

Report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Health and Safety Committee Update

Purpose of Report

1. To provide the Audit & Standards Committee with an update on activities and items of significance from the Service's Health and Safety Committee.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that the activities and items of significance from the Health and Safety Committee be noted, in particular:

- (i) Health and Safety performance information recorded during July 2017 to September 2017 (Quarter 2)***
- (ii) The involvement of the Service in a number of Health and Safety initiatives.***

Introduction

2. A key aim of Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority is to 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 with regard 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 managers from across the Service to discuss general H&S matters on which it must consult the workforce via 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 working group meets as and when required but at least every six months.

Update from Last Committee Meeting

5. The Committee last met on 18 December 2017 and significant items that were discussed are described in more detail below.

6. The H&S Committee Working Group is finalising a review on organisational road risk and provided an update on progress. Several key policies have been developed and are already being implemented. Consolidation of all the existing relevant policies and guidance documents into an overarching single policy is nearing completion. This will bring all aspects of organisational vehicle usage into one place in a single policy that is current, and easy to understand.
7. A number of H&S reporting and recording processes have also been reviewed, including accident reporting, workplace inspections and fire risk assessments, as detailed below in sections 11-12.
8. A review of quarterly performance for the relevant period was discussed in detail. The second quarter report (Appendix 1) shows there has been a small decrease in personal injuries and near hits reported. There has been a slight increase in the number of verbal abuse events reported, however, these have all been of a relatively minor nature. All such events that occurred during the quarter have had local level investigations to identify preventative control measures and to help reduce the likelihood of similar occurrences.

HWFRS H&S Update – Local Initiatives

H&S Flash - Radio Interference

9. A H&S flash (urgent information to staff) has been released regarding an issue that can cause radio frequencies to impact on the readings given by gas monitoring and detecting equipment. This can result in the fail safe alarm activation.

H&S Bulletin Item

10. Following a number of debriefs that have been received, a H&S bulletin Item was issued to remind all operational personnel of the need to wear the correct level of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for any task that is being undertaken. Whilst the use of PPE is decided using a Risk Assessment, crews have been advised to review the equipment safety files to ensure they are aware of their limitations of each item of PPE.

Fire Risk Assessments

11. The Service has undertaken a review of all fire risk assessments for HWFRS premises, as is legally required. All HWFRS properties have current fire risk assessments in place which have been reviewed by the responsible manager within the last 12 months. Minor remedial actions identified have been reported but pose no significant issues.
12. Working closely with Place Partnership Ltd (PPL), a schedule for inspecting HWFRS properties to identify any structural fire safety risk has been produced and will be completed by the end of 2017. Once this work is completed, a further update will be provided to the Committee.

Risk Assessment Database

13. The Risk Assessment database provides a platform for staff to undertake and review Risk Assessments to ensure that suitable and sufficient control measures are implemented.
14. During Quarter 2 a total of 1002 Risk Assessments (RAs) were reviewed with 231 being created. Initially the majority of reviews were conducted at Training Centre; however, the database is being utilised across the organisation, ensuring crews are aware of the control measures required for the activity they are undertaking.

Regional Activities

CFOA Health and Safety West Midlands Group

15. HWFRS will be audited as part of the agreed H&S West Midlands regional business plan 2016-2020. The audit team is made up of regional H&S practitioners, with Staffordshire FRS providing the lead officer. The audit allows for four specific areas in relation to H&S to be chosen, and aims to provide further assurance that management systems are suitable and sufficient. This Audit will take place from 20th to 22nd March 2018.

National Activities

Regulation 28 Coroners Report to prevent Future Deaths

16. The Coroner's report that followed the inquest into the death of Firefighter Stephen Hunt in Greater Manchester identified ten recommendations regarding operational procedures and risk assessment competencies. HWFRS has reviewed all areas identified, checked compliance is in place in all these areas and recorded the actions taken via the H&S Committee. The return has been submitted and this matter is now closed.

Firefighter Exposure to Contaminants Project

17. With the support of the Home Office department Centre of Applied Science and Technology (CAST), a review was commissioned to determine the current potential risk of contamination to Firefighters PPE.
18. This initial review has now been completed and whilst it is progressing through the CAST formal publication process, early indications suggest it is difficult to form a firm conclusion as to whether or not Firefighters are at a higher risk of developing cancer when compared to the rest of the population. It is hoped that the CAST report will be published within the next month and in anticipation of the report, tentative proceedings have been made to establish an 'Expert Advisory Panel' to peer review the findings.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	N/A
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 health and safety 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)	N/A
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	N/A

1. Supporting Information:

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1. Overview of Events Reported During Quarter 2 (Jul 17 – Sept 17)

1.1 Summary

In the period of July 2017 to September 2017 a total of **43** Health and Safety (H&S) events were reported. They fall into the categories of:

- Personal Injury
- Vehicle Accidents
- Property or Equipment
- Near Hits or Causes for Concern.
- Violence or Aggression

During this period there were no events reported in the following categories:

- Exposure

Individual summaries of reporting in the key areas are outlined below.

