

Report of the Head of Operational Support

Health and Safety Committee Update

Purpose of Report

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

Recommendations

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

- (i) ***Health and Safety performance information recorded during October to December 2018 (Quarter 3);***
- (ii) ***The involvement of the Service in a number of Health and Safety initiatives.***

Introduction

2. A key aim of Hereford & 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 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). The Committee provides the opportunity for 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, Operational Support.

Update

5. The Health & Safety Committee met on 13 March 2019. The third quarter's performance was discussed at this meeting and is attached as Appendix 1 for information.
6. There has been a general decrease in accidents, injuries and damage reported in comparison to Quarter 3, 2017-18. Levels of overall reporting are still high and this should be seen as a positive reflection on the Service's Health and Safety culture. This assists in ensuring that personal injuries remain low, and significant events can be avoided. It also demonstrates a high degree of staff awareness in regards to H&S related matters.

7. All reported events (accidents and near hits) receive a minimum of a local level managerial investigation to identify the cause and implement any preventative control measures to help reduce the likelihood of similar occurrences. More serious events can receive a higher, more specialist investigation as is deemed appropriate.

Department Health & Safety Champions

8. A scheme to develop H&S Champions has been introduced across the Service. The role of the Champions will be to support the site responsible managers in assuring the H&S management system and acting as local point of contact to liaise with the Service H&S Advisor to promote the H&S management systems and advising of the correct reporting and recording routes. A formal Service-wide launch of this role will be undertaken during Quarter 4.

Regional Activities

CFOA Health and Safety West Midlands Regional Group Audit

8. HWFRS representatives from HWFRS will be taking part in the upcoming regional audit of West Midlands Fire Service later this year.
9. The outcome of the CFOA H&S West Midlands Regional audit of HWFRS last year highlighted 15 recommendations of which eight have been completed. Most of the remaining recommendations will be completed in the next quarter with a few final areas due to be completed by mid-2019, subject to some process and system updates.

National Activities

Firefighter Exposure to Contaminants Project

15. With the support of the Home Office's department, the Centre of Applied Science and Technology (CAST), a literature review was commissioned in November 2016 to determine the current potential risk of contamination to firefighters from PPE after it has been worn in a fire. This project is continuing through the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Health & Safety Group, with a formal update report and recommendations due to be issued in the near future.
16. The NFCC led national working group has also agreed the objectives and workstreams for the second stage of the project, as well as the publication of best practice guidance for use by all FRSs.

This guidance will promote the "*Clean is the new tough*" strapline, taken from a similar 2-year research project completed by the Dutch FRS and their recommendation of improved guidance on cleanliness of operational staff and equipment.

The Working Group has identified five areas for future focus:

- Review of practices, safe systems of work ensuring they keep in line with any developments;

- To investigate potential possible sources of personnel points of entry/contamination (absorption, abrasion, inhalation);
- To identify what materials/ treatments are used within PPE manufacturers;
- To investigate whether wider studies are required and if any collaborative opportunities can be realised;
- To investigate how clean is clean question.

An additional second part to the literature review is also near completion and this report will provide a further summary on recent publications. It is hopeful that this publication will be shortly available.

Currently HWFRS has worked with its regional FRS partners and has enhanced the cleanliness and well-being practices by issuing awareness posters and provided decontamination wipes for use at operational incidents and training scenarios. To date, there has been no further information issued from a national level that requires HWFRS to action.

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 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)	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

Supporting Information

Appendix 1: Quarter 3 Event Reporting (October – December 2018)

Contact Officer

Jon Pryce, Area Commander
Head of Operational Support
(01905 368237)
Email: JPryce@hwfire.org.uk

Health and Safety Quarterly Report

Quarter 3 (Oct 18 - Dec 18) Event Reporting and Annual Summary

1. Events Reported During Quarter 3 (Oct 18 – Dec 18)

1.1 Overview

In the period of October 2018 to December 2018 a total of **46** Health and Safety (H&S) events were reported. They fall into the categories of:

