

Report of Area Commander, Head of Operations Support

7. Health and Safety Committee Update

Purpose of report

1. To provide the Policy and Resources Committee with an update on the activities and items of significance from the Service's Health and Safety Committee.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee note the content of this report.

Introduction

1. Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority's aim is ensure the safety and well-being of its employees and to reduce and prevent accidents and injuries at work.
2. The Health and Safety Committee is established to provide effective arrangements for the liaison and review of matters of a common interest in regards to health and safety (H&S), and to act as a forum for liaison on all matters relating to health and safety for key stakeholders and departments. The Committee provides the opportunity for the Service to discuss the general H&S matters on which it must consult the workforce with employee representatives.
3. The membership of the Committee has been recently reviewed and meetings are chaired by a Principal Officer – the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Support).
4. The Committee has the facility to task work to the Health & Safety Working Group (H&SWG), which sits beneath it and is chaired by the Area Commander Operations Support. The H&SWG meets as and when required but at least 6 monthly.
5. The Committee last met on 11 November 2013. Agenda items included: quarterly H&S performance report, regional audit protocol, H&S audit, legislative changes and Health & Safety Executive (HSE) updates, national operational guidance, breathing apparatus (BA) events review, Human Resources (HR) update, training update and national H&S activities.

Significant Issues Discussed

6. A review of the previous quarter's H&S performance was discussed in detail (see attached Appendix 1). Overall, reporting levels and staff awareness continue to be good and in general, any injuries reported continue to be predominantly minor in nature.
7. The West Midlands Regional H&S Committee, led by our H & S Advisor, is currently developing a fire service bespoke audit system. The framework has been ratified and agreed by Chief Fire Officers (CFOs) and following a recent presentation to the South East Region and the South East Collaborative Partnership, it has been agreed to collaborate on further development of the system. Once the system has been developed it is anticipated external awarding bodies will be approached with a view to obtaining accreditation.
8. The organisation has recently completed a full H&S Audit against the health, safety and welfare framework for the operational environment and leading health and safety at work documents. The findings of the audit are still to be collated, though early indications are extremely positive.
9. The H&S Advisor gave a presentation to the Committee on National Operational Guidance, which is guidance for fire services, currently being led by London Fire Brigade. All existing documentation will be reviewed and revised; obsolete documents will be removed; and there will be guidance templates only as opposed to standard operating procedures.
10. The organisation has completed a review of the measures introduced in response to a series of BA incidents that occurred in May/June 2011. The review identified a number of recommendations, which are now being actioned and will be reported on at the next Committee meeting in February.
11. The Human Resources (HR) team provided an update which discussed the measures recently introduced to improve fire fighter fitness; the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) National Fitness Project and the implementation of health surveillance for our fleet Mechanics.

Conclusion

12. Reported incidents, serious injuries and total H&S events for the year to September 2013 are lower than the average and are also below the agreed tolerances, indicating a downward trend in incidents and a good H&S culture within HWFRS.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	None
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	None
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	None
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	None
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	No, not required – information only

