

Report of Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Response & Protection)

Health and Safety Committee Update: July – September 2021 (Quarter 2)

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide a Health & Safety update on activities and items of significance.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that the following issues, in particular, be noted:

- (i) The involvement of the Service in Health and Safety initiatives;*
- (ii) Health and Safety performance information recorded during July to September 2021 (Quarter 2)*

Introduction and Background

2. Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) aims to ensure the safety and well-being of its employees and reduce and prevent accidents and injuries at work, as outlined in the People Strategy 2020-2022.
3. The Health and Safety Committee is established to provide effective arrangements for the liaison and review of matters of common interest concerning Health and Safety (H&S). The Committee provides the opportunity for the Service to discuss general H&S issues and consult with the workforce via employee representatives. The Committee is chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer and last met on 8 December 2021.
4. The Committee has the facility to task work to the H&S Working Group, which sits beneath it and is chaired by the Group Commander responsible for Health and Safety. The group meets as and when required.
5. The Working Group was formally tasked with the following:
 - To implement the findings from the NFCC's Death in the Workplace report.
 - To promote and improve fitness across the Service.
6. The Group meet regularly, last meeting on 8 November.

Health & Safety Initiatives Update

National Activities

7. The NFCC have issued a Safety Instruction Note to all Services who use Drager smoke hoods. The main concern related to the hood carrier which is designed to fail at a certain pressure in the event of entanglement. Following an incident reported in another FRS it has been identified that this safety measure can not be achieved when the expected failure pressure is applied. Therefore, HWFRS have immediately removed the smoke hoods from being continually attached to BA equipment and they will now be carried as a separate ancillary item in key risk incidents e.g. high-rise incidents. Confirmation of the removal of this equipment was completed within 48hours by all HWFRS stations. Further national investigations are ongoing with a more permanent solution being sought.

Regional Activities

8. The regional audit programme, a partnership between Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) from across the West Midlands region, was due to be reintroduced during Quarter 2; however due to key personnel sickness this has been postponed to Quarter 4 2021.
9. It utilises H&S Subject Matter Experts (SME) from each FRS, with findings and learning outcomes shared across the partnership to enhance health and safety. A GAP analysis is completed following each peer assessment to ensure that HWFRS adopts any learning and maintains compliance against H&S legislation.
10. As part of this programme, HWFRS's Health and Safety Advisor will support Shropshire FRS's audit.
11. The themes of the audit are:
 - Water rescue
 - Transport procurement
 - Provision & Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER)
 - Equipment checks and safety files.

HWFRS Local Activities

12. Following on from the last update provided in the Quarter 1 report, HWFRS have continued to monitor and implement safe systems of work via the COVID Recovery Groups. Managers have been supplied with best practice guidance issued by Government, NFCC and the HSE to ensure that workplaces and work activities are assessed to prevent the transmission of COVID whilst at work. Best practices will be continued to be monitored by the recovery group and current practices regularly reviewed to ensure employee health and wellbeing.

13. The risk assessment database (Figure 1) is owned and maintained by local managers and reviewed by the H&S Advisor. Each risk assessment has a review period, and managers are prompted to carry out reviews. Where risk assessments are no longer applicable, they are archived from the database. During Quarter 2, 351 risk assessments were reviewed, and 47 new risk assessments were created.

Figure 1 – Risk Assessment Database

	Quarter 3 (20/21)		Quarter 4 (20/21)		Quarter 1 (21/22)		Quarter 2 (21/22)	
Location	Reviewed	Created	Reviewed	Created	Reviewed	Created	Reviewed	Created
North District	119	6	92	14	140	6	85	5
South District	75	20	102	18	105	12	109	18
West District	95	8	69	19	89	19	89	20
Training Centre	29	2	96	2	21	0	44	2
Others	1	11	30	4	41	1	24	2
Total	319	47	389	57	396	38	351	47

H&S Working Group activity updates

14. The group is progressing the identified action points against the Death in the Workplace analysis. With guidance being formulated by Human Resources and a training provider being sought for welfare officers.
15. The group has identified several areas of work required in order to implement the new Fitness service policy which is under development/consultation in order to promote fitness across the service.

Quarter 2 Performance Report

16. Appendix 1 provides details relating to all safety events reported and investigated during Quarter 2 of the 2021-22 reporting year (July – September).
17. The total number of safety events reported in Quarter 2 decreased by six compared to the previous quarter. The most significant decrease, and reason for the overall reduction, was in reporting of Personal Injury category which reduced by 4 and Vehicle Collisions by 3.
18. During the period, there has been a slight increase in Violence and Aggression reported events (+3) however these were of a verbal nature and no Police assistance was required.
19. One injury has been reported to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) under the RIDDOR regulations. The case was reported because it involved an injury that resulted in over seven days in sickness from the workplace.

20. Two basic Specialist Investigations occurred, one linked to the above RIDDOR event where a member of staff injured their knee during water training. The second SI event was in relation to a vehicle accident where a fire engine lost traction on a roadway and contacted road furniture. This event was also attended by the Police where no legal fault was attributed to the driver.
21. Finally, following the previous review of the accident data, manual handling continues to account for the largest proportion of personal injury incidents. Therefore, the H&S Advisor has worked with training centre and booked a manual handling trainer the trainer course during Quarter 4 for district/station-based instructions in order to refresh manual handling training and awareness across the Service.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Contained within H&S budgets and departmental capacity.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	Corporate Strategy: ensuring firefighter safety.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	Reduces the overall impact for H&S management in the areas identified and safeguards the Services legal requirements.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Representative bodies attend H&S Committee and are fully consulted on H&S matters.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	N/A
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	All personal data has been removed from the reports contained within Appendix 1.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1: Quarter 2 (July to September 2021) Event Reporting and Summary