- Personal Injury 19
- Vehicle Collisions 7
- Property or Equipment 2
- Near Hits or Causes for Concern 13
- Violence or Aggression 3
- Exposure 2

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

1.2 Personal Injury

Of the **46** H&S events reported, **19** relate to the category of Personal Injury. These are described in Table 1 below:

Sub-Categories	Break-down of Injuries in Each Sub-Category
14 events/injuries were during training.	1 relates to an injury sustained whilst putting the ladder back on to the gantry of the fire engine. Finger got caught between the ladder and gantry stop. Certified sickness. 48 Calendar Days lost. 24 Working Days lost. RIDDOR
	1 relates to a young firefighter using a glow stick which snapped. Contents of stick went in their eye. Washed with water. No further medical assistance was required.
	1 relates to a twisted ankle whilst walking alongside the river bank during a training exercise. Continued with the training after an initial period of rest.
	1 relates to a personal injury received by colliding with part of the course in water rescue training. Hospital visit was required, shoulder was dislocated. 67 Calendar Days lost. 32 Working Days lost. RIDDOR. Significant Event
	1 relates to a personal injury as firefighter slipped on some rocks during water rescue at Symonds Yat training and aggravated a previous injury. No medical assistance was required.
	1 relates to a personal injury involving a firefighters hand blistering during a training exercise. This was a result of wearing wet gloves. Burns gel applied. A replacement second pair of gloves is to be requested as required during initial training in the scenario where a pair have received excessive wear and can no longer be used.
	1 relates to a firefighter injuring his right shoulder whilst climbing back into the boat from the water during training.
	1 relates to a training exercise injury. A firefighter grazed his wrist on a sharp edge during the make up stage of RTC training as PPE sleeve had risen up.

	1 relates to a personal injury during a wind driven fire demonstration at a high rise training facility where a BA strap caused heat transfer to a firefighters neck resulting in a burn/blister. Straps are now removed for this demonstration.
	1 relates to a personal injury as a firefighter twisted their left knee whilst High rise BA training. 3 calendar days lost. 3 Working days lost.
	1 relates to a trainee firefighter who got their hand trapped between extrication tool and a vehicle whilst performing RTC training. This was due to inexperience and Instructor corrected the technique. A precautionary check was carried out at hospital.
	1 relates to an injury where firefighter was kneeling on a bed during BA training the bed collapsed resulting in swelling on his right knee. Hospital visit required, this was a pre-existing injury. Crew were reminded of the importance of completing pre-training Risk Assessment. 56 Calendar Days lost. 56 Working Days lost.
	1 relates to a personal injury where a firefighter strained his knee whilst water rescue training. He did this moving a rescue sled alongside the embankment over uneven ground. He was happy to continue the following day.
	1 relates to a firefighter knocking his knee on the river bed whilst training. Bruising to right knee. They continued with course and no medical treatment was required
2 events/injuries were during routine activities	1 relates to a young firefighter trapping her thumb in the door frame of the appliance bay door resulting in a fracture. Attended hospital.
	1 relates to a member of staff walking down the stairs in the HWFRS West Wing building when they caught their foot on the mat that is placed by the outer door. This resulted in a slightly twisted ankle and a bang to the side of the foot. The foot is now swollen. Painkillers taken. No doctor visit.
2 events/injuries were at or during operational incidents	1 relates to an injury where a Fire Investigation Officer who had been kneeling down as part of an investigation for some time suffered with Patellar Tendonitis in the right knee.
	1 relates to a personal injury where the firefighter cut his leg on a piece of Armco barrier whilst attending a RTC incident. Correct level of PPE wasn't being worn, and crew involved were reminded of the importance of wearing PPE at incidents.
1 event/injury was non work related	1 relates to a fall from uneven ground outside a fire station Bruising to right knee, left middle finger and palm. Area coned off then repaired by PPL.
	Totalling 19 personal injuries
	Totalling 2 RIDDOR event
	Totalling 174 calendar days lost. 115 working days lost.