1.2 Personal Injury

Of the **43** H&S events reported, **17** were related to the category of Personal Injury. These are described in Table 1 below:

Sub-Categories	Break-down of Injuries in Each Sub-Category
11 accidents/injuries were during training.	1 relates to an employee bumping their head during confined space training, which caused a short period of dizziness. Full PPE and Helmet was being worn.
	1 relates to an employee accidentally cutting themselves with a pair of scissors.
	1 relates to an employee receiving a burn to the wrist during fire behaviour training after a gap appeared between the glove and tunic sleeve.
	1 relates to an employee sustaining a pulled a muscle in their back during water training.
	1 relates to an employee becoming dizzy during RTC training. Rehydration and cool down treatment actions given.
	1 relates to an employee missing the last step when dismounting a vehicle which resulted in minor strain to their shoulder.
	1 relates to an employee sustaining a shoulder strain during on station training. 3 Calendar Days Lost
	1 relates to an employee who had a minor burn to their hand at the end of a training exercise. The injured person was closing a door of the fire compartment without wearing gloves.
	1 relates to an employee who strained their back during a ladder drill. 2 Calendar Days Lost
	1 relates to an employee receiving a minor burn which caused blistering to the wrist during compartment fire training. Significant Event
4 accident/injuries were at operational incidents	1 relates to an employee being knocked off their feet by hose being pulled by a vehicle during a training course Significant Event 1 Calendar Day Lost until end of quarter 2 RIDDOR
	1 relates to an employee sustaining a pulled muscle to their back whilst using a cutting tool during a RTC
	1 relates to an employee sustaining a pulled muscle in their back whilst rolling up fire hose

	1 relates to an employee cutting their finger whilst making entry to rear of a property
	1 relates to an employee twisting their knee whilst getting off a fire engine at an incident 4 Calendar Days Lost
2 accident/injuries were during routine activities	1 relates to an employee cutting their hand on the sharp edge of a plastic floor mop
	1 relates to an employee bumping their head after turning around and making contact with an open door of a microwave
	Totalling 17 personal injuries
	Totalling 1 RIDDOR events
	Totalling 10 calendar days lost

Table 1: Personal Injuries Reported during Quarter 2

1.3 Vehicle Accidents

Of the **43** H&S events **12** are related to the category of Vehicle Accidents and could be classed as minor in nature - these are further described in Table 2 below. 7 of these events could be attributed to the FRS driver these events are highlighted in grey.

Sub-Categories	Breakdown of Injuries in Each Sub-Category
4 accidents were during routine activities	1 relates to a fire engine clipping the wing mirror on another vehicle whilst slowly driving down a high street.
	1 relates to a service vehicle being driven and scraping another vehicle whilst overtaking.
	1 relates to damage to door of a fire engine when slow manoeuvring on station yard.
	1 relates to a member of the public driving his car in to the back of a fire service car
6 accidents were responding to incidents	1 relates to a fire engine, whilst driving slowly responding on blue light, damaged another vehicle's wing mirror casing
	1 relates to lower side locker on a fire engine being damaged by uneven ground whilst travelling slowly down a rough track.
	1 relates to a fire engine colliding with the road side bank whilst manoeuvring and using a banksman, which resulted in damaged paintwork of underside panel at rear of vehicle
	1 relates to damage to a fire engine wing mirror from shrub/trees on side of road when moving over to let HGV come through whilst driving on blue light.
	1 relates to damage to mud guard on a fire engine whilst manoeuvring past gate post
	1 relates to damage to a vehicle which, although had appeared to stop, then pulled out into the path of the fire engine responding on blue light
1 accident was a non-service related accident	1 relates to a service vehicle being damaged whilst it was left in a car park
1 accident was during training	1 relates to a service vehicle in collision with a tractor during an off road driving course, damaging tractor's light clusters
	Totalling 12 vehicle accidents

Table 2: Vehicle Accidents Reported during Quarter 2

Vehicle mileage statistics for the year 2016-2017 have been provided by the Operational Logistics Fleet Department and have been used to predict vehicle mileage for Q2 2017/18. These are summarised in Table 2A below. It can be seen that there were 6 white fleet accidents out of approximately 207,364 miles driven, which equates to 1 accident for every 34,561 miles driven. The 6 accidents by red fleet vehicles were out of approximately 58,629 miles driven, which equates to 1 minor accident for every 9,772 miles driven.

