

## **Report of Deputy Chief Fire Officer Richard Lawrence**

### **15. 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.

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#### **Recommendation**

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

- (i) ***Health and Safety performance for Quarter 3 of year 2015-16 (Oct – Dec 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 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015 and is due to meet next on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016.
6. A review of quarterly performance for the relevant period will be discussed in detail, which overall shows a fairly even frequency level of incidents reported.
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 higher. The number of Vehicle collisions has slightly increased of which 10 were whilst responding to operational incidents.
9. The number of personal injuries remained at a similar even level throughout the year.
10. There were five RIDDOR reports that were submitted to the HSE for over eight day absences.
11. Significant Event:  
One significant event was reported during the reporting period which relates to a collision between a fire appliance responding to an incident and a private motor vehicle. The private motor vehicle turned directly across the path of the appliance resulting in the appliance colliding with the side of the vehicle. A specialist investigation has been undertaken, which evidenced that the service driver was driving in accordance with the service policy. No Police action was taken against the service driver.

## National Activities

12. The Service is currently involved in a number of initiatives at a national level. Key areas of activity include:
  - a) Investigation into Ladder Incident  
  
The national H&S Committee received a presentation from a representative of West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service (WYFRS) regarding their findings following an investigation into a 135 ladder failure during a training exercise in 2011; three firefighters were unfortunately injured. The investigation focussed on replicating the stresses/load the ladder was subjected to at the time of failure. To assist with dissemination of the key findings, the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) will be shortly issuing a circular alongside the WYFRS accident investigation report and an associated presentation.
  - b) Moisture Content in Breathing Apparatus (BA)  
  
CFOA and Dublin Fire Brigade have agreed to fund the Health & Safety Laboratories research proposal which investigates the potential for water freezing in BA set components when the cylinder contents are within moisture content tolerances and thus lead to set failure. The resultant report, including findings, is expected in April 2016. CFOA will own the results and have the ability to disseminate as considered necessary.

c) Asbestos Medical Survey

Every Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) has been contacted to remind them to respond the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) asbestos survey confirming if they have Appointed Doctors carrying out or overseeing medicals for operational staff. The HSE are now awaiting responses from four services, a further reminder has been sent to these for action.

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service has responded to the HSE survey confirming compliance of the requirement of an appointed doctor overseeing asbestos medicals.

d) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

An initial meeting has taken place between CFOA, Chief Fire and Rescue Advisors and a national PPE expert to discuss issues relating to the potential risk to firefighters' health from carcinogens. Initial discussions reflect the need for an academic evaluation of the data sources available to establish what future actions may be required. This project will be passed onto the new CFOA H&S Lead Officer to action.

e) HSE Strategy

The Health & Safety Executive are in the process of creating a new national strategy. The new strategy is aimed at developing Great Britain's working well agenda whilst building upon the success of workers wellbeing. CFOA were invited to attend a forum group in London to give an industry perspective supporting the development of this strategy.

The six key themes of the strategy are:

- *Acting Together – promoting broader ownership of health and safety in Great Britain.*
- *Tackling ill health – Highlighting and tackling the costs of work related ill health.*
- *Managing risk well – Simplifying risk management and helping business to grow.*
- *Supporting small employers – Give SMEs simple advice so that they know what they have to do.*
- *Keeping pace with change – anticipating and tackling new health and safety challenges.*
- *Sharing our success – Promoting the benefits of Great Britain's world class health and safety system.*

More information of the strategy can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/strategy/#themes#HelpGBWorkWell>.

Further information will be shared within Hereford & Worcester when the strategy is formally launched.

f) CFOA Circular Lessons Learned

*'Health and Safety in the Fire and Rescue Service – Embedding Lessons Learned'*, is a jointly produced document by the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisors in England & Wales, HM Fire Service Inspectorate in Scotland and the Health and Safety Executive.

The HSE does not undertake a proactive programme of inspections across the FRS sector due to the good historical safety record and proactive culture with the FRS sector. To ensure these high standards remain the HSE works closely with CFOA to understand developments and support continuous improvement.

