



Essex County
Fire & Rescue Service

Health and Safety

Annual Report

2019/2020



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Executive Summary

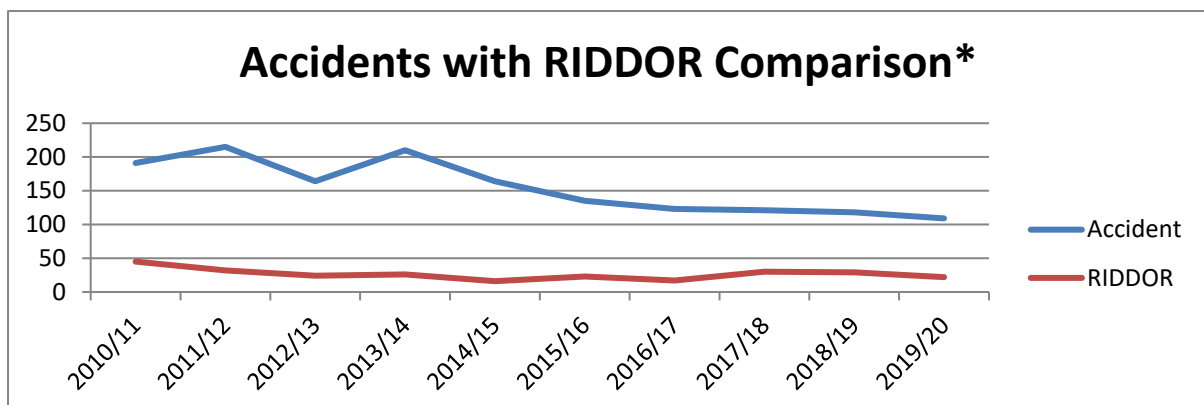
This report provides an overview of the health, safety and welfare performance achievements within the Service for the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

The report will be provided to members of the Service Leadership Team (SLT), Essex Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority and the Health, Safety and Welfare Strategy Group (HSWSG). It will also be available electronically via the Service intranet for all members of staff.

The Service seeks continuous improvement in all aspects of safety, from promotion of a positive safety culture, to identification and mitigation of risk and personal competence. The Service strives to keep its employees and the County of Essex safe, whilst delivering against our Service strategy by providing a wide range of essential services to the community. Our performance is constantly monitored and measured against agreed standards to reveal where and when improvement is needed.

Active self-monitoring and reactive monitoring is carried out by the Health and Safety department to ensure that key risks are controlled and that performance standards and risk assessments are actually used and monitored.

The Health and Safety Advisors monitor safety events on the 'Occupational Safety Health and Environmental Notification System' (OSHENS) which enables trends and issues to be identified and monitored with remedial actions taken swiftly and appropriately where required. There is feedback into the risk assessment system where past hazards and accidents are the driver for risk assessment reviews. The learning outcomes are used by risk assessment authors to update risk assessments to ensure continuity and that risks are mitigated to as low as is reasonably practicable.



*This is the total number of accidents from all groups of staff across the Service.

Looking back to 10/11 we have seen a 42% reduction in accidents to date. This has plateaued as per the national trend.



Four year Comparison

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/29	2019/20
Accidents	123	121	118	109
Attacks on FSP	20	20	19	18
RIDDOR Count	17	30	28	22

Over the last 4 years we have still seen a continual steady reduction in accidents of 12%. Attacks on FSP remain steady which shows a good awareness culture to report these types of Safety Events. The average for RIDDORs over the last 3 year is 25 which has reduced to 22 this year.