Fleet	Total Mileage 2016-2017	Predicted Mileage Q2 2017
White Fleet	829,456	207,364
Red Fleet	234,516	58,629
	Totalling 1,063,972 miles	Totalling 265,993 miles

Table 2A: Vehicle Mileage Statistics

1.4 Property or Equipment Damage

Of the **43** H&S events **1** related to the category of Damage to Property or Equipment, this is further described in Table 3 below:

Sub-Categories	Break-down of Injuries in Each Sub-Category
1 property or equipment failure during training	1 relates to a high pressure air hose becoming detached from the control unit of an air inflation box. No defect was found, the hose may not have been attached correctly prior to use.
	Totalling 1 property or equipment damage

Table 3: Damage to Property or Equipment Reported during Quarter 2

1.5 Near Hits or Causes for Concern

Of the **43** H&S events **8** related to the category of Near Hits or Causes for Concern - these are further described in Table 4 below:

Sub-Categories	Break-down of Injuries in Each Sub-Category
2 were at operational incidents	1 relates to a fire in a fuse board, the power was not isolated as expected when a fuse was removed from incoming supply. This resulted in the power being shorted when crews applied water to the box. Crews monitored fire spread whilst awaiting an electrician to arrive at the incident.
	1 relates to a missing Tirfor winch handle only identified, when required to be used whilst dealing with incident
1 was during training exercises	1 relates to a trainee firefighter rehousing a 9m ladder. Whilst lowering the ladder the cable became slack which led to the ladder rehousing in an uncontrolled way.
5 were during routine	1 relates to a faulty piece of electrical equipment overheating

activities	within the dashboard of vehicle.
	1 relates to faulty extractor fan hood in a kitchen falling on to the hob, just missing a member of staff.
	1 relates to damage to the metal sleeve of RTC equipment being seen when a firefighter was looking for another piece of equipment.
	1 relates to a firefighter walking backwards and almost tripping over in a pot hole in a station yard, defect reported to Place Partnership Ltd
	1 relates to a fire fighters visor becoming loose due to faulty clip-on visor on helmet. This was noticed prior to use.
Totalling 8 near hits or causes for concern	

Table 4: Near Hits or Causes for Concern Reported during Quarter 2

1.6 **Exposure to Violence or Aggression**

Of the **43** H&S events **5** related to the category of Exposure to Violence or Aggression, this is further described in Table 5 below:

Sub-Categories	Break-down of Injuries in Each Sub-Category
4 Exposure to violence or aggression during operational activities	1 relates to fire fighters receiving verbal abuse from a member of the public when responding to and returning from an incident
	1 relates to verbal abuse experienced by fire fighters from inmates while dealing with a prison cell fire.
	1 relates to verbal abuse from a member of public when fire fighters had to extinguish bonfire in a garden
	1 relates to verbal abuse directed at fire fighters from a farmer burning industrial waste
1 during routine work	1 relates to verbal abuse experienced by fire fighters during a training exercise from the same member of public as in an event recorded earlier that week when the crews has been responding and returning from an incident.
Totalling 5 exposure to violence or aggression	

Table 5: Exposure to Violence or Aggression Reported during Quarter 2

2. **Significant/Serious Events during Quarter 2 (Jul 17 – Sept 17)**

There have been two separate Specialist Accident Investigations allocated during quarter 2. The first occurrence relates to an employee who received a minor burn which caused blistering to their wrist whilst undertaking fire behaviour training. The second incident to be investigated relates to an employee injury where a length of hose was pulled under their feet causing them to fall over. Both of these events occurred at the end of the reporting period and are still under investigation at the time of the report.

2.1 Summary for Quarter 2 (Jul 17 – Sept 17)

1 RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) report was submitted to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the time lost criteria.

3. Comparison Between Quarters

3.1 Comparison of Events Reported Showing Differences Q2 2016 and Q2 2017

Table 6 below compares the number of events reported in Q2 2016-17 and Q2 2017-18 for the different categories. Only 2 of the categories experienced an increase in events over the 12 months: vehicle accidents increased by 1 and reports of Violence and Aggression increased by 3. Conversely, over the same period there were 5 fewer personal injuries reported, 5 fewer near hits and 1 less report of equipment failure. Overall, event reporting as a whole has declined by 7 over the period with 43 reports in Q2 2017-18 compared to 50 in Q2 2016-17.

Event Type	Q2 2016-17	Q2 2017-18	Increase/Decrease
Personal Injuries	22	17	-5
Vehicle Accidents	11	12	+1
Property or Equipment	2	1	-1
Violence & Aggression	2	5	+3
Near Hits	13	8	-5
Overall	50	43	-7

Table 6: Quarterly Events Reported Q2 2016-2017 and Q2 2017-2018

Table 6 above, compares Q2 2016-17 to Q2 2017-18 reports the service has had:*

- Five fewer Personal Injury reports
- One more Vehicle Accidents report
- One less report of Damage to Property or Equipment
- Three additional reports of Violence or Aggression against service personnel
- Five fewer reports of Near Hits or Causes for Concern were made

*Specific details of these can be provided upon request to the Health and Safety advisor.

3.2 Trend Analysis

In summary, there has been a decrease in personal injuries and near hits reported. There has been a slight increase in the number of verbal abuse events reported, however these have all been of a relatively minor nature. All events that occurred during the quarter have had a minimum of a local level investigation to identify preventative control measures, to help reducing the likelihood of similar occurrences.