CFOA fully endorses the principles outlined within the document and encourages UK FRSs to assess the content of the document to assess any lessons or principles to be applied locally.

H&WFRS is currently undertaking a GAP analysis of current procedures. Initial evaluation identifies H&WFRS are in a strong position and have already considered the majority of the requirements outlined within the document, a further update will be given when the analysis is complete.

## Conclusion

13. This report provides Members with an update on health and safety issues to be discussed at the next Health and Safety Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2016 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

<b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	N/A
<b>Strategic Policy Links</b> (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

<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (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
<b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	
<b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	N/A

**Supporting Information**

Appendix 1: Quarter 3 of year 2015/2016 (Oct – Dec 2015) Health & Safety Performance Report

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**Title:** Quarter 3 Performance Report (Oct - Dec 2015)

A total of 38 H&S events were reported this quarter:

<b>11 incidents were personal injuries</b>	
<b>5 incidents relate to injuries occurring during training.</b>	1 relates to a burn during hot fire training
	1 relates to a broken finger sustained while water rescue training in Wales (RIDDOR)
	1 relates to an injury to the forearms whilst doing ladder drills (RIDDOR)
	1 relates to a burn to the face during hot fire training
	1 relates to an arm injury caused by a failed working platform (RIDDOR)
<b>4 incidents relate to routine activities</b>	1 relates to an inflammation of both wrists to a Fire Control operator (RIDDOR)
	1 relates to a facial injury caused by recoil of jet washer
	1 relates to a foot injury caused by equipment falling out of a locker
	1 relates to being hit on the head by equipment falling out of a locker
<b>2 injuries were at operational incidents</b>	1 relates to a manual handling injury at a large animal rescue (horse)
	1 relates to a firefighter stepping through some poorly constructed stairs (RIDDOR)
	Totalling <b>11</b> personal injuries
	Totalling <b>5</b> RIDDOR events

<b>20 incidents were vehicle accidents</b>	
<b>10 accidents were during routine activities</b>	1 relates to private vehicle colliding with a service vehicle from the rear
	1 relates to collision with tree branch fallen onto edge of the roadway
	1 relates to member of public reversing into a stationary service vehicle
	1 relates to service vehicle being reversed into a low pillar
	1 relates to service vehicle collision at slow speed into rear of private vehicle that had stopped in traffic
	1 appliance reversing into a raised trapdoor cover
	1 relates to appliance manoeuvring in the drill yard
	1 relates to manoeuvring appliance whilst connected to hydrant
	1 relates to service vehicle being reversed into a garden wall
	1 relates to service vehicle being reversed and contact made with private vehicle
<b>10 incidents were responding to incidents</b>	1 relates to an appliance making contact with railings during manoeuvre
	2 relate to collisions with parked vehicles during manoeuvres
	1 relates to a collision with temporary road sign on hard shoulder of roadway
	1 relates to collision with object protruding from embankment on a narrow road
	1 relates to collision of appliance with parked car whilst travelling between parked cars
	1 relates to an appliance making contact with a concrete slab hidden in grass verge
	1 relates to appliance collision with gate post at slow speed
	1 relates to an appliance making contact with parked car
	1 relates to an appliance colliding with private vehicle. The private vehicle was driven directly across the path of the appliance
	<b>Totalling 20 vehicle accidents</b>

<b>5 were near hits or causes for concern.</b>	
<b>1 was whilst responding to an incident</b>	1 relates to driver's door opening due to fault with door catch
<b>4 were during routine activities</b>	1 relates to coupling of hose reel coming apart
	1 relates to a firefighter hitting his head (no injury) on a low lying loft ladder
	1 relates to a reduction in door clearance caused by new lockers
	1 relates to an appliance bay roller shutter door crashing to the floor
Totalling <b>5</b> near hits or causes for concern	

<b>2 were near acts of violence or aggression</b>	
<b>1 was during routine activities</b>	1 relates to verbal abuse aimed at a crew member whilst partaking in routine activities
<b>1 was during an operational incident</b>	1 relates to verbal aggression aimed at crews whilst attending an operational incident
	Totalling <b>2</b> acts of violence or aggression



