



Essex County
Fire & Rescue Service

Health and Safety Annual Report

2021/2022



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1. Executive Summary

Be transparent, open, and accessible.

This report provides an overview of the health, safety, and welfare performance achievements in our Service from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

The report will be provided to members of our 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 on our Service intranet for all colleagues.

Our Service seeks continuous improvement in all aspects of safety by promoting a positive safety culture, identifying, and mitigating risk, and ensuring personal competence. Our Service strives to keep all colleagues and the County of Essex safe, while 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 show where and when improvement is needed.

2. Statistical Analysis

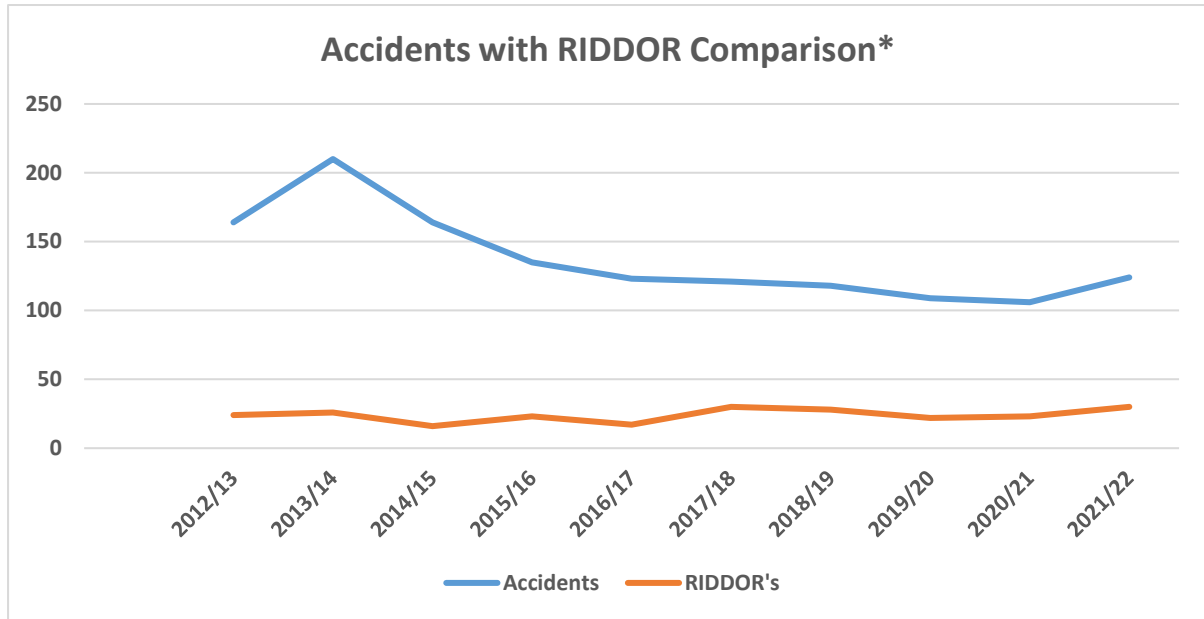
Be transparent, open, and accessible. Promote a positive culture in the workplace.

Our Health and Safety department carries out active self-monitoring and reactive monitoring to ensure that key risks are controlled, and that performance standards and risk assessments are used and monitored.

Health and Safety Advisors monitor safety events on the Occupational Safety Health and Environmental Notification System (OSHENS). This enables trends and issues to be identified and monitored with remedial actions taken swiftly and appropriately where required. Risk assessment reviews are carried out after hazards are identified and after accidents occur. The learning outcomes from investigations are used to update risk assessments to mitigate risks as low as is reasonably practicable.