Table 1: Personal Injuries Reported during Quarter 3

1.3 Vehicle Collisions

Of the **46** H&S events **7** relate to the category of Vehicle Collisions which are further described in Table 2 below. **5** of these events could be attributed to the FRS driver; these events are highlighted in grey. If these collisions occurred while response to an operational incident the category of response has been given.

Sub-Categories	Breakdown of Vehicle Collisions in Each Sub-Category
3 events were responding to operational incidents	1 relates to a minor impact on a fire engine travelling to a fire call. Clipped rear wheel arch on parked vehicle. Emergency response
	1 relates to a vehicle accident where a car belonging to a member of staff was hit whilst parked in the car park. The car was hit by a fire engine responding to an emergency call out. Emergency response
	1 relates to a vehicle accident where the fire appliance slipped down a grass bank which had given way and bottomed out on a grass verge causing damage to the front nearside of the vehicle. Emergency Prompt response
3 events were during routine activities	1 relates to a collision where a fire engine stopped to let a rubbish lorry through. The car in front of the fire engine reversed to move out of the way and reversed into the fire engine causing damage to front bumper.
	1 relates to a vehicle accident where a firefighter drove between two portacabins and caught the 13.5m ladder on electrical wiring.
	1 relates to a vehicle accident where a fire engine came in to contact with some tree branches causing the upper fittings on a fascia to come loose. Fittings removed for safety.
1 event was non service related	1 relates to a vehicle accident. As a fire service vehicle was reversing out of a car park space, another vehicle was reversing behind it in an L shape and swung into the fire vehicle.
Totalling 7 vehicle accidents	

Table 2: Vehicle Collisions Reported during Quarter 3

Vehicle mileage statistics for the year 2017-2018 have been provided by the Operational Logistics Fleet Department and have been used to predict vehicle mileage for Q3 2018/19. These are summarised in Table 2A below. It can be seen that there was 1 white fleet safety event out of approximately 247,137 miles driven, which equates to 1 event for every 247,137 miles driven. The 5 safety events by red fleet vehicles were out of approximately 71,622 miles driven, which equates to 1 event for every 14,324 miles driven.

Fleet	Total Mileage 2017-2018	Predicted Mileage Q3 2018-2019
White Fleet	988,548	247,137
Red Fleet	286,488	71,622
	Totalling 1,275,036 miles	Totalling 318,759 miles

Table 2A: Vehicle Mileage Statistics

1.4 Property or Equipment Damage

Of the **46** H&S events **2** relate to the category of Damage to Property or Equipment, this is further described in Table 3 below:

Sub-Categories	Break-down of Property or Equipment Damage in Each Sub-Category
1 property or equipment failure was during operational activity	1 relates to a property damage where a firefighter sneezed while driving their car out of the station and hit the fob access stand knocking it out of the ground.
1 property or equipment failure was during routine work	1 relates to an equipment issue where safety gates are not self-closing causing a potential fall hazard. Gates marked as 'Do Not Use' notice fixed to entrance until PPL fix issue.
	Totalling 2 property or equipment damage

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

1.5 Near Hits or Causes for Concern

Of the **46** H&S events **13** relate to the category of Near Hits or Causes for Concern - these are further described in Table 4 below.

Sub-Categories	Break-down of Near Hits or Causes for Concern in Each Sub-Category
6 were during training exercises	1 relates to a near miss when a practice session with a drone resulted in the drone crashing as the batteries ran out. Could have potentially hit someone.
	1 relates to a cause for concern due to a failure of a pump whilst training at a live fire situation.
	1 relates to a cause for concern as during training the shoulder strap on a BA kit looped over a casualties head and around the neck which could have caused possible strangulation.
	1 relates to a cause for concern where during a training exercise crews managed to draw smoke from the fire on the 4th floor down to the bridgehead situated on the 2nd floor causing a 'for real' evacuation. Safety brief has been amended to cover this actuality.
	1 relates to a cause for concern where during a training exercise crews managed to draw smoke from the fire on the 4th floor down to the bridgehead situated on the 2nd floor causing a 'for real' evacuation. Safety brief has been amended to cover this actuality (as above).
	1 relates to a near miss/cause for concern as 2 Training Centre Technicians were preparing for training. Whilst loading ceiling boards into position, a piece of equipment (baffle plate) fell down multiples times nearly hitting both persons. Full PPE was in use at the time.

