

Report of Deputy Chief Fire Officer - Service Support

11. Update from the Health and Safety Committee

Purpose of report

1. To provide the Policy and Resources 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);*
- (iii) Health and Safety performance for Quarter 4 of year 2014 - 15 (Jan – Mar 2015)*

Introduction

2. Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority's aim 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 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 3rd June 2015 and is due to meet next on 10th September 2015.
6. A review of quarterly performance for the relevant periods (see above) was discussed in detail, which overall shows a downward trend. A summary report is included at Appendix 1.

7. On Wednesday 26th August, CFO Mark Yates hosted a visit by Lesley Pascoe of the HSE. Lesley is the HSE Officer who is responsible at a national level for matters that relate to the fire service. Lesley is new to her role (although a very experienced HSE Inspector) and as such has a limited knowledge of the fire service matters. The CFO liaises with Lesley in his national lead role for CFOA and as such offered Lesley a visit to Hereford and Worcester as part of her induction for her new role.

Lesley was given a tour of Worcester Fire Station to show how a frontline operational response unit works, followed by a visit to the Urban Search and Rescue facility at Droitwich Fire Station. She also witnessed a demonstration at the Evesham and Defford Strategic Training Facilities. The day was concluded with a presentation by Group Commanders George Marshall and Guy Palmer outlining our Operational Assurance activities and H&S reporting procedures.

National Activities

8. The Service is currently involved in a number of initiatives at national level. Key areas of activity include:
- Implementation of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) - Initial Operational Response (IOR)

IOR is a government owned programme. Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA) remain responsible for securing the provision of trained personnel, services and equipment necessary to provide the control measures for IOR. This is consistent with the contents of the Health, safety and welfare framework for the operational environment which states the following: Fire and Rescue Authorities should have in place appropriate arrangements for monitoring and measuring health, safety and welfare performance against pre-determined plans and standards, including learning from incidents and using the information to improve operational performance.

HWFRS is currently addressing the following areas;

- Review of existing operational risk assessments
- Review of existing policies and operational procedures and are making amendments where required
- Delivery of effective training to operational personnel. This training may include additional elements over and above the nationally supplied Home Office training products based on the assessment of local risks
- Testing and exercising to ensure understanding and effectiveness of IOR / CBRN(E).
- Ensuring that self-contained breathing apparatus is certified to BS8468 (CBRN RPE).
- Consulted with Representative Body officials via the local Health and Safety Committee.

- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

The Service is actively involved in consultation for the amendments to the fourth edition of this legal publication. It describes what to do in order to comply with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002. It has been produced to help employers, managers, safety representatives and employees across all industries reduce the risk of injury from manual handling.

Asbestos Management

9. All UK FRSs previously held exemption certificates in respect of licensing and notification when working with asbestos. This exemption was granted because of the impracticability of the need to provide 14 days' notice of any work with, on or affecting asbestos. To meet the requirements of the new Control of Asbestos Regulations (CAR 12), CFA 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 (from what are now regulations 8 and 9 of CAR 12) for the UK FRSs. The Service policy is now live and operational training is complete and associated equipment is available on all frontline appliances. The remaining tasks for health surveillance monitoring are being finalised by the Human Resources Department and the Service remains on track to complete this work by the end of September 2015.

Summary for Quarter 4 Performance Report

10. In comparison to the previous Quarter the total number of incidents is slightly lower. Vehicle incidents have reduced; this is largely due to extra training delivered during Emergency Response Driver Training (ERDT) refreshers regarding slow speed manoeuvres as well as additional monitoring of technical knowledge packages. Near hits have remained the same against the previous quarter but are expected to increase after the introduction of the new Health and Safety Reporting System and personal injury incidents remain within tolerance.

See appendix 1 for additional information

Conclusion

11. 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 quarterly health and safety performance, which overall shows a downward trend.

