible working register will also facilitate more flexible training delivery and reduce the number of training courses cancelled due to short term absence.
25. Changes are also being proposed to the mobilisation and management of specialist water rescue units at Worcester, Hereford and Evesham. The proposal is that these teams will be put on a retained / secondary contract basis similar to the USAR teams. This will enhance resilience and improve the arrangements for training in this highly specialised field of work.
26. These objectives are being overseen by the PPP department including programme support, progress monitoring and the development of key performance indicators within each area. A full communications strategy for the changes will ensure that all staff are aware of the new arrangements. The change programme will include the provision of detailed information, guidance and face to face meetings with all managers responsible for operational attendance management.

Government Response to the 2007 Floods - EU Grant – Flood Ex 2009

27. In response to Sir Michael Pitts review into the 2007 floods, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has committed £2m to enhancing flood rescue capabilities. The Chief Fire Officer, representing the Chief Fire Officers Association, has been appointed to contribute to the national programme, which will deliver enhanced national rescue procedures, training and equipment standards. The programme will also identify any immediate capability needs, and commence procurement of equipment and training for delivery in Winter 2009/10. Part of this programme will develop and formalise “Major Flood” response modules for UK or international deployment.
28. The Cabinet Office and Department for Communities and Local Government have agreed to make a UK contribution to a major EU flood exercise taking place in Holland in September of this year. This is the largest and most complex flood exercise ever held by the EU, and will involve a practical deployment of UK FRS and voluntary sector resources to Holland, where they will work alongside EU partners from Holland, Germany, Poland, Sweden and Latvia, with assistance and observers coming from remaining Member States.
29. To facilitate the UK response, Hereford and Worcester has been nominated to receive a grant of 104k Euros from the European Union. This funding will be used to cover all of the staff and managerial costs of organising the UK response, and for the costs of the deployment itself. The UK Major Flood Module will include FRS staff from across the UK supported by specialists from the voluntary sector. It is likely that there will be opportunities for Hereford and Worcester FRS staff to become involved in the exercise. Further information and requests for volunteers will be circulated once known.

Annual Carol Service

30. The annual Friends and Family Carol Service took place at Worcester Cathedral on Sunday 21 December 2008. A large number of people came along to the Cathedral to join in the festivities – members of the public and members of staff and their families.

31. The Fire Choir treated the attendance to traditional Carols throughout the event, and there were seasonal readings by members of the Service. The Young Firefighters also played a starring role in their Nativity Play 'In the Inn'. Afterwards, everyone got together to enjoy mulled wine and mince pies.
32. On behalf of everyone who enjoyed the evening so much, the Chief Fire Officer thanks all those involved in the Carol Service for such a memorable event.

Young Firefighters Association (YFA) Update

33. The Executive Committee chaired by Cllr Fry has met since the last FRA meeting and continues to monitor organisation and management of the Association. The Committee is supporting the establishment of the new branch at Redditch and has hopes of a launch in the early summer.
34. In Hereford, the Service currently supports the Cadet scheme run by West Mercia Police, but there is still a desire to establish a full YFA branch in Herefordshire and a number of sites are under consideration subject to volunteers and funds being identified.

Volunteer Programme Update

35. In a new approach to building capacity for Community Safety activities, minor restructuring has taken place to allow the creation of a "Volunteer Programme Co-ordinator" within existing staff levels. Once appointed, the individual will be responsible for running and recruiting to a new volunteer programme which will deliver additional Home Fire Safety Checks and a more focused engagement with some of our harder to reach communities. The coordinated use of trained volunteers will enable us to increase the number of number of Home Fire Safety Checks delivered within existing budgets.

Information for Members

Business Continuity

36. A Pandemic Flu Exercise (Sixways) was held at Worcester Rugby Club on 04 February 2009. A number of players from the Service took part, both at Silver and Gold Command. The exercise was designed to test Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire's resilience arrangements in the event of a Flu Pandemic.

Update of the Standards Committee

37. Consultation Paper on Codes of Conduct for Local Authority Members and Employees:

The Department of Communities and Local government published this consultation paper on 1 October 2008, inviting submissions by 24 December 2008. CLG invited views on proposals for revising the model code of conduct for local authority members ("the members' code"), principally to clarify its application to members' conduct in their non-official capacity. This paper also invited views on proposals for associated changes to the general principles which govern the conduct of local authority members. Finally, comments were invited on proposals to introduce a requirement for authorities to incorporate a code of conduct for employees, based on

a statutory model code of conduct, into the terms and conditions of employment of their employees' ("the employees' code").

