

Highlight Report



Name & Role	Joanne Hellen Senior Health & Safety Advisor
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Period covered:

Date from:	01/04/21	Date to:	30/06/21
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Highlights / achievements this period

COVID-19 Department Work – Prevention, Protection & Response, develop and broaden the roles and range of activities undertaken by the Service, Collaborate with our partners.

This section of the report highlights the work that the Health and Safety department have undertaken for the last quarter in relation to COVID-19.

Bureau Veritas COVID-19 Workplace Assurance Assessment – A Workplace Assurance Assessment has been commissioned and undertaken utilising Bureau Veritas to carry out an assessment of the measures that we have taken as a Service to support COVID-19 safety in the workplace, both from an operational, and non-operational perspective. The Health and Safety department assisted Bureau Veritas with audit site visits to several Service locations to complete their independent assessment of COVID-19 arrangements.

All sites were found to be sufficiently following and adhering to government guidelines with regards to COVID-19 and our own internal COVID-19 measures, policies, and procedures. The report stated that it was evident that COVID-19 controls have been considered in depth and implemented, to achieve compliant status.

Minor isolated non-compliances were swiftly rectified and verified as resolved by the lead consultant and our Service has been awarded with a full assurance certification from Bureau Veritas.

Joint investigation into localised COVID-19 cases – A request was received from the Fire Brigades Union safety representatives to jointly investigate links between a small number of cases of COVID-19 at one of our fire stations over the Christmas period. All cases were fully investigated, and it was concluded suitable and sufficient control measures were in place and being followed. After thorough examination of timelines, the investigation concluded that there was no evidence to directly link the cases to each other and concluded that the positive cases were most likely attributed to societal COVID-19 conditions which were at their peak during the time line of the occurrences.

Risk Assessments

- COVID-19 Risk Assessment review SHQ – this was reviewed, and outstanding actions have now been complete.
- Risk Assessment Officer liaised with the Inclusion and Diversity lead to review and amend the COVID-19 risk assessment in relation to the COVID-19 High risk groups.

Non-related COVID-19 Departmental Work - Prevention, Protection & Response, Develop and broaden the roles and range of activities undertaken by the Service, make best use of our resources, Collaborate with our partners.

Health and Safety Annual Report

The Health and Safety Annual report for 2020/2021 was completed and submitted in June.

Toolbox Talks

No 42 - The importance of reporting hazards - This followed a fall in the number of hazards being reported on OSHENS over the last few months and was a reminder to Service personnel the importance of Hazard reporting. There has been a 69% return on PDR Pro for fire fighters reading and understanding this document.

Slip Tests

Slip tests were carried out on new flooring installed at Burnham, Orsett, and Rochford Fire Stations.

Eastern Regional Meeting

The department attended the Eastern Regional Health and Safety meeting in May and discussed and debriefed the different COVID-19 controls and procedures each Service implemented.

A significant number of FRSs within the Region have been inspected by the HSE in relation to COVID-19 secure workplaces. None of which resulted in recommendations from the HSE.

HSE update – The HSE informed the NFCC that they would be carrying out thematic inspections within FRSs related to training activity (particularly in-house training and on-station training delivered by FRS staff). They will be focussing on the risk assessment process and the competence of staff who deliver the training. No indication was given as to when these inspections would take place although they stated that the inspections would be a formal process.

Significant Accident Investigations

OSHENS IN009480 USAR- This significant accident investigation relates to the sad death of a FF from USAR whilst on duty using the Service gym. This was reported to the HSE as a RIDDOR report, and a full significant accident investigation was carried out by the Health and Safety department. This was sent to the HSE for review, and they advised they did not wish to investigate further as they were satisfied it was not a death relating to a Service activity. A significant accident investigation board took place in June, and the findings will be presented at the Health, Safety and Welfare Strategy Group (HSWSG).

OSHENS IN009702 Contractor fall at Coggeshall Fire Station – This significant accident investigation relates to a contractor falling through rotten floor boards that they were replacing on a drill tower at Coggeshall Fire Station. The contractor was taken to hospital and it was reported as a RIDDOR. The contractor suffered broken ribs as a result of the accident. Health and Safety and Property Services departments are working closely with the Contractor's Health and Safety Advisor with their investigation. The Health and Safety department is also carrying out our own internal significant accident investigation. Updates in relation to the investigation will be monitored at the HSWSGp.

RSM Risk Assurance Services Audit

RSM Risk Assurance Services carried out a follow up external audit on several departments including the Health and Safety department in May 2021. Two action points were identified in relation to non-operational workplace health and safety identified in the initial draft report.

Action point 1 – “We will ensure that where Site-Specific Workplace Risk Assessments are overdue, this is regularly chased with dated updates being recorded to reflect this”.

RSM have been advised that this is currently a manual process and overdue actions are escalated to the HSWSG. We are unable to use our current safety management system to monitor this as it does not have

the capability to follow up outstanding risk assessments. This is in scope for the replacement safety management system project, for future assurance.