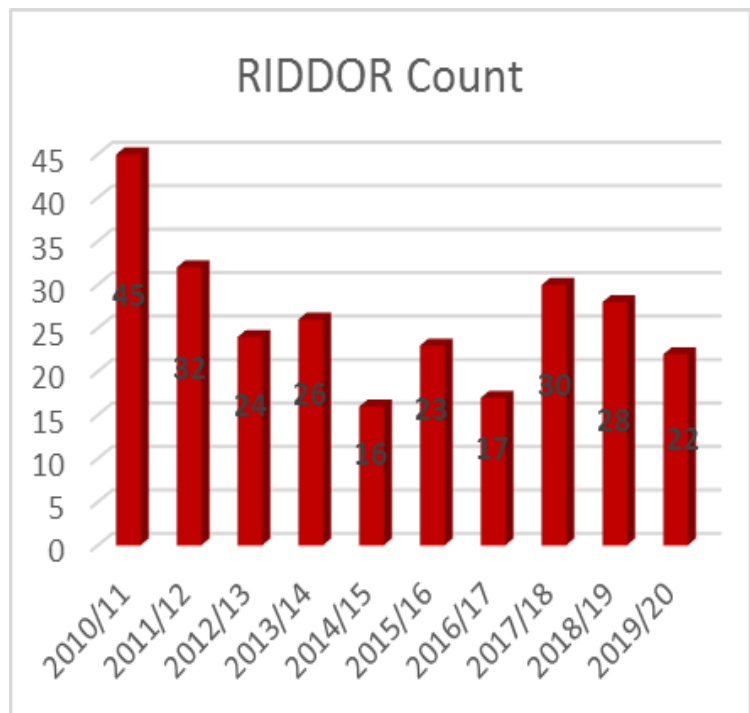
OUR GOALS

- Protect people, assets and the communities in which we work
- Provide and maintain safe plant, equipment and safe systems of work
- Apply best practice always and recognise that compliance with standards and legislation is a minimum level only that must be continually improved upon
- To control workplace hazards by assessing risks and establishing suitable control measures
- Drive a system of open communication and a no-blame culture on safety that fosters strong employee and employer co-operation
- Communicate lessons learnt and share good practice throughout the Service

RIDDOR reportable incidents have decreased by 21% from last year.

The 22 reported in 2019/20 consist of:-

- 3 - Dangerous occurrence's - BA set malfunction
- 2 - Specified injury's – both were during routine activities and required hospital treatment. 1 for stiches to the head after banging it on the door and the 2nd requiring an x-ray on their arm after falling over
- 2 - Injuries to members of public (MOP), both injuries were during Station visits, 1 slip on wet ground, 1 thumb shut in door
- 15 - Over 7 day injuries (which was 5 less than the previous year)





Home Office Data 2019/20 Operational Personnel/Injuries

	Injuries at fires		Injuries at road traffic collisions		Injuries at other special service incidents		Total
	Wholetime firefighters	On call firefighters	Wholetime firefighters	On call firefighters	Wholetime firefighters	On call firefighters	
Total number of personnel injured	13	12	2	2	1	0	30
Number of "Over 7 day injuries"	1	5	0	0	0	0	6
Number of RIDDOR Major injuries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of fatalities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total shifts lost	14	54	0	0	0	0	68

	Operational training		Fitness training		Injuries during routine activities		Total
	Wholetime firefighters	On call firefighters	Wholetime firefighters	On call firefighters	Wholetime firefighters	On call firefighters	
Total number of personnel injured	21	6	3	1	14	4	49
Number of "Over 7 day injuries"	3	2	0	0	2	2	9
Number of RIDDOR Major injuries	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Number of fatalities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total shifts lost	25	31	0	4	36	44	140

2019/20 Operational data highlights a decrease in both Wholetime and On-call injuries sustained whilst attending fires and shifts lost due to accidents. Operational injuries have decreased by a combined total of 26% leading to a decrease of 49% in shifts lost.

Data for injuries whilst attending road traffic collisions, highlights no significant difference in injuries sustained compared to the same period in 2018/19. However, shifts lost due to injuries in this area have reduced. There were no shifts lost in this category compared to 71 shifts lost the previous year.

Data for injuries at other special service incidents have highlighted no significant differences compared to the previous year. Wholetime injuries were down from 3 in 2018/19 to 1 during 2019/20. There were no shifts lost for this injury.