6 were during operational activities	1 relates to a near hit. Fire engine responding to a road traffic collision, pulling out of a station and nearly collided with 3 cars who had ignored the flashing warning lights (wigwags) at front of station.
	1 relates to a cause for concern as drivers are ignoring the warning signs (wigwags) outside a station as fire engine is about to leave causing the fire engine to brake suddenly.
	1 relates to a cause for concern as drivers are ignoring the warning signs (wigwags) outside a station as fire engine is about to leave. Pulling away from the station a bus ignored the lights and fire engine had to stop sharply.
	1 relates to a cause for concern as drivers are ignoring the warning signs (wigwags) outside a station as fire engine is about to leave. The appliance had to stop and give way to two cars before being able to turn out and respond to a fire call.
	1 relates to a near hit. Appliance responding to fire call, pulling out of station and had to wait for 3 cars to pass as they'd ignored the flashing warning lights (wigwags) at front of station.
	1 relates to a cause for concern where the drainage grate in the station floor was lifted up by the snow chains as the fire engine was lowered to get access to the ladder. The grate remained on the fire engine when the vehicle was lifted back to normal height. The grate then came off the chain, close to the entrance to the station whilst driving to a fire call.
1 was during routine activities	1 relates to a cause for concern regarding a faulty kettle on station. Kettle was emitting smoke. Kettle's power supply isolated.
Totalling 13 near hits or causes for concern	

Table 4: Near Hits or Causes for Concern Reported during Quarter 3

1.6 Violence or Aggression

Of the **46** H&S events **3** relate to the category of Violence or Aggression, this is further described in Table 5 below:

Sub-Categories	Break-down of Violence or Aggression in Each Sub-Category
3 were during operational activities	2 relate to a fire call where the occupier was verbally abusive to the firefighters. Occupier believed to inebriated and may have mental health issues.
	1 relates to aggression. A male threatening to jump into the river gave verbal abuse to a firefighter trying to assist before the police had arrived.
Totalling 3 violence or aggression	

Table 5: Violence or Aggression Reported during Quarter 3

1.7 Exposure or Contamination

Of the **46** H&S events **2** related to the category of Exposure or Contamination, this is further described in Table 6 below:

Sub-Categories	Break-down of Exposure or Contamination in Each Sub-Category
2 were during training exercises	1 relates to an illness potentially caused after attending a water rescue training day. Sickness after the course. 10 Calendar Days lost. 4 Working Days lost.
	1 relates to a personal injury where a firefighter was ill after water rescue training through coming into contact with potentially contaminated water. All crews had received input on correct hygiene procedures and full PPE was used. Calendar days Lost 3. Working Days Lost 1
	Totalling 2 exposure or contamination
	Totalling 13 calendar day lost 5 working day lost

Table 6: Exposure or Contamination Reported during Quarter 3

2. Significant/Serious Events during Quarter 3 (Oct 18 – Dec 18)

There have been 3 significant events reported during quarter 3 that required a specialist accident investigation.

2.1 Summary for Quarter 3 (Oct 18 – Dec 18)

During quarter 3, 2 RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) reports were submitted to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as described in Section 1.2 Table 1.

There were a total of 3 significant events requiring a special investigation reported during quarter 3. Further details below;

- 1 relates to a personal injury. A firefighter was performing water rescue training and collided with part of the course resulting in a dislocated shoulder. A hospital visit was required.
- 2 relate to causes for concern where firefighters were carrying out BA training whilst training in a high rise situation whereby an unaffected floor became smoke logged during the training exercise.

Near Hits Trend;

- 5 incidents were reported where members of public have been ignoring the warning lights on the roadway outside of a Droitwich station. Fire Engines have been leaving the station whilst responding to operational incidents and had to stop upon accessing the live carriageway when private vehicles have ignored the lighting. The highway code states that vehicles should stop when flashing lights are in activation.