Action point 2 – “The Service will ensure that all new starters carry out the Health & Safety Premises Induction on their first day. To support this, a monitoring mechanism will be introduced, with non-compliance being escalated accordingly. We will make the Working Safely training a mandatory requirement for all staff, with this training being refreshed on a periodic basis”.

We received partial assurance on this action and an induction and onboarding working group has been established involving the relevant heads of departments to ensure this action is completed and provides full assurance going forward.

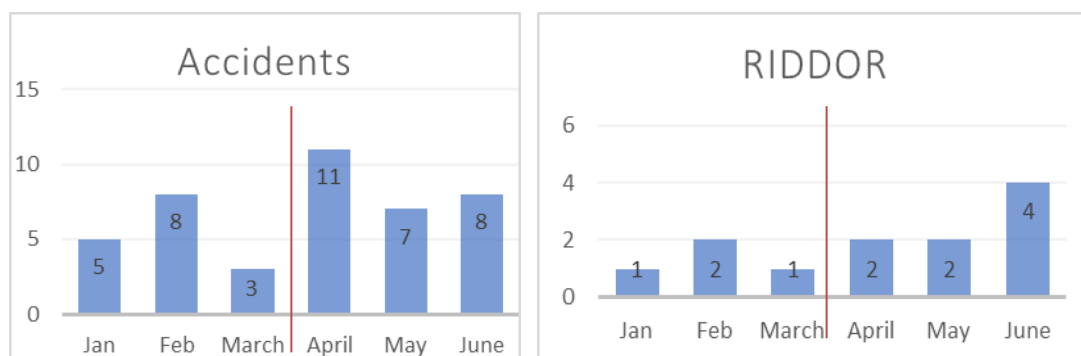
OSHENS Replacement

The functionality of our safety management system ‘Occupational, Safety, Health, Event, Notification System’ (OSHENS) has progressively deteriorated over the years and no longer meets ECFRS’ requirements. ECFRS first commissioned OSHENS in 2008 to take over from a paper-based system. At the time, this made significant improvements, however, despite numerous updates over the past 13 years the system does not perform as would be expected and required of a modern organisation.

Using a suitable health & safety management system will allow the Service to monitor, audit and review safety events in line with HSG65 Managing for Health & Safety to meet our statutory requirements. A new system is required that meets the Service needs now and in the future as OSHENS will be phased out by the provider over the next 3 years. The OSHENS replacement project brief was approved at the Digital and Data Program Board meeting on 7th July 2021. The Project Initiation Document will be submitted in the next quarter.

Safety Event Figures Q4 January, February, March 2021 and Q1 April, May, June 2021- Prevention, Protection & Response, promote a positive culture in the workplace, Be transparent, open, and accessible.

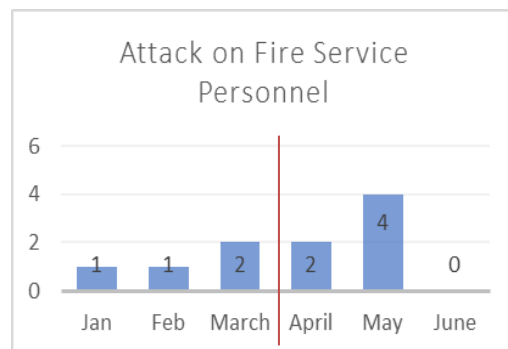
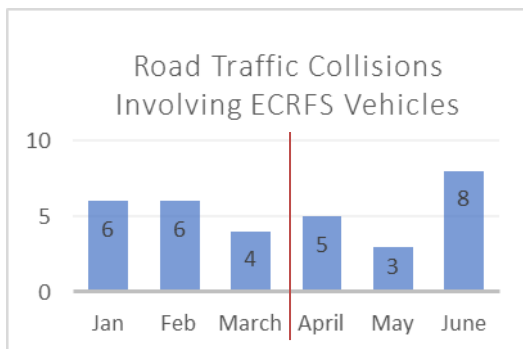
The graphs below show a comparison of Q4 safety event data with Q1 safety event data.



Accidents – There were 26 accidents reported in Q1 of this financial year, against 16 accidents in the previous quarter. Despite this increase there were similarly 24 accidents reported in the same quarter of 2020. Accident investigations have taken place to ensure learning opportunities are captured to mitigate the risk of similar events reoccurring. Below is a breakdown of the previous quarters accidents month by month;