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).	N/A
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	The report highlights the work of the Authority around Risk Management / Health & Safety
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

Supporting Information

Appendix 1: Quarter 4 of year 2015 (Jan – Mar 2015) Health & Safety Performance Report

Contact Officer

Richard Lawrence, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

(01905 368206)

Email: rlawrence@hwfire.org.uk

Date: 3rd June
Title: Quarter 4 Performance Report (January – March 2015)

Summary

A total of 29 H&S events were reported this period:

- 2 Near hits
- 1 incident of property damage involving damage to a charging reel
- 1 incident of verbal abuse from an inebriated occupant
- 10 Vehicle accidents, 7 of which occurred during routine or non-operational driving causing minor damage to FRS vehicles only. Only one incident involved reversing and a total of 5 incidents occurred during slow speed manoeuvres.
- 15 Personal injuries occurred, of which:
 - 7 occurred during training
 - 6 occurred during operational activity
 - 2 occurred during routine or non-operational activity; and
 - 7 were manual handling injuries
 - 4 were the result of a slip, trip or fall
 - 2 were the result of being hit by, or walking into something
 - 1 was a steam burn occurring whilst fighting a chimney fire

Quarter 4 Total Reported H&S Events

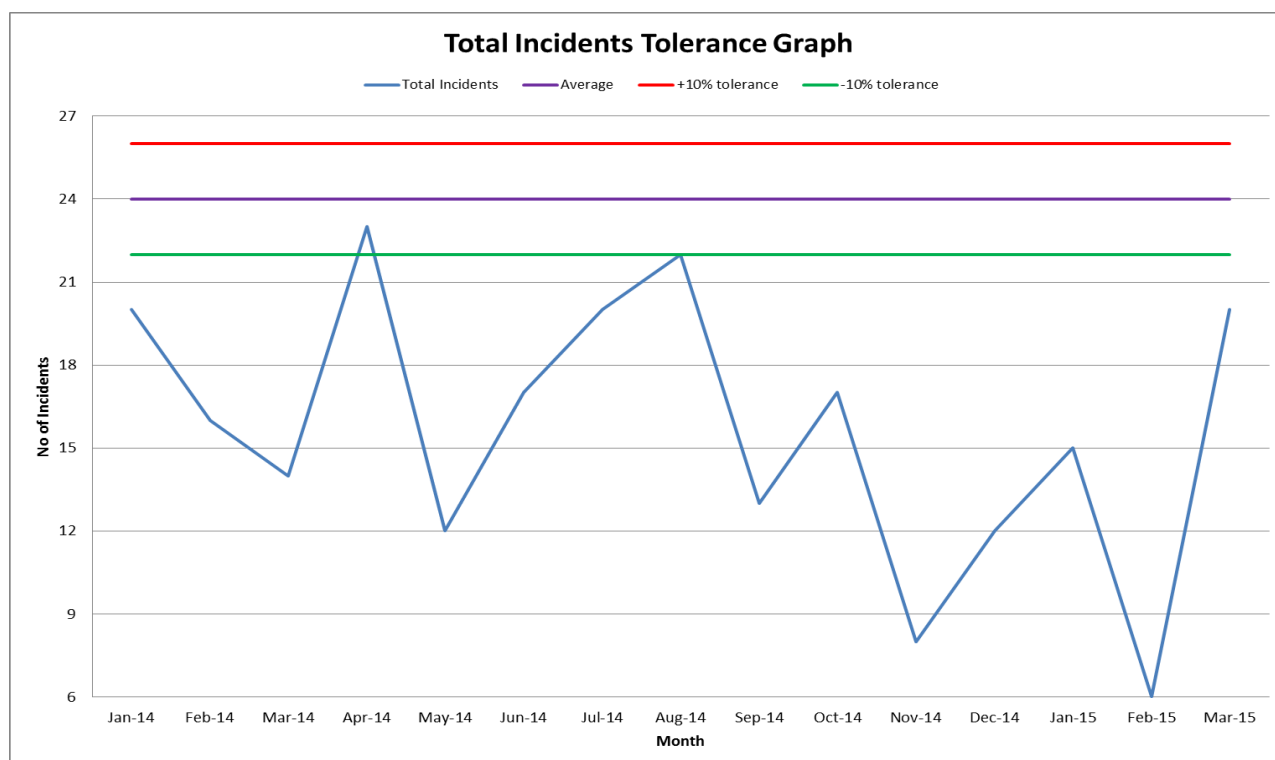


Figure 1 – Total events per month January 2014 to March 2015

Summary Whilst there has been a spike in March, the total number of H&S events in this period appear to be continuing a downward trend.

