

Report of the Head of Operational Support

Health & Safety Committee Update

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is 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.
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Recommendations

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

- (i) ***Health and Safety performance information recorded during April 2018 to September 2018 (Quarters 1 & 2)***
- (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. The group meets as and when required but at least every six months.

Update

5. The Health & Safety Committee met on 10 December 2018, and previously on 10 September 2018. This report focuses on the review of the second quarter performance and report in Appendix 1. The first quarter's performance was discussed at the previous meeting in September and is attached as Appendix 2 for information.
6. A review of quarterly performance for the relevant period (Quarter 2) was discussed in detail at the recent December meeting. This report (Appendix 1) does show a slight increase in personal injuries and near hits during Quarter 2 as compared to Quarter 2 from the previous year (2017-18).

7. The increase in personal injuries is only minimal and generally minor in nature. The increase in the reporting of near hits reflects a positive H&S culture, as it demonstrates that staff are regularly submitting reports regarding the potential for injuries. The reporting of near hits allows the Service to review control measures, and implement further controls before an injury is sustained. 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.
8. 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.
9. At the December meeting the H&S Committee discussed the accidents and injuries that have occurred during training activities against the data supplied at the meeting. Injuries in training of all types across the Service make up a significant proportion of injuries (59% this year to end of Quarter 2), albeit mostly minor in nature. There is no clear area of training that accounts for any particular majority of injuries and there is a fairly even spread of injury types across all training activities, as might be expected aligned to the role of a modern firefighter. The regional audit team examined this area recently and found no significant areas of concern. There was unanimous support for ensuring that training remains realistic and fully prepares operational staff for the hazards may face in an operational environment. The H&S Committee also agreed that where more serious accidents have occurred, the processes in place for review and investigation have been robust. However the H&S Committee was committed to ensuring that all types of training continue to be proportional, safe and fully risk assessed. This is an area that will be monitored and reviewed again at future H&S Committee meetings.

Workplace and Property Inspections

10. These inspections are specifically designed to ensure that key areas of health, safety and welfare in relation to the premises are checked for compliance. This process also ensures areas of non-compliance are suitably and sufficiently controlled, whilst identifying any areas requiring improvement.
11. Any actions required as a result of these inspections are assessed by Station Commanders/managers and priority levels allocated. These issues can either be managed locally or reported to Place Partnership Ltd (PPL) should property maintenance support be required.
12. These inspections are carried out annually by local managers but elements of the inspections such as asbestos assessments and surveys, and legionnaires water testing are carried out more regularly by PPL and reported to the committee on a quarterly basis.

Regional Activities

CFOA Health and Safety West Midlands Regional Group Audit

13. HWFRS was audited earlier this year as part of the agreed CFOA H&S West Midlands Regional Business Plan 2016-2020.
14. The outcome of this audit highlighted 15 recommendations of which seven have been completed, three will be completed in the next quarter and the final five are due for completion by the middle of 2019.

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 future.
16. Within HWFRS a number of measures have been implemented on the grounds of Health and Safety to promote improved cleanliness and working practices, which support the aim of reducing exposure to potentially harmful containments.
 - The NFCC Regional Health & Safety Group have created four posters to reiterate good housekeeping and cleanliness practices, which have been posted at all locations.
 - In April 2018 operational staff were issued with two full sets of PPE to ensure that it can be easily laundered regularly, with minimal inconvenience to the user.
 - The Service has issued two types of cleaning products (wipes) for both equipment and Firefighters exposed skin to be cleaned after exposure to contaminants such as the products of combustion.
 - Provision has been made to encourage staff to bag and appropriately store clothing and equipment that has been used at operational incidents.

Corporate Considerations

Resource (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Implications	Contained within H&S budgets and departmental capacity.
Strategic (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	Policy Links	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)	Rep 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: Events Reported during Quarter 2 (July – September 2018)

Appendix 2: Events Reported during Quarter 1 (April – June 2018)

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