

16. Health and Safety Liaison Panel Update

Purpose of report

1. To provide the Policy and Resources Committee with a report on the activities and items of significance from the Health and Safety Liaison Panel.
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Recommendations

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that:

- i) The Committee note the content of this report.*
- ii) The Committee consider the nomination of an Authority Member representative to sit on the Health and Safety Liaison Panel.*

Introduction

2. The Health and Safety Liaison Panel (H&SLP) last met on 16 August 2011.

Significant Issues Raised

3. It was proposed that the Chair of this panel would now pass to the Area Commander, Corporate Services and the Chair of the Health and Safety Working Group would pass to the Group Commander, Operational Policy. This is to be considered by members of the panel and agreed prior to the next meeting.
4. It was identified that there is currently no Authority Member representation on the H&SLP and it was proposed that the Authority is asked to consider nominating a Member to attend this meeting.
5. A review of the previous quarter's Health and Safety performance data was discussed in detail, followed by a review of the recent Health and Safety investigations (also see paragraphs 7 to 12). No significant issues arose. Debriefs on completed investigations have been carried out and were current and up to date.
6. It was agreed that the Service would include the FBU Health and Safety representative in planned advanced level (NEBOSH) Health and Safety training later this year.
7. The "Health and Safety Managers' Handbook" was issued recently to all managers and commanders in the Service and has been very well received. It was also presented at the regional Health and Safety Forum and was again well received with all regional partners requesting a copy for use in their organisations, which has subsequently been facilitated.
8. Two recent serious Health and Safety related issues were discussed in detail:

9. A recent issue in West Yorkshire FRS, released nationally, regarding the catastrophic failure of a 13.5m extension ladder causing serious injury to a Firefighter was reviewed. The Service's response to this, in liaison with the Representative Bodies, was to immediately implement control measures within the Service, and has seen subsequent reviews of protocols and risk assessments, including H&S Flashes being issued. Also revised testing and maintenance measures have been adopted. Members of the Liaison Panel were satisfied with the response to this event and the current measures in place, however consideration needs to be given to the outcomes of the pending final report and causal factors from the West Yorkshire incident. An internal review of the testing and maintenance programme for the HWFRS's ladders, which were identified as being behind schedule, is currently underway.
10. HWFRS has recently concluded two investigations into the reported failures of two BA sets from Hereford Fire Station that were being used during training. No person was injured or harmed during these incidents, however the potential for harm with this type of incident prompted a dedicated Specialist Investigation utilising internal and external resources. The Service commissioned the Health and Safety Executive's independent commercial Laboratory (HSL) to forensically examine both BA sets. This was carried out in conjunction with a team of trained internal specialist investigators and subject experts, who have completed a thorough internal investigation.
11. HSL concluded that both incidents were due to water in the cylinder subsequently causing internal components in the BA set to "freeze" and fail to operate correctly. On one occasion this led to a failure to deliver air to the wearer. In the other incident it caused the gauge assembly to malfunction, leading to incorrect monitoring of air consumption. HSL concluded that there was no fault or issue with the Drager BA sets and it was reasonable for any breathing equipment to react in this way to these levels of water in the air supply.
12. The Service has implemented a series of measures to address this issue, including independent moisture testing of all BA cylinders and rigorous testing of compressors. No further cylinders were found to have equivalent levels of moisture, however some cylinders were found to have higher than expected levels, but within safe limits. These were removed from use as a precaution. The investigation has not been able to determine the exact cause of the moisture entering the cylinder. All possible and known routes by which this might occur have been identified with additional control measures and procedures now implemented.
13. The Service has released a National Operations Bulletin through CFOA and has been liaising with other FRSs. The response to these incidents was carried out with the full involvement of the Representative Bodies and the staff affected. Staff responded positively to the investigation and have commented on their satisfaction with the Service's handling of this matter. The H&SLP were satisfied with the investigation and response to these incidents. Additionally it was felt that the response to these investigations has led to a significant improvement Service-wide in the management and use of BA Sets and Cylinders. A full report will be available in September.
14. A further review and update of reported incidents of abuse to staff was held with no significant issues being identified.

Financial Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
There are financial issues that require consideration	No	

Legal Considerations

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
There are legal issues e.g. contractual and procurement, reputational issues that require consideration	No	

Additional Considerations

15. The table below sets out any additional issues arising from the proposals contained in this report and identifies the relevant paragraphs in the report where such issues are addressed.

Consideration	Yes/No	Reference in Report i.e paragraph no.
Resources (e.g. Assets, ICT, Human Resources, Training & Development, Sustainability).	No	
Strategic Policy Links (e.g. IRMP, Authority Plan, Equality & Diversity, Partnerships, Environmental Impact).	No	
Risk Management / Health & Safety (e.g. risk management and control measures, risk register score).	No	
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No	

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