

Report of Deputy Chief Fire Officer

8. Health and Safety Committee Update

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 be noted:

- (i) ***Health and Safety performance for Quarter 1 of year 2015-16 (Apr – Jun 2015); and***
- (ii) ***the involvement of the Service in a number of Health and Safety initiatives at national level.***

Introduction

2. Hereford & 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 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 group meets as and when required but at least every six months.

Update

5. The Committee last met on 10th September 2015 and is due to meet next on 3rd December 2015.
6. A review of quarterly performance for the relevant period was discussed in detail, which overall shows a downward trend.
7. The report is included at Appendix 1 with a summary below:

Summary

8. In comparison to the previous quarter, the total number of incidents is marginally lower. The number of 'near hits' or 'causes for concern' has increased significantly. This is due to the implementation of an electronic recording system making reporting considerably easier and quicker, as well as staff training and monitoring via technical knowledge packages.
9. There were two RIDDOR reports submitted to the HSE for eight day absences, one for a non-operational activity involving a young Firefighter with a manual handling injury. The other absence occurred during routine water training and caused a shoulder injury.
10. This quarter also saw two reports of verbal abuse to staff by members of the public.

National Activities

11. The Service is currently involved in a number of initiatives at a national level. Key areas of activity include:

Potential risk of Cancer connected to Person Protective Equipment (PPE)

12. Recent reports from America have highlighted the potential risk of cancer from the carbonaceous deposits on PPE following incidents and training. Our current policy and procedure is to send PPE away for cleaning following incidents and training, utilising the 'total care' package from Bristol Uniforms. This, coupled with regular checks and management encouragement to clean PPE regularly, helps to keep the risk of exposure to a minimum. However, we will be monitoring the situation and will report any significant findings or outcomes at the next Committee meeting.

Regional Inter Fire and Rescue Service Health and Safety Management Audit

13. The CFOA Regional Health & Safety Committee, in which Hereford and Worcester, Shropshire, West Midlands, Staffordshire and Warwickshire regularly meet to share good practice and experience, have agreed to monitor standards of health and safety management across the region.
14. A key component of the regional approach is the peer audit process in which each Service is audited by a team from a Regional Service. The natural cycle means every year two Services within the region are audited. HWFRS was the first Service to be audited in the early part of this year. Each Service will have the opportunity to take the role of lead audit team for this process.
15. There are fourteen separate subject or topic areas that may be used to select the themes for the audit, and within each subject, there are sets of questions that will provide the initial structure for the audit. The audit team may develop these questions further in order to gain a more in depth understanding of the area being audited.

16. HWFRS will be carrying out an audit of West Midlands Fire Service in November 2015 looking at two key areas 'Breathing Apparatus' and 'Slips, trips and falls'.

Implementation of Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear evacuation procedures CBRN(e) - Initial Operational Response (IOR)

17. Discussions have recently been taking place with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) with regard to their concerns about the effectiveness of the local preparations for implementation.
18. HWFRS are well prepared to deal with a CBRN(e) response and all staff have now received the relevant training, initial first strike decontamination equipment is now available on all frontline appliances, and this is supported by Mobile Data Terminal handbook files and policy documentation.

Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

19. The fourth edition of this legal publication describes what to do 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. This publication is currently being reviewed by the Service's manual handling instructors at Training Centre.

Conclusion

20. 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).	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)	CBRN(e) documentation and process has been consulted on by the Fire Brigades Union
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	N/A

Supporting Information

Appendix 1: Quarter 1 of year 2015/2016 (Apr – Jun 2015) Health & Safety Performance Report

Contact Officer

Richard Lawrence, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
(01905 368206)

Email: rlawrence@hwfire.org.uk

Quarter 1 Performance Report (April - June 2015)

A total of 31 H&S events were reported this quarter:

- 6 - Incidents relate to injuries that occurred during training.
 - 3 of the incidents related to manual handling
 - 1 related to a recruit firefighter who injured themselves whilst hose running
 - 1 related to reddening of the skin whilst on a Breathing Apparatus course
 - 1 related to bruise caused whilst water rescue training

- 2 - Incidents relate to routine injuries.
 - 1 related to injury to wrist whilst loading a vehicle
 - 1 related to a small burn to hand during routine activities (cooking)