**Quarter 3 H&S Event type breakdown**

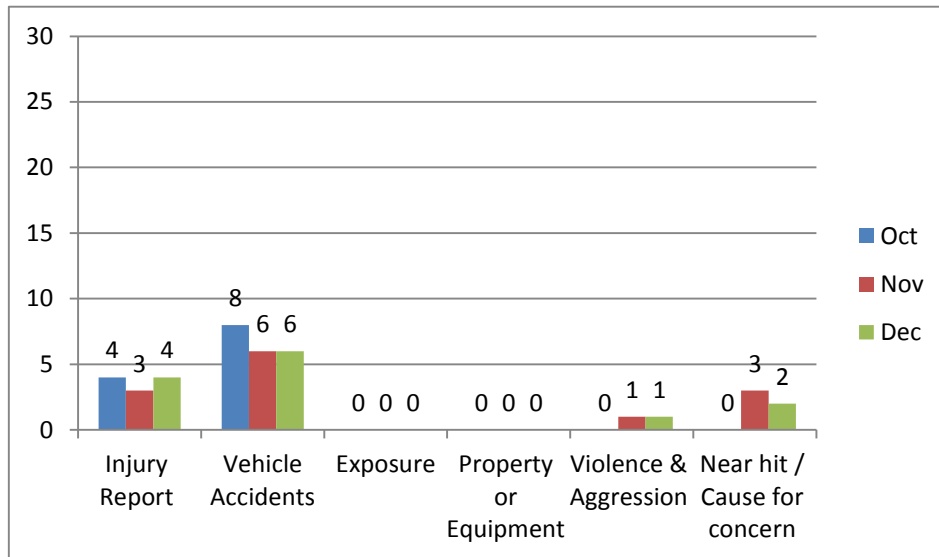


Figure 1 – Total events per month October 2015 to December 2015

**2015/16 Total Reported H&S Events-Monthly Breakdown**

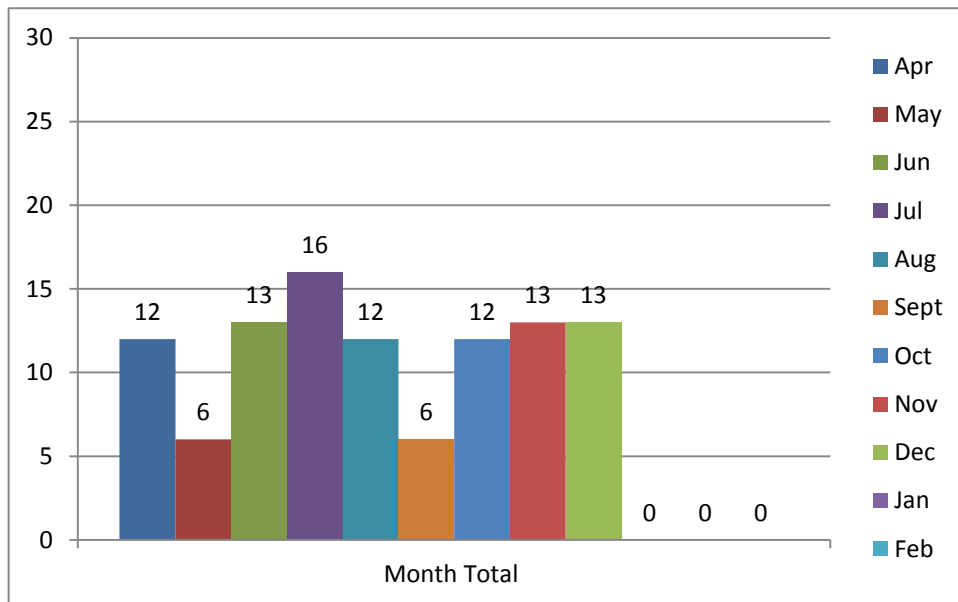


Figure 2 – Total events per month April 2015 to December 2015