Supporting Information

Appendix 1: Quarterly H&S Performance Report

Contact Officer

Keith Chance

Area Commander

Head of Operations Support

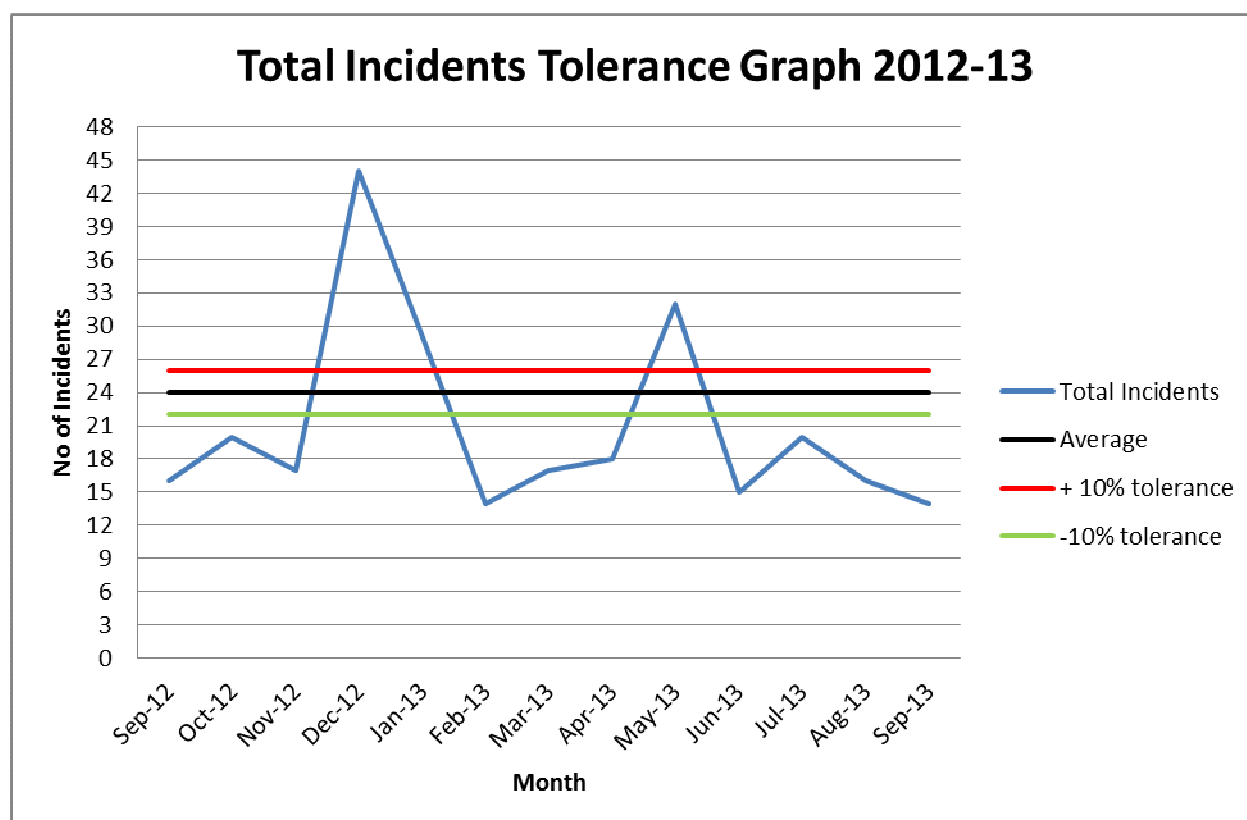
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Quarterly H&S Performance Report

Quarter 2 Total Reported H&S Events

A total of 50 H&S Events were reported this quarter:

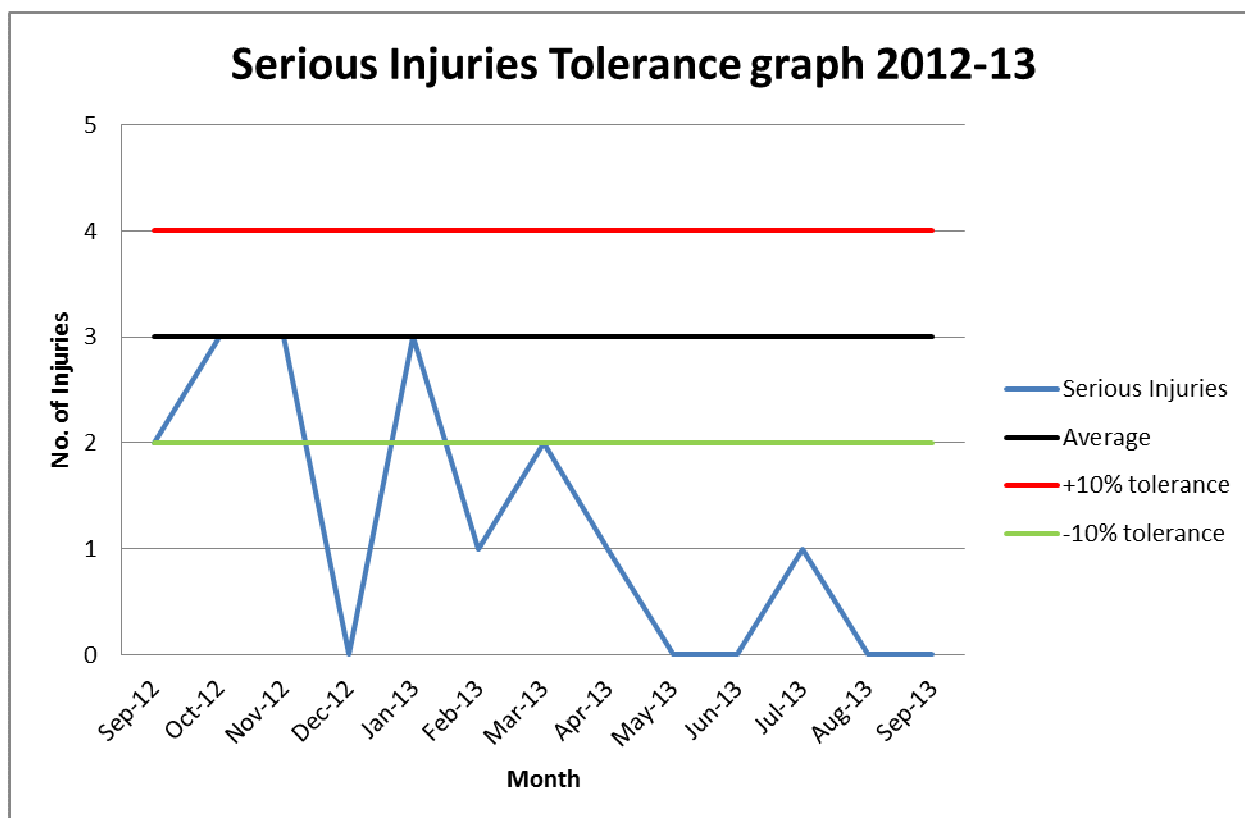
- 1 had potential to be a 'serious event²;
- 6 were causes for concern or near hits;
- 14 related to vehicle collisions, of which 10 were slow speed manoeuvres - 6 occurred whilst responding to incidents;
- 3 incidents were of minor verbal abuse from members of the public;
- 2 incidents of minor property damage;
- The remaining incidents were minor personal injuries.



(Figure 1 – Total Events per month Sep 2012 to Sep 2013)

Summary *The graph above shows the year September 2012 – September 2013. The spikes on the graph are due to the Lawrence and Sims Recycling fires. Total H&S events for this first quarter are significantly lower than the preceding quarters, indicating a downward trend in incidents. However, with the onset of inclement weather that is seasonal at this time of year, this trend is not expected to continue.*

Quarter 2 Serious Events Reported



(Figure 2 – Total Events per month Sep 2012 to Sep 2013)

Summary There was only one potentially serious event this quarter:

- The uncontrolled descent of a 13.5 m ladder during core skills training – the ladder was being made up in accordance with the fire service training manual when it descended uncontrollably. This was because the ladder pawls were not operating correctly resulting in the top two section of the ladder being used descending together as one unit: as the middle section of the ladder housed, this caused a jolt in ladder momentum, which then caused the top section of the ladder to descend uncontrollably. Workshops have confirmed that there have been no other issues with these ladders but have undertaken additional inspections and maintenance as a precaution. **No Injuries.**

Actions – A reminder of the correct drill sequence was issued to all crews to draw their attention to this incident as an example of the potential hazards involved in this activity.