- 8 - Causes for concern or near hits were reported.
 - 1 related to stowage of a fan on a fire appliance
 - 1 related to a branch incorrectly fitted to a firefighting hose
 - 1 related to a manual handling issue at the Services real fire training facility
 - 1 related to the new automatic access barrier at Malvern Fire Station
 - 1 related to a miscommunication via the services Mobile Data Terminals that are available on every fire appliance
 - 1 related to an incorrectly fitted metal bar on a door
 - 1 relates to operating cables on roller shutter door
 - 1 related to a trip hazard due to trailing cable

- 11 - Vehicle collisions were reported.
 - 1 related to wing mirror damage
 - 1 related to bumper damage caused by a third party
 - 5 related to slow manoeuvres at Fire Stations
 - 2 related to damage caused by low hanging branches
 - 1 related to an officer's car hit by a third party
 - 1 related to an officers car cause unknown.
 - 7 of these were the fault of our driver
 - 8 of these were non-operational/routine journeys
 - 1 of these occurred during training
 - 3 of these occurred when responding to or at incidents

- 2 - Incidents of verbal abuse were reported.
 - 1 related to a phone call received by an administrator
 - 1 related to a member of staff from the property department attending the new Fire Station at Worcester, it should be noted that this occurred whilst the site was illegally occupied

- 2 - events reported during this quarter were reportable to the HSE as they met the RIDDOR criteria (reportable for +8 days absence).
 - 1 related to an injury to a young firefighter who sustained a twisted ankle at a rounder's match

1 related to an injury to a firefighter who sustained a muscle injury whilst carrying out water rescue training