There has been a small increase from injuries during operational training from a combined total of 26 during 2018/19 to 27 during 2019/20. Shifts lost during this period highlighted an increase of 14% this is due to more Operational training taking place throughout the Service within the last year. We have also seen 3 new Whole Time Squads in this previous year. Most injuries during operational training relate to slips, trips and falls and manual handling injuries.

Injuries sustained during fitness training during 2019/20 showed a decrease from 10 during 2018/19 to 4 during 2019/20. Shifts lost have significantly reduced from 215 to 4. There were no reportable RIDDORS for this period compared to 6 from the same period last year.

Injuries during routine activities have also highlighted a decrease compared to those in 2018/19. However there have been 5 RIDDOR reportable injuries during this period compared to 1 during 2018/19. This has highlighted an increase in shifts lost from 69 during 2018/19 to 80 during 2019/20. Of the 5 RIDDOR reportable injuries, 4 were over 7 day injuries (injury to finger whilst getting changed, neck and shoulder injury following a vehicle collision, fall from stairs whilst descending and a back strain after moving a fire extinguisher). 1 specified injury was reported, this was a loss of consciousness after a Watch Manager banged their head on a dormitory door.

There has been a decrease in injuries of 18% during 2019/20 and a significant decrease of 59% in shifts lost for all staff groups from a total of 539 in 2018/19 to 208 in 2019/20.



OUR COMMITMENTS

- Create a non-judgemental environment where our staff can be open and willing to share something that with hindsight they could have done better. This enables us to learn and reduce the likelihood of a similar occurrence or accident being repeated
- Assign health and safety risks the same priority as other critical organisational activities
- Provide a healthy working environment and appropriate facilities for the welfare of all staff
- Provide a strong safety management framework that sets and reviews safety objectives and targets
- Motivate and drive commitment of all employees by providing health, safety and welfare awareness training
- Use, handle, store and transport articles and substances safely
- To ensure continual improvement, all Service employees are reminded of their responsibility. Each individual has an obligation to take reasonable care of their own safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their activities
- When safety events occur, we will engage with staff to reinforce safety messages and procedure to mitigate the likelihood of the risk
- Provide an annual report on health and safety statistics and trends to enable us to continually seek to improve upon performance

Current Resourcing

The Head of Health and Safety is a Chartered Member of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health and a registered consultant on the Occupational Safety and Health Consultants Register endorsed by the HSE.

The Health and Safety department directorate was headed by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer during 2019/20.

Over the last year, there was a continual emphasis in expanding the core skills of the Health and Safety team to facilitate internal training courses and to enable them to carry out their roles competently.

The Service acknowledges the right of employees to nominate health and safety representatives and will consult and communicate with all trade union representatives and employees in good time. Currently the Service engages in consultation and values all contributions from the following trade union health and safety representatives:-

- Fire Officers Association
- Unison
- Fire and Rescue Services Association
- Fire Brigades Union



Health and Safety Department

Deputy Chief Fire Officer:

Without absolving the Police, Fire and crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority, or the Chief Fire Officer of their legal obligations as an employer with regard to health and safety, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer assumes day-to-day responsibility for the discharge of the authority's legal obligations to health and safety.

Area Manager: Response Policy, Operational Assurance, Service Control and Health & Safety

Designated 'Competent Person' in accordance with requirements under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

The Area Manager: Response Policy, Operational Assurance, Service Control and Health and Safety, has the responsibility for managing the activities (planning, development and implementation) of each of the functions comprising of the Health and Safety and Operational Assurance departments.

Senior Health and Safety Advisor

The Senior Health and Safety Advisor is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Health and Safety Advisors, supports the Head of Health and Safety in design and implementation of policies and procedures. Advises Service management on health and safety legislation/policy and deputises for the HSM.

FBU Health, Safety and Welfare Coordinator

Seconded safety representative for consultation and assisting the Head of Health and Safety in design and implementation of policies and procedures.

6 Command Reps

31 Station Reps

Risk Assessment Officer

The Risk Assessment Officer assists the Head of Health and Safety in the planning, development and implementation of Service health and safety policies, and is responsible for the management of the risk assessment systems and procedures.