3. Comparison Between Quarters and Trend Analysis

3.1 Comparison of Events Reported Showing Differences Q3 2017-18 and Q3 2018-19

Table 7 below compares the number of events reported in Q3 2017-18 and Q3 2018-19 for the different categories. For events over the last 12 months, four of the categories experienced a decrease, one with an increase and one stayed the same.

Overall, event reporting as a whole has decreased by 7 over the period with 46 reports in Q3 2018-19 compared to 53 in Q3 2017-18.

Event Type	Q3 2017-18	Q3 2018-19	Increase/Decrease
Personal Injuries	25	19	-6
Vehicle Collisions	10	7	-3
Property or Equipment	3	2	-1
Violence & Aggression	1	3	+2
Near Hits	14	13	-1
Exposure	0	2	+2
Overall	53	46	-7

Table 7: Quarterly Events Reported Q3 2017-2018 and Q3 2018-2019

Table 7 above, compares Q3 2017-18 to Q3 2018-19 reports the service has had:*

- Six less Personal Injury reports
- Three less Vehicle Accident reports
- One less report of Damage to Property or Equipment
- Two more reports of Violence or Aggression
- One less of Near Hits or Causes for Concern
- Two more reports of Exposure (than Q3 last year)

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

3.2 Trend Analysis

In summary compared with the previous year, there has been an overall decrease (-7) in the number of events reported during quarter 3. All events that occurred during the quarter have had a minimum of a local level investigation to identify preventative control measures, to help in reducing the likelihood of similar occurrences.

Table 8 shows during quarter 3 the majority of events were reported during Training activities followed by Operational Activities. Training Centre and H&S are working together to review the RAs and control measures are suitable and sufficient to help prevent events occurring.

	Total	Training	Operational Activities	Routine Activities	Non-Service Related Activities
Total H&S Events	46	22	15	7	2
Personal Injury	19	14	2	2	1
Vehicle Collision	7	0	3	3	1
Property or Equipment Failure	2	0	1	1	0
Near Hit or Cause for Concern	13	6	6	1	0
Exposure	2	2	0	0	0
Violence or Aggression	3	0	3	0	0

Table 8: Safety Event Breakdown Q3 2018-2019

Table 9 identifies slips trips and falls are the cause of the majority of personal injuries reported, which are within the expected areas in relation to the physical activities that are regularly undertaken by personnel.

Total Personal Injuries	19
Manual Handling	4
Slips, Trips & Falls	6
Hit by Moving Object	3
Hit Stationary Object	1
Burns – Operational	0
Burns – Training	2
Other	3

Table 9: Personal Injury Breakdown Q3 2018-2019

Table 10 highlights whilst at low numbers and on the whole of a minor nature, the vehicle collisions involving fire engines are mainly whilst non blue light driving (*the bracketed figure is the number of vehicle collisions whilst on Emergency Prompt response category*). Where as car and van accidents have occurred during normal road driving or parking, which is generally expected due to the nature of the vehicles use.

Vehicle Accidents	Fire Engines		Cars and Vans		Non-Service Vehicle
	On blue lights	Off blue lights	On blue lights	Off blue lights	
Total Accidents	2	3 (0)	0	1	1

Table 10: Vehicle Breakdown Q3 2018-2019

3.3 **12 Month Trend Analysis**

Table 11 below breaks down the last 4 quarters by injury type. Personal injuries are the most common type of reported accident and follow a similar pattern/numbers over the latest 12 months followed by near hits.

	Q4 17/18	Q1 18/19	Q2 18/19	Q3 18/19
Total H&S Events	45	46	48	45
Personal Injury	19	21	19	19
Vehicle Collision	16	9	13	7
Property or Equipment Failure	3	2	2	2
Near Hit or Cause for Concern	5	8	12	13
Exposure	2	0	0	2
Violence or Aggression	0	6	2	3

Table 11: 12 Month Trend Analysis Q4 2017 – 2018 to Q3 2018 – 2019