Quarter 1 Total Reported H&S Events

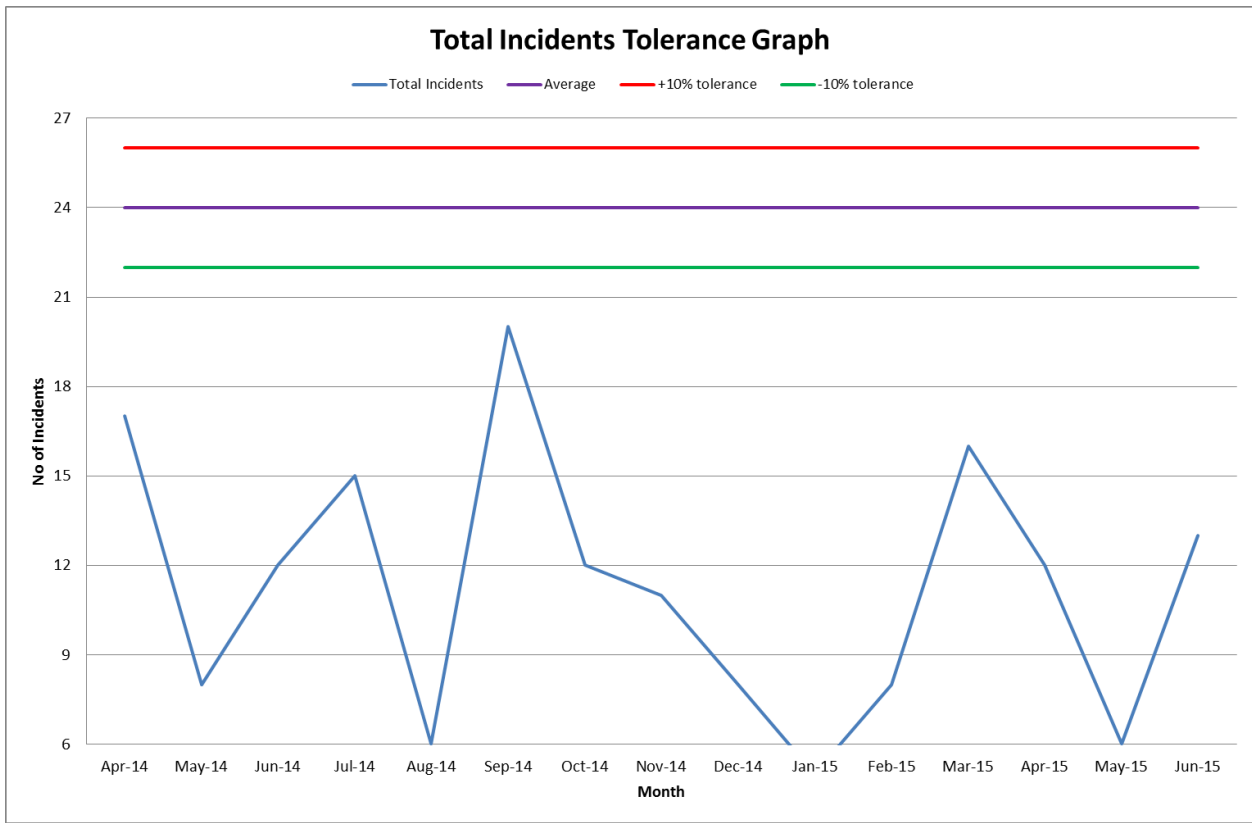


Figure 1 – Total events per month April 2014 to June 2015

Summary

The total H&S events for this quarter show a downward trend in April and May 2015, with a small increase in June 2015 following the anticipated increase in events during the inclement months. Overall, it should be noted that the number of incidents remains low and below tolerance levels.

Quarter 1 Serious Events Reported

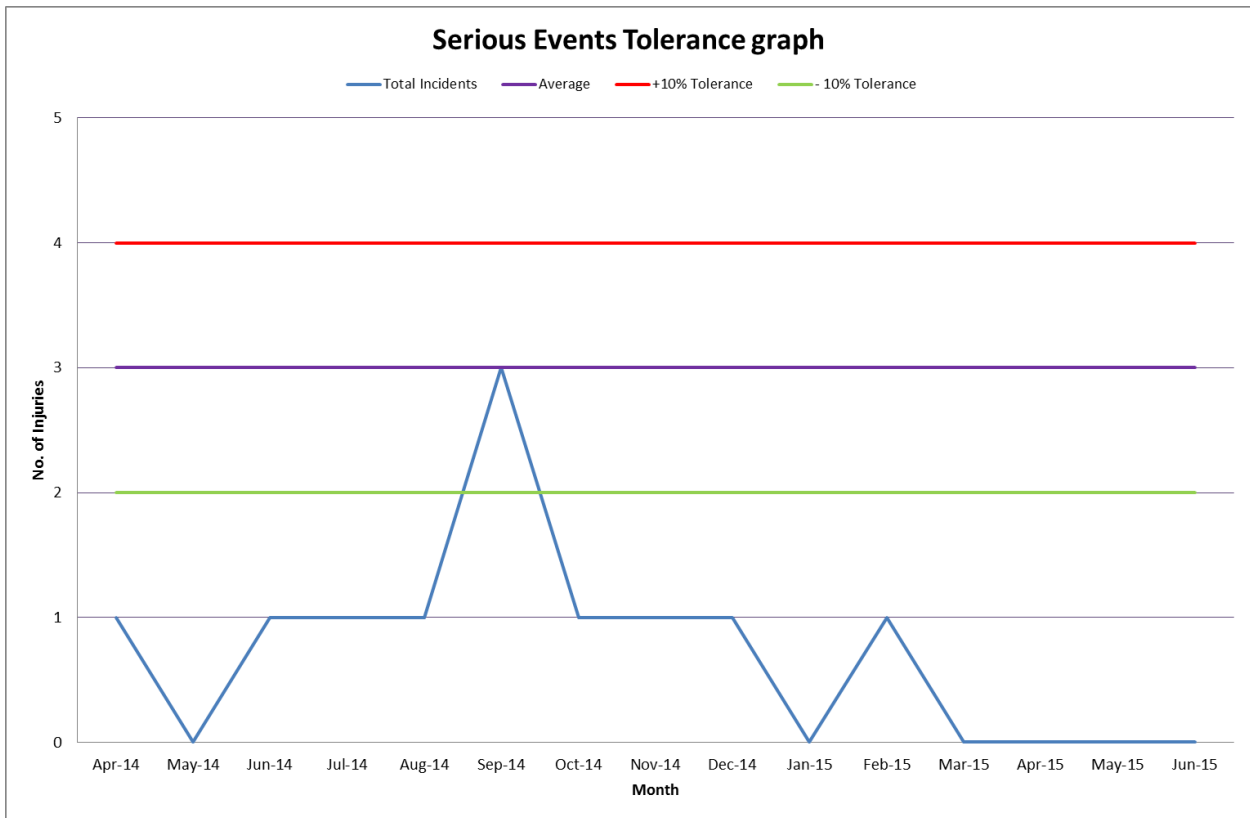


Figure 2 – Serious events per month April 2014 to June 2015

Summary

There were no potentially serious events this quarter.