Health and Safety Advisor

North West & South West

Functional and geographical responsibility to support station managers. Advises Service management on health and safety legislation/policy change and implementation. Has technical expertise to support local managers in achieving safety goals.

Health and Safety Admin Assistant

The Health and Safety Administration Assistant is responsible for managing the safety event electronic reporting system. Reviewing and monitoring progress of all accident investigation documentation as well as general Health and Safety department administration.

Health and Safety Advisor

North East & South East

Functional and geographical responsibility to support station managers. Advises Service management on health and safety legislation/policy change and implementation. Has technical expertise to support local managers in achieving safety goals.



2019/20 Department Achievements

In 2019/20, the Health and Safety department completed a number of achievements summarised below:

9 new Toolbox talks were created to inform operational crews on updated health and safety information:

- Fire Contaminated Operational Equipment
- Fire Contaminated PPE
- Recording of Equipment Tests/Inspections
- COSHH
- OSHENS Completing Reports and Carrying out a Review and Close
- Managing Evidence at the scene of a safety event
- Control Measure Failures
- Data Breaches and OSHENS Reporting
- Station and Appliance Genie Leads

7 new Safety Flashes were created to identify urgent safety messages:

- High Bay Racking Storage
- Pseudomonas Aeruginosa in Appliance Tanks
- Interspiro BA set Facemask union connection
- Series 19 Hydrant Clamps
- Sanitisers and Hygiene Guidance
- Operational Response where COVID-19 is suspected or Confirmed
- Station Cleaning Routines

Review of the following department Policies within the last 12 months:

- Health and Safety Policy document including the Statement of Intent - October 2019
- The Control of Noise at Work policy – December 2019
- Control of Exposure to Vibration policy – December 2019
- Service arrangements for the workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) regulations 1992 Policy – January 2020
- Manual Handling Policy – April 2019
- Area Health Safety & Welfare Forum - Terms or Reference – November 2019
- Health Safety & Welfare Functional Forum - Terms or Reference – November 2019
- Health Safety & Welfare Strategy Forum - Terms or Reference – November 2019



No Time to Lose Campaign

The Health and Safety department have been continuing to work on the 'No Time to Lose campaign', this raises awareness of occupational cancer and enables the Service to take action in protecting our employees.

We are continuing to work to the pledge that commits us to an action plan to raise awareness and tackle the problem whilst ensuring our employees are kept as safe as possible.

As a Service, our action plan commits us to the following:

- Assess whether work activities that form part of our business have the potential to cause occupational cancer
- Develop and deliver a prevention strategy that reflects the risks of developing occupational cancer in our workplaces
- Ensure senior and operational managers understand relevant occupational cancer risks and manage them proactively as a significant health issue
- Ensure our employees use the preventative measures in place properly and consistently, and check that our preventative measures are working
- Demand the same standards of our supply chain as we do ourselves
- Include our protective measures against occupational cancer risks in our annual report or other public reporting format

As part of the Service pledge to the IOSH 'No Time to Lose' campaign, the following work has been undertaken:

Service Intervention:

- Three documents that cover the control of cross contamination of equipment and PPE have been reviewed and re-submitted to provide procedural clarity.
- Technical department have been looking into the potential benefits of an alternative Sundstrom half mask filter for all operational personnel. This alternative filter is currently issued to all DIM, HEMPA, Fire investigation Officers and Hazmat units.
- The 'Gas Monitoring' Thematic review began on 27th January 2020 and will gather vital information regarding potentially harmful gases that crews may be exposed to without the necessary respiratory protective equipment (RPE). This review will support the NTTL campaign by allowing for a more informed decision regarding guidance on; Hazard zones, RPE requirements during the developing and closing stages of an incident and the requirement for gas monitoring equipment on front line appliances.
- A review of Service supplied vacuum cleaning equipment on stations, Fleet Workshops and live fire locations has taken place. This review looks at the provision of vacuum cleaners and the suitability of a 'High Efficiency Particulate Air' (HEPA) filter to clean appliance cabs.



