

**Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee  
5 March 2018**

**Report by the Director of Service  
Support**

**HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUARTERLY REPORT  
3<sup>rd</sup> QUARTER 2017/18  
October – December 2017**

**REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2017/18 report on Health, Safety and Environment. Appendix 1 provides a summary of the statistical data.

During the reporting period there were 18 incidents recorded (Figs 1 & 2) that resulted in some form of personal injury or illness compared to 19 for the same period last year. Due to the makeup of the workforce, the highest number of accidents were incurred by Full-time Fire Fighters and Control staff (14).

The total number of reported accidents for the quarter has decreased marginally, by just over 5%, compared to the same quarter for last year (Fig 3). It is also well below the five year rolling average figure for the same period (25). This shows the long term accident trend continues to fall. Activity areas showing an increase in reported injuries are Training and Physical Training. Injuries related to Fire, Routine Activities, RTC and Special Service all show a reduction.

Pleasingly we have also seen a rise in near miss reporting.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee considers this report and makes any recommendations to the Fire Authority as necessary.

## BACKGROUND

2. Six of the eight reported injuries during training activities were sustained at the same initial water rescue training course for recruits. This four day course was conducted by qualified HFRS instructors at an offsite venue used to provide realistic practical simulation. All of the resultant illnesses involved gastroenteritis type symptoms and were recorded as “exposed to, or in contact with, a harmful substance”. One individual subsequently attended their local hospital and provided a stool sample for analysis, as a result the sample was identified as containing bacteria consistent with food poisoning.
3. Two of the three injuries sustained during Physical Training were whilst individuals were using the station treadmill causing “pain and soreness” to a knee and a back respectively. The other was a stubbed toe. All six injuries sustained during Routine Activities were of a minor nature. Three were sustained by Non-operational staff and three by Full-time or On-call firefighters.
4. A single injury was sustained during Fire Activities. This was a minor laceration sustained by a firefighter after attending a car fire when shards of glass had fallen into their pocket. The only activity types to increase in comparison to the same quarter for last year are Training and Physical Training. As detailed in paragraph two, the spike in Training reports caused by the potential food poisoning during water rescue training is responsible for this 300% increase from two to eight. This also explains the largest contributing type of cause being “exposed to, or in contact with, a harmful substance” (seven).
5. During this quarter, there have been two RIDDOR events compared to zero for the same quarter last year (Fig 5). Both resulted in sickness absence longer than seven consecutive days. One of the RIDDOR events occurred during recruit initial training resulting in a broken foot and the other during physical training on station with the outcome being recorded as pain and soreness in the lower back. The Service strives to reduce accidents and subsequent RIDDOR events to an aspirational target of zero.
6. On a positive note, near miss reports (Fig 6) have increased from 10 to 39 in comparison with the same quarter for last year. However, while the increase in reporting has been positive a number of reports were discounted as not meeting the criteria for a near miss. Ongoing training within this area will seek to ensure reports are appropriate. This confirms that real progress continues to be made by the H, S & E team in educating personnel and positively improving the safety culture of HFRS; although it is noted there is a fine balance between proactive reporting and using the near miss reporting as means to raise wider concerns.
7. The H, S & E team continue to undertake research in several areas reflecting the Services positive approach to H & S. These include:
  - Occupational cancer risks – In conjunction with the FBU, the Service is looking into the potential risk posed by contaminated PPE. This complements national research being undertaken by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) of which the Service is a contributor. A wide range of proactive mitigation measures have already been implemented. Currently the procedures for travelling in appliances with soiled kit are being investigated.
  - Accident investigation training – secured from leading external provider for November 2107 with further dates planned for 2018.

- Safe working limits for work at height PPE – proactive identification and control of related activities for all individuals above the prescribed weight limit.
  - Operational learning following on from fatalities in other FRSs – In light of a number of national reports/post-accident investigations received by the Service a review of current practices/procedures has been undertaken with a view to driving ongoing improvement. Again a number of interim measures have already been implemented.
  - The Blue Light Pledge for positive mental health – Members are aware that significant work has been undertaken to develop the pledge in conjunction with MIND. This was signed by the previous Chief Fire Officer, Dene Sanders, and an action plan developed to raise awareness of mental health, reduce stigma and improve support mechanisms across the Service. This plan is monitored and managed by the Mental Health Steering Group.
  - Sticky Blood – following the research conducted by the University of Edinburgh, work is ongoing to reduce the risks arising from exposure to extreme temperatures, with a number of control measures already in place.
  - Behavioural Safety training – The Service continues develop the positive safety culture through delivery of behavioural safety training. A development program delivered by the HS&E team is already well established and is continuing to be delivered across the Service.
8. Details of the Service's Health, Safety and Environmental outcomes for this Quarter 2016/17 are contained in Appendix 1.

#### STRATEGIC PLAN COMPATIBILITY

9. The monitoring of Health, Safety and Environmental information is a key part of the management of Strategic Objective 5 – “continuing to develop a committed, skilled and safe workforce.” This also links with the Service's vision of “Safer Firefighters, Safer Communities”.

#### FINANCIAL/RESOURCES/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10. None.

#### LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11. None.

#### EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT/HR IMPLICATIONS

12. None.

#### CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

13. None.

#### HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

14. This report provides the opportunity for an additional level of scrutiny of Health and Safety information.

#### COMMUNICATION ACTIONS ARISING

15. None.

#### DETAILS OF CONSULTATION AND/OR COLLABORATION

16. None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AVAILABLE FOR ACCESS

17. Health and Safety Policy Statement SP 10\_1.

RECOMMENDATIONS RESTATED

18. That the Committee considers this report and makes any recommendations to the Fire Authority as necessary.

**S TOPHAM**

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