Quarter 4 Serious Events Reported

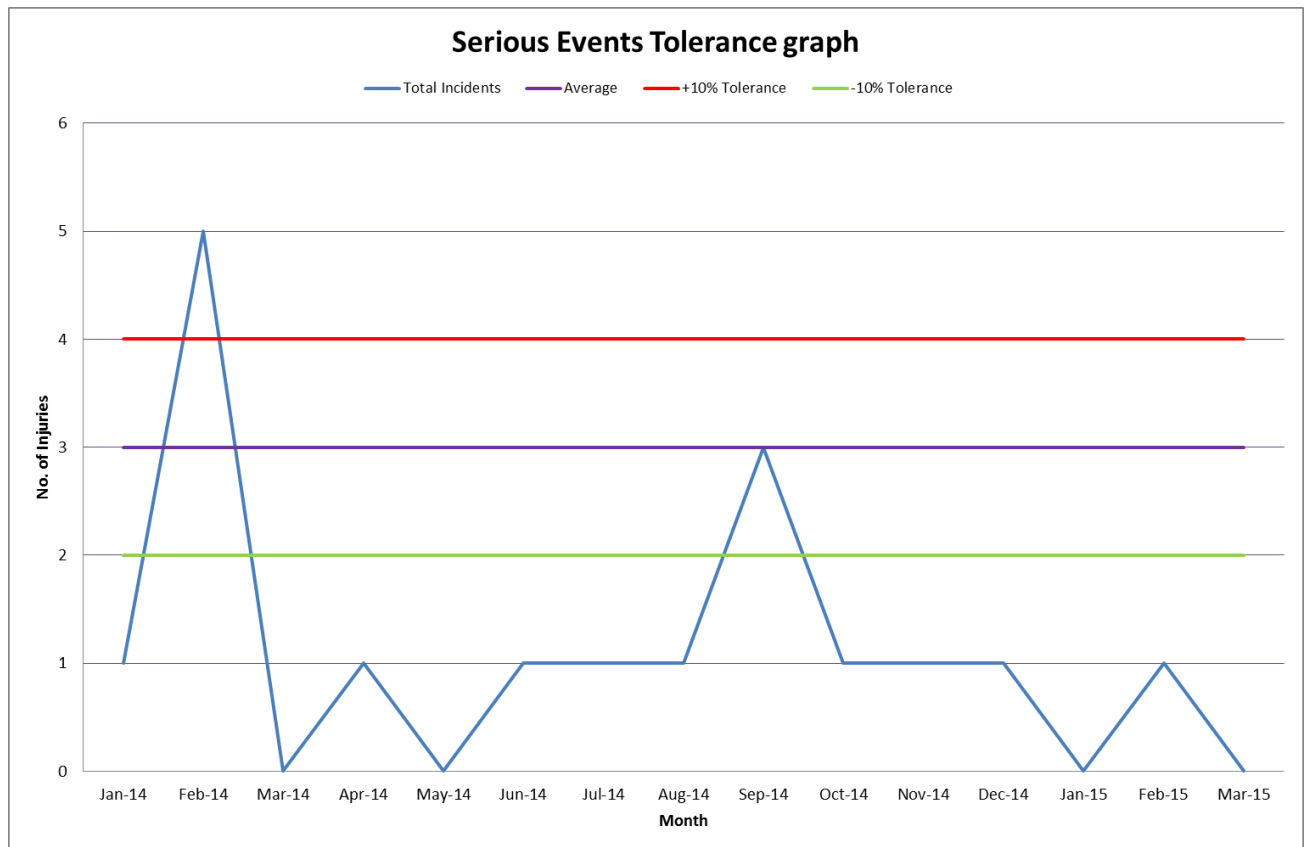


Figure 2 – Serious events per month January 2014 to March 2015

Summary *The total number of significant/potentially significant events in this period appear to continue to remain low. We have had two serious/potentially serious events this quarter (see below for details)*

Significant/Serious Events

1. A third party vehicle pulled across the path of an appliance to park, having not noticed the appliance traveling towards it. This occurred on the Bromwich Road and the appliance was on a routine journey

Action – this was originally the subject of a specialist investigation as a member of the public had been injured but was stood down upon investigation.

Potentially Serious Events

1. Whilst fighting a fire in a layby on the Hollywood Bypass, two traffic cones segregating our staff from traffic were hit by an unknown vehicle passing the incident.

Action – station personnel have been reminded of the importance of remaining vigilant of passing traffic and of correct coning procedures.