

Report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer

14. Health and Safety Committee Update

Purpose of report

1. To provide the 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 following issues, in particular, be noted:

- (i) the involvement of the Service in a number of Health and Safety initiatives at national level;*
- (ii) the review of asbestos management within the Service prompted by the new national agreement with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE); and*
- (iii) Health and Safety performance for Quarter 1 (April – June 2014)*

Introduction

2. Hereford & 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.
3. The Health and Safety Committee (the 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 H&S 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.
4. The Committee has the facility to task work to the Health & Safety Working Group, which sits beneath it and is chaired by the Area Commander Operations Support. The group meets as and when required but at least every six months.

Update

5. The Committee last met on 20 May 2014 and is due to meet next on 1 September 2014. An update of significant issues discussed will be provided in the next report.
6. A review of performance for quarter 1 (April – June 2014) was discussed in detail, which overall shows a downward trend. A summary report is included at Appendix 1.

National Activities

7. The Service is currently involved in a number of initiatives at national level. Key areas of activity include:
- Performing rescues national guidance.
 - Development of a bespoke Fire Service audit system.
 - Review of standards for thermal protection Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the explosives industry.

Asbestos Management

8. UK Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) previously held exemption certificates in respect of licensing and notification when working with asbestos. This exemption was underpinned by a method statement, detailing how the UK FRSs would safeguard personnel when encountering asbestos in the course of their duties.
9. To meet the requirements of the new Control of Asbestos Regulations, the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) has engaged in a process of consultation and collaboration with the HSE to revise the method statement and secure a continuation of the previously agreed exemptions for the UK FRSs.
10. We have now received our certificate of exemption from the HSE. However, it must be emphasised that exemptions were only granted on the basis that the Service meets the requirements described in the method statement. In order to satisfy these requirements, the organisation has embarked on a review of asbestos management. This includes the following work streams:
- (i) Operational Logistics
Procurement of relevant equipment.
 - (ii) Operational Policy and Community Safety
Review of internal policies and procedures.
 - (iii) Training & Development
Development of underpinning training packages
11. It is anticipated that the above work streams will be completed by March 2015.

Conclusion

12. This report provides Members with an update on health and safety issues discussed at the previous Health and Safety Committee and draws Members' attention to key areas of work currently being undertaken by the Service. In addition the report provides information on health and safety performance during quarter 1, which overall show a downward trend.

Corporate Considerations

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| Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues) | Para 8 |
| Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications). | Para 8 |
| Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores). | Para 8 |
| Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter) | Para 8 – in hand |
| Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?) | N/A |

Supporting Information

Appendix 1: Quarter 1 Health & Safety Performance Report

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Quarter 1 Health & Safety Performance Report Summary (April – June 2014)

A total of 37 H&S events were reported this quarter:

- 3 specialist investigations were instigated (detail over page).
- 8 incidents relate to injuries occurring during training, of which 4 were manual handling injuries and of these 3 involved recruits.
- 4 incidents were causes for concern or near hits.
- 13 related to vehicle collisions, of which:
 - 6 were the fault of our driver
 - 9 were non-operational/routine journeys
 - 1 occurred during training
 - 3 occurred when responding to or at incidents
- 2 incidents were of verbal abuse from members of the public at operational incidents.
- 1 was a RIDDOR major injury of a broken bone, which occurred during water rescue training in Cardiff.