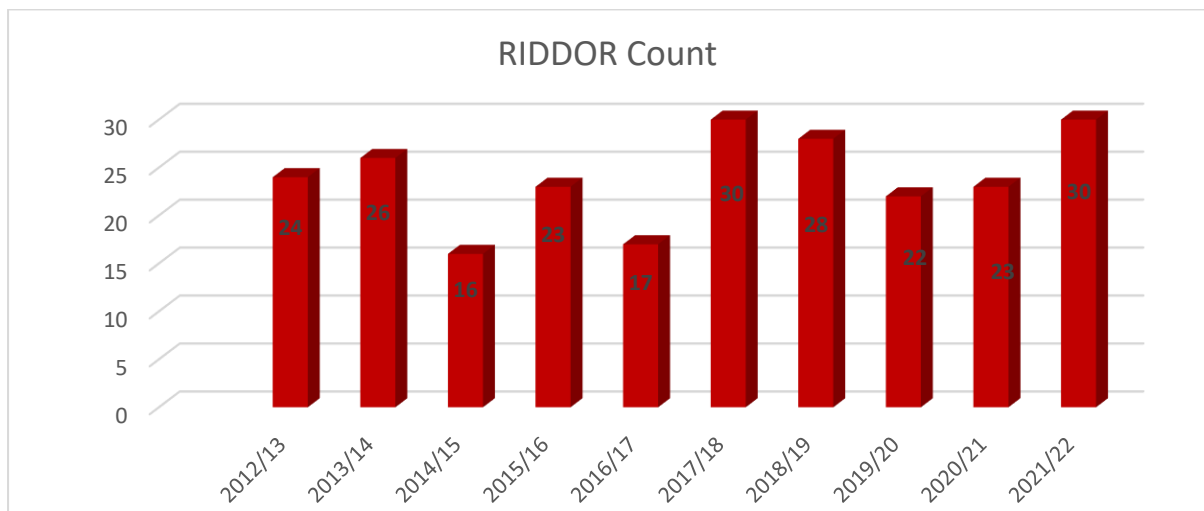
2.1 The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)

RIDDOR puts duties on employers, and their nominated 'Responsible Person' for health and safety to report certain serious workplace accidents, occupational diseases and specified dangerous occurrences (near misses).



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

Overall, we have seen a reduction in accidents from 164 in 2012/13 to 124 in 2021/22. Over the reporting period RIDDOR incidents have been relatively consistent with minor fluctuations year on year. This year equalled 2017/18 pre COVID-19 level of 30.



The 30 RIDDORs reported in 2021/22 consist of:

- 2 Dangerous Occurrence – 1 ringing in ears after a battery exploded in the battery testing station at Service Workshops, behind a protective shield (routine activities) and 1 BA malfunction whilst in the open air (operational incident)
- 2 Specified Injuries - 1 broken arm following slip on wet drain cover during training and 1 contractor slipped and fell onto guard rail whilst working on scaffolding resulting in broken ribs



- 26 injuries exceeding 7 days (see section 2.3 for further detail RIDDOR's in red)
 - 10 at operational incidents
 - 3 during operational training
 - 1 during fitness training
 - 3 participating in recreational sport (volleyball)
 - 9 during routine activities

2.2 Five Year (medium term) Comparison

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Accidents	121	118	109	106	124
Attacks on FSP	20	19	18	16	18
RIDDOR Count	30	28	22	23	30

The table above shows how the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a reduction in accidents over 2019/20 and 2020/21 with figures showing three more incidents in 2021/22 compared to 2017/18. Attacks on Fire Service Personnel (FSP) remain steady and are mainly verbal abuse. RIDDOR reports reduced during the pandemic and have now returned to pre COVID-19 levels with the majority being over 7-day injuries.

OUR GOALS

- Protect people, assets, and the communities in which we work
- Provide and maintain safe plant, equipment, and safe systems of work
- Always apply good practice and recognise that compliance with standards and legislation is a minimum level requirement 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 our Service



2.3 Home Office Data 2021/22 Operational Personnel/Injuries

HOME OFFICE DATA 2021/22	Number of Persons Injured	Number of Over 7 Day Injuries	Number of RIDDOR specified Injuries	Number of Fatalities	TOTAL
Injuries at Fires	30	7	0	0	37
Injuries at Road Traffic Collisions	4	1	0	0	5
Injuries at Special Service Incidents	3	2	0	0	5
Injuries During Operational Training	40	6	1	0	47
Injuries During Fitness Training	4	0	0	0	4
Injuries During Routine Activities	20	6	0	0	26
TOTAL	101	22	1	0	

2.3.1 Injuries During Operational Incidents

During 2021/22 we attended 15,420 incidents against 13,787 the previous year. This contributed to an increase in RIDDOR's from 3 to 8, however over the same period the number of injuries while attending operational incidents remained at 34, the same number as the previous year. The number of personnel injured at operational incidents was 101 resulting in 14 personnel being absent from the workplace due to their injury and 196 shifts lost.