38. The matter was considered as an Urgent item at the Standards Committee Meeting on 21 November, and it was decided to make a submission on behalf of the Authority, which would be informed by the views of our constituent authorities. The submission response was framed by CLG in the form of 22 questions regarding the proposed changes, and the responses of Herefordshire Council and Worcestershire County Council were broadly similar. The submission made by this Authority to CLG was informed by these responses, and was, in summary, as follows:

- The proposal to extend the Members' Code of Conduct to members' conduct in their non-official capacity is acceptable;
- The associated changes to the general principles which govern the conduct of local authority members are acceptable;

This Authority already has in place a Code of Conduct for Employees, which is very similar to the proposed Model Code of Conduct for Employees. The proposals in the Consultation paper are unnecessary and unworkable.

39. The Committee made the submission to CLG, on behalf of the Authority, on 23 December 2008.

Update of the Audit Committee

40. The Committee met on 28 January 2009 and considered the External Audit Plan, including the new Use of Resources approach, the Internal Audit Plan 2008/09 and the Authority's Confidential Reporting Policy (Whistleblowing), and details of the Meeting will be available when the Minutes are confirmed.

Update of the Budget Committee

41. The Committee met on 28 January 2009 and reviewed the current position in relation to Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2009/10 and beyond, and the implications for the precept, and the revised Service Level Agreement for financial services with Worcestershire County Council, and details of the Meeting will be available when the Minutes are confirmed.

Corporate Risk

42. Members will recall the Strategic Risk Register was approved at the FRA meeting in December 2008 and continues to be reviewed and revised as a live document. The Departmental Risk Registers review has now been completed and actions from these Registers will now be incorporated into the Performance and Business Planning process.

Emergency Planning

43. The Service is currently working closely with our Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners to address the implementation of the changes recommended by Sir Michael Pitt in his review of the 2007 Floods. This collaboration and contribution will further reinforce the joined up approach the Service has with our LRF partners as Category One responders. A full report on the impact of the Government's response to the Pitt

report from the Authority's perspective will be presented to Members at a future meeting of the Authority.

44. The Joint Emergency Resilience Arrangements (JERA) is currently under review with the LRF working group.

Community Safety Update

45. December saw the end of a very busy quarter for Community Safety staff members working within both Counties.
46. A bonfire night fireworks safety education campaign was conducted in many schools across the two Counties targeting year 7 pupils over a 4 week period. The aim of the school visits was to reduce the risk of injury by encouraging youngsters and their families to attend an organised event, as opposed to celebrating bonfire night at home.
47. The "Christmas Presence" campaign highlighted the 12 fire safety messages surrounding the festive season in the week prior to Christmas. The campaign generated approximately 50 Home Fire Safety Check referrals, many of which 'fell' within the Services defined higher-risk output areas. This initiative also allowed us to promote Road Safety and was featured on TV and on radio.
48. Attendance at the Worcestershire Partnership "Emerging Communities Task Group" has commenced and a service representative will continue supporting and engaging with the Group on a quarterly basis.
49. A new Committee has been created to promote road safety messages to young people across the 2 Counties, in partnership. A joint approach to delivery into schools and youth centres is to be adopted by the Service, the WM Safer Roads Partnership, West Mercia Police, Worcestershire County Council and Youth support services.

Home Fire Safety Checks Update

50. Between 1st October and 31st December, the Service undertook 690 Home Fire Safety Checks and installed 809 smoke detectors. An increasing proportion of these were in properties specifically highlighted as being at an increased risk of fire, defined using known contributors to risk from the 2002 Census data, as well as local and historic information.

Schools Update

51. At the start of this current year, the Service commenced a new strategy focusing more clearly on Key Stage 2 students as intelligence indicated that this was where our efforts were best placed. The existing Education Assistant posts were disbanded and better use of part-time staff made to reflect school hours and terms. Two new part time Education Assistants have now been recruited to work across the two Counties.
52. During this period of change, we are pleased that operational staff have maintained the schools programme and we now look forward to increasing our activity with the two new posts.

Signposting Update

53. Substantial activity has continued delivering cross-agency referrals between partners, facilitated by the sign-posting co-ordinators within Worcestershire and Herefordshire. With the Worcestershire scheme nearing the conclusion of its pilot phase, a business plan has been developed to promote continuation of this vital service. The aim is to present the plan to the Local Strategic Partnership linking in with the Sustainable Community Strategy with funding proposals largely underpinned through the FRS element of the Public Service Agreement (1) Reward Grant.