- All ECFRS BA training venues have incorporated the 'Safe Undress Procedure' (SUP) into their BA training presentations as standard practice.
- A NTTL presentation is now delivered to all new operational firefighters (transferees and recruits) with a view to include all operational personnel who enter the service at all levels. It has been identified that early awareness and education of a firefighters working environment and the control of contaminants is crucial. A dedicated presentation has been developed and implemented at Service training centre as part of the new inductee training programme.
- New whole-time squads have received a theoretical presentation on the 'No time to lose' campaign and how to control cross contamination from the incident, they have also taken part in a practical session to embed an understanding of the 'Safe undress' procedure for Structural firefighting PPE and breathing apparatus. This will now be rolled out to all new on-call firefighters with a view to providing catch up sessions where required.
- In line with the clean cab policy, the availability of suitable vacuum cleaners on stations to improve the air quality within the interior cab has been assessed. The make and model of service supplied vacuum cleaners have now been obtained from all stations with a view to supplying two HEPA filters to each location for a 6 month cab deep clean.

Fire Brigades Union (FBU) 'National Carcinogenic Project'

The Health and Safety department also volunteered to support an additional carcinogen project led by the FBU in conjunction with the University of Lancashire. This research project was due to start in the spring 2019 but was delayed till November 2019, its aim is to conduct research over a three-year period.

The National FBU carcinogen project conducted in conjunction with Lancashire University took place in Essex on Tuesday 5th November with a number of work locations being sampled over a four-day period. Some of the locations included Whole-time and On-call stations, Fleet Workshops, BA workshops and Wethersfield training centre. This phase of the project focused on air quality and swab sampling of all work areas and looked at the effective cleaning of operational work wear clothing worn under PPE following varied wash cycles.



Case Study: Health and Safety – Electronic Stability Programme (ESP) – Follow up from 2018/2019

Following the introduction of 44 new appliances within the Service, we were made aware of a number of ESP activations occurring through hazard reports that were submitted by drivers. A number of different communications were published and additional driver training was given when the new appliances came into the Service, but this did not completely resolve the situation and we still received feedback that drivers had a lack of confidence in driving vehicles with ESP fitted.



To rectify this, a number of Service representatives attended a driver/training familiarisation event at Alconbury hosted by Cambridge FRS who had resolved concerns in their Service by adapting the course and making it more interactive. The training with Cambridgeshire FRS and their driver trainers took place on 26th March 2019. The day was very successful and feedback from all those that attended found the training extremely beneficial.

The quality of the training has given those that attended the skills to understand why, and how, the vehicle reacts when ESP activates so that our drivers can be more confident to drive to the conditions of the road to prevent ESP activating, and if it did, allows the drivers to be confident on how to react and trust the vehicle.

As a result, Driver Training have now revised our ESP familiarisation course by taking a similar approach to Cambridge FRS and have inviting all our drivers to Wethersfield where they have experienced, and understand, vehicle reactions in a safe environment. Due to the high number of reversing and slow speed collisions, Banks Person familiarisation was also incorporated into this training session to utilise the training time efficiently to assist with our campaign to reduce slow speed collisions.

Each course takes no longer than two hours. These courses have been delivered from September 2019.



Case Study: Health and Safety – Department Projects

Hand-Arm Vibration (HAV)

The Health and Safety department, in conjunction with Occupational Health, have had workplace equipment measured for the health effects of HAV. These included air tools and equipment used at Fleet Workshops as well as operational equipment used by front line crews. The full report has been received and indicates areas where the Service needs to install control measures to prevent HAV. One tool has been removed from Service workshops completely as the HAV level was unacceptable. Further advice will be relayed to front line crews to limit exposure times to other equipment to prevent HAV.



RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP Audit

RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP carried out an audit on the H&S department in May 2019. We can confirm out of the 13 action points identified in the initial draft report all of the high and medium risks have been resolved and mitigated and we currently have 1 low action that remains outstanding. The original target date for this action was 31st December 2019, although this date has lapsed we have made progress in initiating meetings with the Performance department and Training department. The outstanding action is in relation to KPI's for training targets for relevant health and safety training and the training department are currently working through their current data sources and the ways information has previously been stored, as there are currently a number of health and safety training courses missing from their systems. We will continue to monitor this monthly through to closure of the action point with a revised target date set at 31st May 2020. This target date has now be extended in conjunction with L&D due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation but we will ensure to keep this as close as possible to the target date.

OSHENS Replacement/Take over

The provider of our on line health and safety system, Optima have been taken over by a new company called Ideagen. Members of the Health & Safety team attended a seminar to find out more about the new provider and to assess what it means for the current OSHENS system users. Ideagen will phase out OSHENS out over the next 3 - 5 years and look to move current users onto their own health and safety management system Q Pulse. The team, in conjunction with ICT, now needs to determine if the Q Pulse system will be a suitable replacement for OSHENS. Work is ongoing with this project and we are still pursuing this project albeit timelines for this may now be extended due to the current Covid-19 situation.

Accident Investigation Training Exercise

On 16th September 2019 the Health and Safety Advisors attended a training exercise at Harwich Port to carry out a mock accident investigation as part of a planned exercise. We were tasked with investigating a fall from height of a firefighter. USAR were part of the exercise and were tasked with extricating the casualty which was staged on the deck of a ferry. The Health and Safety team were trialling iAuditor to carry out the investigation and found it really efficient in collecting the information and publishing it into a report at the scene, this meaning information can get back to SHQ instantly.



2019/20 Health and Safety Department Objectives Review

Each year a Health, Safety and Welfare Strategy Action Plan is produced. This document identifies and sets out the strategic direction of the Health and Safety department over the coming year. The departmental objectives for the year 2019/20 were as follows:

- Initiate Service wide seatbelt campaign - Following a SAIB action point we launched a seat belt campaign to highlight the importance of wearing seatbelts in Service appliances on every trip. We wanted to highlight a good news story following an accident late last year where crews avoided serious injury as they were all wearing their seatbelts. Posters were sent to all stations and information sent out on the Intranet and via the Shout.
- Create and publish Monthly Performance reports – Monthly Health and Safety performance reports are created and issued to the Performance department which are shared to SLT and the PFCO on a monthly basis.
- Create and publish Monthly Crew updates – Following feedback from the Health and Safety roadshows station personnel asked for monthly health and safety updates and these have taken form in a monthly crew update. These have been very well received by station personnel and we continue to issue these on a monthly basis.
- Review potential for iAuditor to be used for inputting Quarterly inspections – The department put together on iAuditor a quarterly premises inspection template for Station Managers to use when carrying out there quarterly inspections and these are being utilised across the Service by most Station Managers.
- Produce Managing Safely as an eLearning package to support blended learning – The eLearning package has been created and trialled by a small group of service personnel in November 2019 there are some final changes required to the assessment working alongside the training department this can be live by the end of the summer 2020.
- Create and deliver NEBOSH workshops for Station Managers – These workshops were set up by the Advisors and 6 workshops were run throughout the year and was attended by Station Managers who were studying their NEBOSH General Certificate and the feedback from these sessions was very positive and this in turn lead to some groups going off on their own and creating study groups.
- Support contaminants projects in conjunction with the FBU – Work is continually ongoing please see page 10 for further updates.
- Continually review the No Time to Lose pledge - Work is continually ongoing please see page 9 for further updates.

2020/21 Health and Safety Department Objectives

The Health and Safety departmental objectives for the coming year are to:

- Replace the current Health and Safety Management System (OSHENS)
- Support the Service in the works relating to the Covid-19 Global Pandemic
- Review the potential for iAuditor to be used for Service Accident Investigation process
- Implement and review the “Managing Safely” as an eLearning package to support blended learning
- Implement a refresher “Working Safely” package for the Service
- Continually review the No Time to Lose pledge
- Support contaminants projects in conjunction with the FBU



For further information, please contact:

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Our vision is to make Essex a safe place to live, work and travel.