Injuries resulting in lost shifts were (RIDDOR reportable incidents in red):

1. FF tripped and twisted ankle at operational incident resulting in 3 shifts lost
2. FF got up from kneeling position causing knee to give way resulting in 7 shifts lost
3. FF stumbled on pothole causing pain and swelling in ankle resulting in 7 shifts lost
4. FF suffered heat exhaustion and dehydration resulting in 1 shift lost
5. FF injured back whilst assisting paramedics with casualty resulting in 47 shifts lost
6. FF suffered burn to hands resulting in 17 shifts lost
7. FF slipped on kerb whilst responding to pager resulting in 9 shifts lost
8. FF injured Achilles tendon running out hose resulting in 46 shifts lost
9. FF twisted ankle on uneven ground resulting in 20 shifts lost
10. FF suffered cut to forearm resulting in 3 shifts lost
11. FF had debris get into his eye resulting in 6 shifts lost
12. FF suffered muscle strain in chest resulting in 12 shifts lost
13. FF suffered injury to back when moving pallets resulting in 3 shifts lost
14. FF cut hand on glass whilst using door entry equipment resulting in 15 shifts lost



2.3.2 Injuries During Operational Training

In 2019/20 there were 27 injuries during operational training. This number decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic and in this reporting period the number of injuries were 40. There has also been an increase in RIDDOR reportable injuries relating to operational training, from 5 in 2019/20 to 7 during 2021/22. Shifts lost also increased from 86 in 2020/21 to 213 during 2021/22 due to one of the injuries resulting in 111 of the shifts lost. Below in red is a summary of the RIDDOR reportable injuries:

1. FF slipped on a wet drain cover and broke his right arm when re housing a 10.5m ladder after training, which was reported as a specified injury (broken bone).
2. FF experienced pain and discomfort at home following RTC Core Skills Assurance Programme 3 training exercise during the day which was an over 7 day injury.
3. FF was participating in an Attack 3 exercise at WTC, as part of the Controlled Fire Burn Training course. Once dismissed to fire ground to service their BA sets, the FF informed another instructor that his hand was sunburnt which was an over 7 day injury.
4. FF experienced shoulder pain whilst participating in the 'Sewer' exercise on the BA initial course where he was required to negotiate his way through a network of tunnels whilst wearing BA in a restricted space environment which was an over 7 day injury.
5. FF Injury caused by a gust of wind catching a 13.5m ladder during Phase 2-3 assessment which was an over 7 day injury.
6. FF suffered cold water immersion syndrome whilst attending a re-accreditation course at Lee Valley White Centre which was an over 7 day injury.
7. FF reported they were suffering from discomfort in their shoulder after performing pump hose drills in STC yard which was an over 7 day injury.

2.3.3 Injuries During Fitness Training

Data for injuries sustained while taking part in fitness training has decreased from 13 during 2020/21 to 4 during 2020/21. Three of these resulted in over 7 day injuries and were therefore RIDDOR reportable (in red below). Below is further information relating to the specific injuries:

- FF's knee gave way whilst playing volleyball, this was an over 7 day injury
- FF broke a finger whilst playing volleyball, this injury was over 7 days
- FF pulled calf muscle, this injury was over 7 days
- FF injured leg whilst playing volleyball