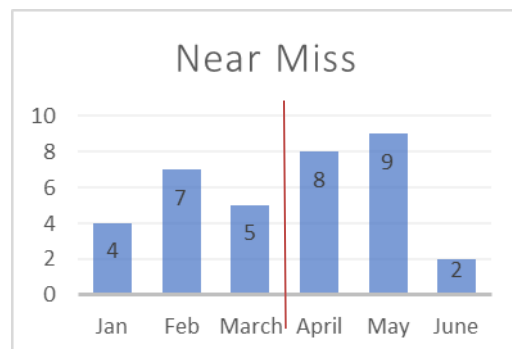
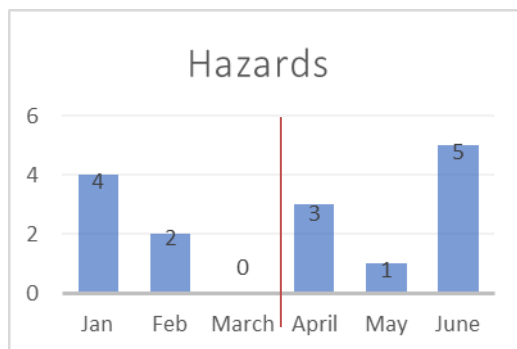
- **April 2021-** Of the 11 accidents reported this month, 5 are related to operational training; 2 during water rescue, 1 while working at height, 1 during a ladder drill, and 1 during a pump hose drill where a FF experienced back pain after picking up a 70mm hose (This was an over 7 day injury and therefore RIDDOR reportable). There was 1 injury relating to physical training (FF’s knee gave way whilst playing sport, this was an over 7 day injury and therefore RIDDOR reportable), 2 injuries during operational activity; 1 FF tripped in an animal hole and twisted ankle and 1 FF injured their back whilst assisting ambulance crews. There were 3 injuries during routine activities; 1 suffering from back pain after standing from their desk, 1 experienced shoulder pain while carrying out routine maintenance of BA cylinder and 1 slip when exiting the shower.

- **May 2021** – Of the 7 accidents at work reported this month, 4 are related to operational training; 2 during pump hose drills, 1 during BA training and 1 during a ladder drill where a FF slipped on a wet drain cover whilst rehousing the 10.5 ladder and injured their arm. This injury was an over 7 day injury and therefore RIDDOR reportable. There was 1 injury during an operational incident, 1 during routine activities where a FF stepped off the rescue pump backwards and tripped over a weight bar that was laying on the floor, this was an over 7 day injury and therefore RIDDOR reportable. 1 'other' where a contractor working on Service premises collapsed/fainted whilst walking to his van.
- **June 2021** – Of the 8 accidents at work reported this month, 3 are related to operational training; 2 during BA training and 1 during a ladder drill. 2 injuries reported from operational incidents, a FF was in a kneeling position and their knee gave way whilst standing, and a FF injured their ankle whilst running out the 70mm hose. Both of these were over 7 day injuries and therefore RIDDOR reportable. There were 3 injuries during routine activities; one of which was a specified injury where a Contractor fell within the tower and injured their back and knee. The Contractor was taken to hospital by Ambulance. This injury was RIDDOR reportable. 1 Injury where a FF twisted their ankle whilst descending the stairs, and 1 FF taken to hospital after feeling unwell on Station.
- **RIDDOR** – there were 8 RIDDORs reported during Q1 (see above commentary). Whilst this is higher than the 4 reported during Q4, it is worth noting than the same quarter of 2020 saw 7 reported RIDDORs.



Road Traffic Collisions – There were 16 reported RTCs during Q1, the same as the previous quarter, most being minor at low speed whilst manoeuvring appliances at operational incidents.

Attacks on FSP – In Q1 there were 6 attacks on Service personnel, 3 of which were verbal abuse, 2 involving missiles and 1 involving verbal and physical aggression. There were no injuries reported from these attacks.



Hazards – 9 hazards were reported in Q1 against 6 in the previous quarter. Reporting hazards is seen as part of a positive health and safety culture and although this is a slight increase from the previous quarter a toolbox talk has been issued in June to remind personnel of the importance of reporting hazards.

Near Misses – Accident investigations have taken place to ensure learning opportunities are captured to mitigate the risk of similar events reoccurring. Below is a breakdown of the previous quarter.

19 near misses were reported during Q1 against 16 in Q4, 6 of these were during Operational incidents; 3 relating to hose, 1 relating to a hoist used during animal rescue, 1 whilst using the Makita disc cutter where a blade became loose, and 1 where a vehicle on blue lights approached a cordoned off area behind an appliance at an inappropriate speed.

There was 2 near misses reported whilst responding, 1 which related to a loss of power to an appliance whilst driving and 1 to On Call crews arriving in the station yard in private vehicles whilst responding to a fire call.

There were 6 near misses reported from Operational training; 2 during RTC training, 2 during BA drills, 1 during emergency response driver training and 1 involving a genie lead which was not unplugged before the appliance left the bay causing it to recoil back near to where a FF was standing.

1 near miss was reported from physical training and 1 reported as 'other' regarding the temperature of water in the shower on Station.

Key Risks (problems and opportunities predicted, not occurring)	Mitigating actions – how prevent a problem or develop an opportunity
OSHENS no longer available for use in the next 3 years	Safety System Management replacement project initiated

Key issues (problems occurring now – needing action)	Actions required e.g. decisions needed
Inability to integrate OSHENS system requires data to be manually extracted and outstanding risk assessments and not notified to owners automatically	Project Initiation Document approval