Arson Update

54. Work continues to establish an Arson team resourced through the Service but hosted within West Mercia Police. This initiative is planned to deliver much improved access to resources allocated to the Anti-Social Behaviour and Safer Communities agenda.
55. The Service is engaged at a national level working to recognise increases in arson as the financial climate worsens and to identify mitigating actions as part of the business planning cycle.
56. The Service received a number of referrals of young people who had been involved with fire setting activity during the third quarter. The majority of the cases seen were in North Worcestershire, followed by South Worcestershire then Herefordshire. This reflects the general arson profile of the Authority.

Child Protection Update

57. Following the appointment of the ACFO Service Delivery as Child Protection Officer for the Authority and membership of the executive of the Safeguarding Children Board, the Services new "Safeguarding Children and Young People" policy is nearing publication. This will be supported with a full programme of training for staff.

Local Incidents to Note

Man rescued from flat fire on Boxing Day

58. A 29 year old unconscious man was rescued by firefighters from a bedroom fire in a first floor flat at Greenhill, London Road, Worcester, early on Boxing Day. He was taken to hospital where he was detained for a number of days suffering the effects of smoke inhalation. He has since made a full recovery. The fire was caused by overloaded electrical sockets in the timber framed built property.

Evesham crews rescue man from smoke filled offices

59. Fire crews from Evesham rescued an unconscious man from the offices of a taxi firm in the Vale Business Park, Evesham in the early hours of Wednesday December 31. He was taken to hospital suffering from smoke inhalation. The fire was caused by clothing left on a wall heater.

Man charged with arson

60. A man has been charged with arson following a fire which damaged the front door of a house in Lower Chestnut Street, Worcester early on Sunday December 21. The male occupant of the house, who was asleep downstairs, escaped through the back door having been woken by a smoke alarm.

Fire Safety Breaches Cost Father and Son Over £50,000

61. A father and son have been ordered to pay more than £50,000 after pleading guilty to charges relating to inadequate fire safety standards at a building in Coventry Street, Kidderminster, in which tenants were rescued following a fire.
62. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority brought proceedings against Brian Murdoch who owns 90 and 91 Coventry Street, Kidderminster, and his son David, who was responsible for the day to day running of the premises.
63. Brian Murdoch pleaded guilty to six charges of breaching The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, and his son pleaded guilty to eight.

The charges brought against Brian and David Murdoch included:

- Failure to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of risks
 - Failure to ensure that the premises and any facilities equipment and devices were subject to suitable maintenance and in efficient state, working order and good repair
 - Failure to co-operate as far as necessary to comply with the Fire Safety Order
64. The two men were sentenced by District Judge Brian Morgan at Kidderminster Magistrates today (Friday, January 30). The judge awarded the costs of £39,695 to Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority. Both father and son were fined a total of £11,600. During the course of the proceedings the Judge commented on the "efficiency and effectiveness" of the Fire Service following the fire at the premises in July 2007."
65. Assistant Chief Fire Officer Jon Hall paid tribute to his fire safety officers and said: "This case clearly demonstrates how our officers are inspecting relevant buildings and applying the law to help ensure the safety of our community. The Fire Authority will use enforcement action and ultimately prosecution where people don't fulfil their legal obligations to those that use their buildings. We would like to issue a timely reminder to people throughout Herefordshire and Worcestershire that these regulations are there to make people safer."

School sports hall roof damaged by fire

66. The roof of the sports hall at Elgar Technology College, Worcester was damaged after a fire was deliberately started on the evening of Saturday December 20. The fire was extinguished by crews from Worcester, Malvern and Droitwich and Pershore. The College authorities thanked the Fire Service for the prompt response.

Church fire at Kidderminster

67. Firefighters from Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley attended a fire at Trinity Methodist Church, Churchfields, Kidderminster on the night of Sunday December 14. The Church caretaker and his partner, who live on the premises escaped unhurt. The Church was extensively damaged. Police later arrested a man on suspicion of arson with intent to endanger life.

M5 closed for 14 hours after tanker crash

68. The M5 between Junctions 7 (Worcester South) and 8 (Strensham) was closed for 14 hours on Sunday 4th January after an articulated tanker carrying almost 50,000 litres of petrol and diesel overturned. Approximately 8,000 litres of fuel was spilled into a ditch adjoining the northbound carriageway. Fire Crews from Worcester, Droitwich, Upton on Severn, Ledbury and the environmental protection unit from Evesham were in attendance to limit the environmental damage and reduce the potential for a major fire. The Service has received a letter of appreciation from the Environment Agency for our work which minimised pollution of the area and ensured the safe recovery of the vehicle and its remaining content of fuel. No persons were injured as a result of this incident.

Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the report be noted.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

Submission from the Standards Committee to the Department of Communities and Local Government re proposed amendments to Codes of Conduct for Local Authority Members and Model Code of Conduct for Local Authority Employees.