Quarter 1 Total Reported H&S Events

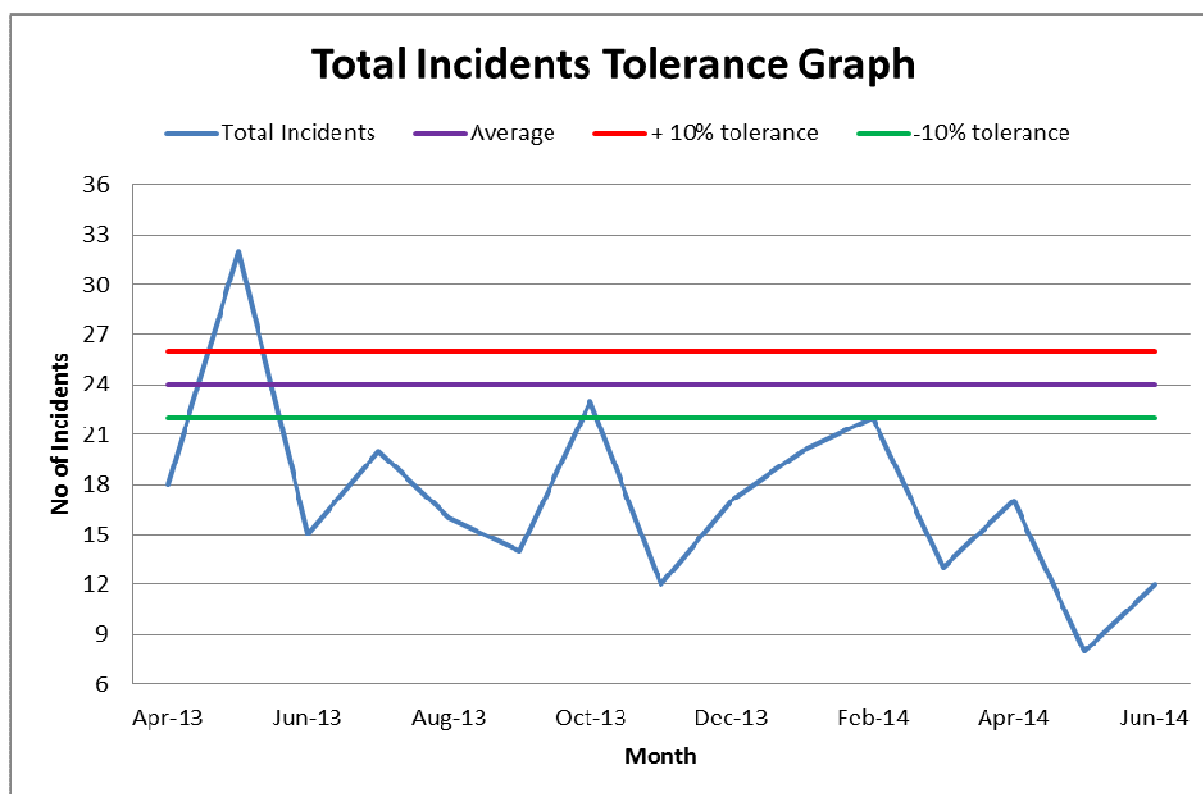


Figure 1 – Total events per month April 2013 to June 2014

Summary Total H&S events for this quarter show a downward trend following the anticipated increase in events during the inclement months.

Quarter 1 Serious Events Reported

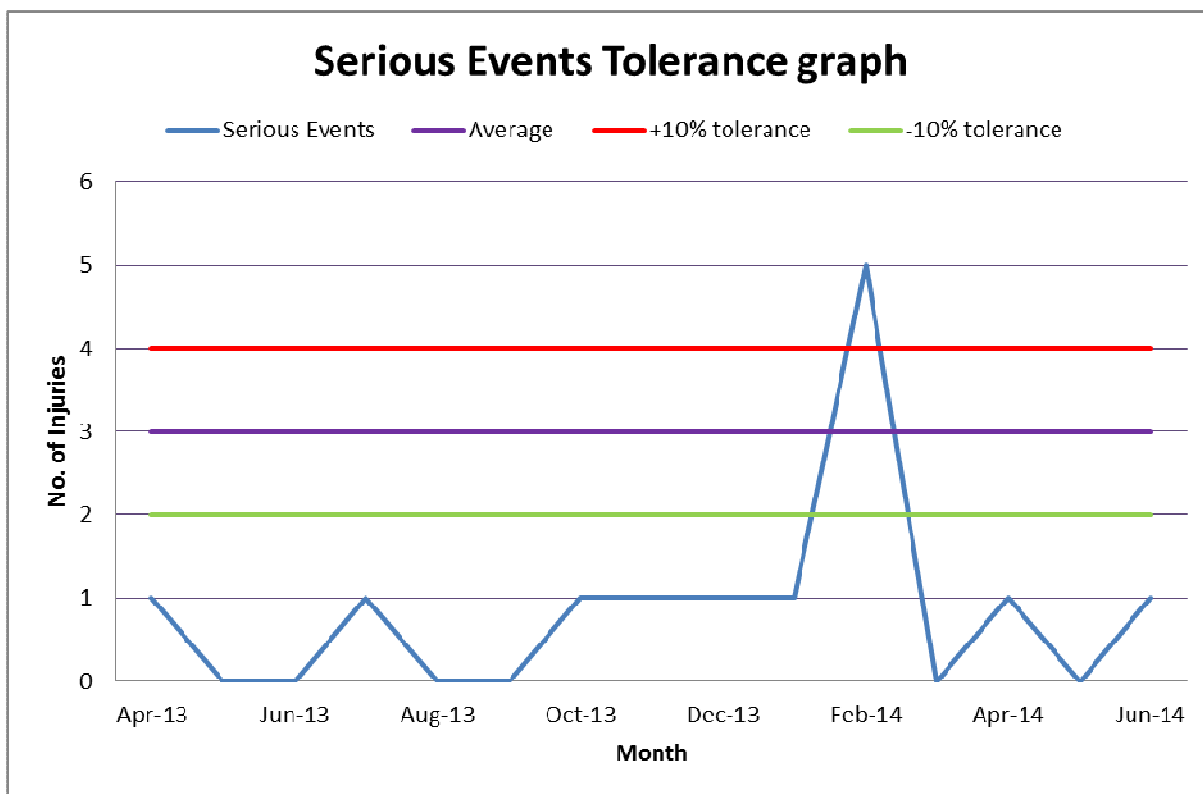


Figure 2 – Total events per month April 2013 to June 2014

Summary There were two potentially serious events this quarter, in addition to three specialist investigations:

Specialist Investigations

1. A fire fighter felt light-headed during a BA exercise. .

Actions – upon investigation it was found that the individual was insufficiently hydrated and had eaten very little.

No injuries were sustained.

2. A fire fighter broke his tibia whilst undertaking a water rescue course.

Actions – investigation is still ongoing.

3. Damage to a third party by our IRU when passing the vehicle in a layby. The third party raised a complaint as our vehicle did not stop.

Actions – investigations found that it would be plausible for our driver to be unaware due to the size of the appliance and the slow speed during the event.

No injuries were sustained.

Potentially Serious Events

1. *The pump on an appliance failed to deliver water at a fire.*

Actions – *a loose connection was found which would appear to be the cause. A shield is being fabricated to prevent similar issues on other appliances of this kind.*

2. *An officer inhaled a quantity of blood when administering mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.*

Actions – *all officers have been reminded to ensure they have adequate stocks of orinasal protection for use when administering mouth-to-mouth. The officer has also been referred to occupational health for screening/monitoring.*