2.3.4 Injuries during Routine Activities

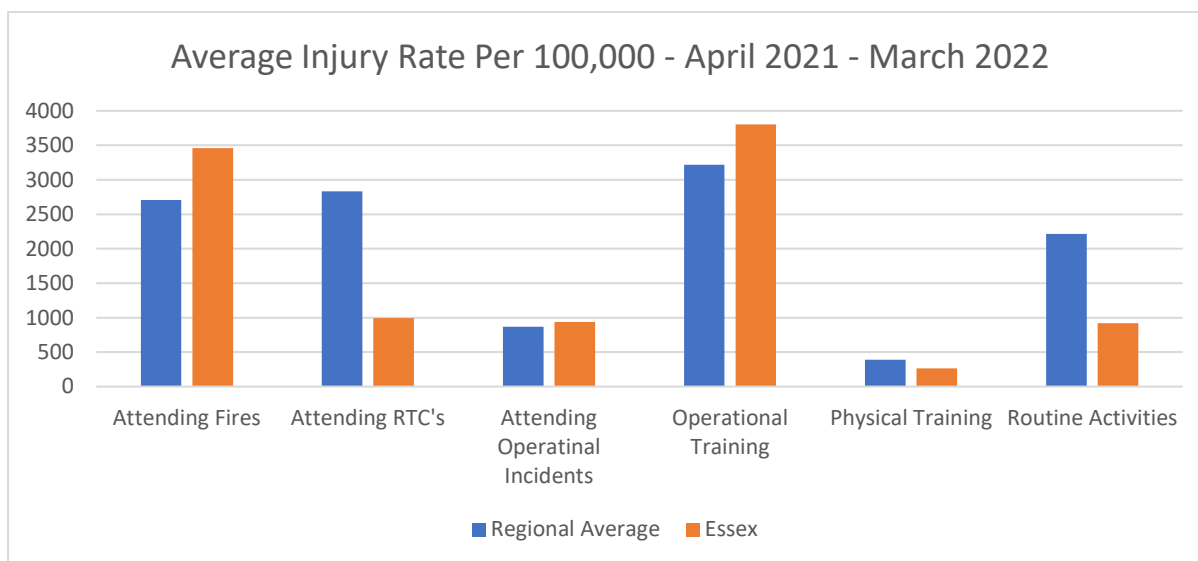
Injuries sustained during routine activities have increased slightly from 17 during 2020/21 to 20 during 2021/22. There was also an increase in reportable RIDDORs relating to routine activities from 2 to 6 over the same period. The increase in numbers can be attributed to the return to normal working practices post COVID-19. Shifts lost this year equalled the pre pandemic level of 133 in 2017/18. There were no notable trends highlighted.



2.3.5 Regional Comparison

To support the development of health and safety across Fire Services in the Eastern Region and London a forum for the seven Fire and Rescue Services was created to engage on strategic and tactical level health and safety management. Partner agencies, subgroups and working groups come together as required to ensure of an appropriate response to health and safety matters.

The Eastern Region and London Health and Safety Group also provides representation at the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) National Health and Safety Committee.



The graph above shows our Service's performance against the region average through data that is collated quarterly and presented as per 100,000 to bring all Services data into alignment. This data is compared and discussed at the Eastern Region and London Health and Safety Group for trend analysis and sharing of notable practices.

Although the average injury rate for Essex is higher against the regional average for 'Attending Operational Training' (18%) and 'Attending Operational Incidents' (8%), there were significantly less injuries against the regional average for 'Routine Activities' (58% less), 'Attending RTC's' (64% less) and 'Physical Training' (42% less).

2.3.6 Road Traffic Collisions (RTC)

The chart below shows a comparison in the number of RTC incidents reported in the last two years and an overall reduction of 5% from 2020 to 2021 – See page 15, H&S Dept objectives.

2020		2021
49	Forwards Operational	38
6	Reversing / turning Operational	14
4	Forwards on station	5
3	Reversing on station	4
7	Third party at fault	4
13	Stationery / vehicle unattended / stone chip	13
1	Other	1
83	TOTAL	79



OUR COMMITMENTS

- Create a non-judgemental environment where our colleagues 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 colleagues
- Provide a strong safety management framework that sets and reviews safety objectives and targets
- Motivate and drive commitment of all colleagues by providing health, safety and welfare awareness training
- Use, handle, store and transport articles and substances safely
- To ensure continual improvement, all colleagues are reminded of their responsibility: colleagues have 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 colleagues to reinforce safety messages and procedures to mitigate the likelihood of risk
- Provide an annual report on health and safety statistics and trends to enable us to continually seek to improve on performance

3. Current Resourcing

Make best use of resources. Promote a positive culture in the workplace.

Line management of the Health and Safety department, during the reporting period changed from the Director of Operations to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer who maintained governance via the Health, Safety and Welfare Strategy Group.

The Head of Health and Safety, and designated “Competent Person,” is a Chartered Member of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), and a registered consultant on the Occupational Safety and Health Consultants Register endorsed by the HSE.

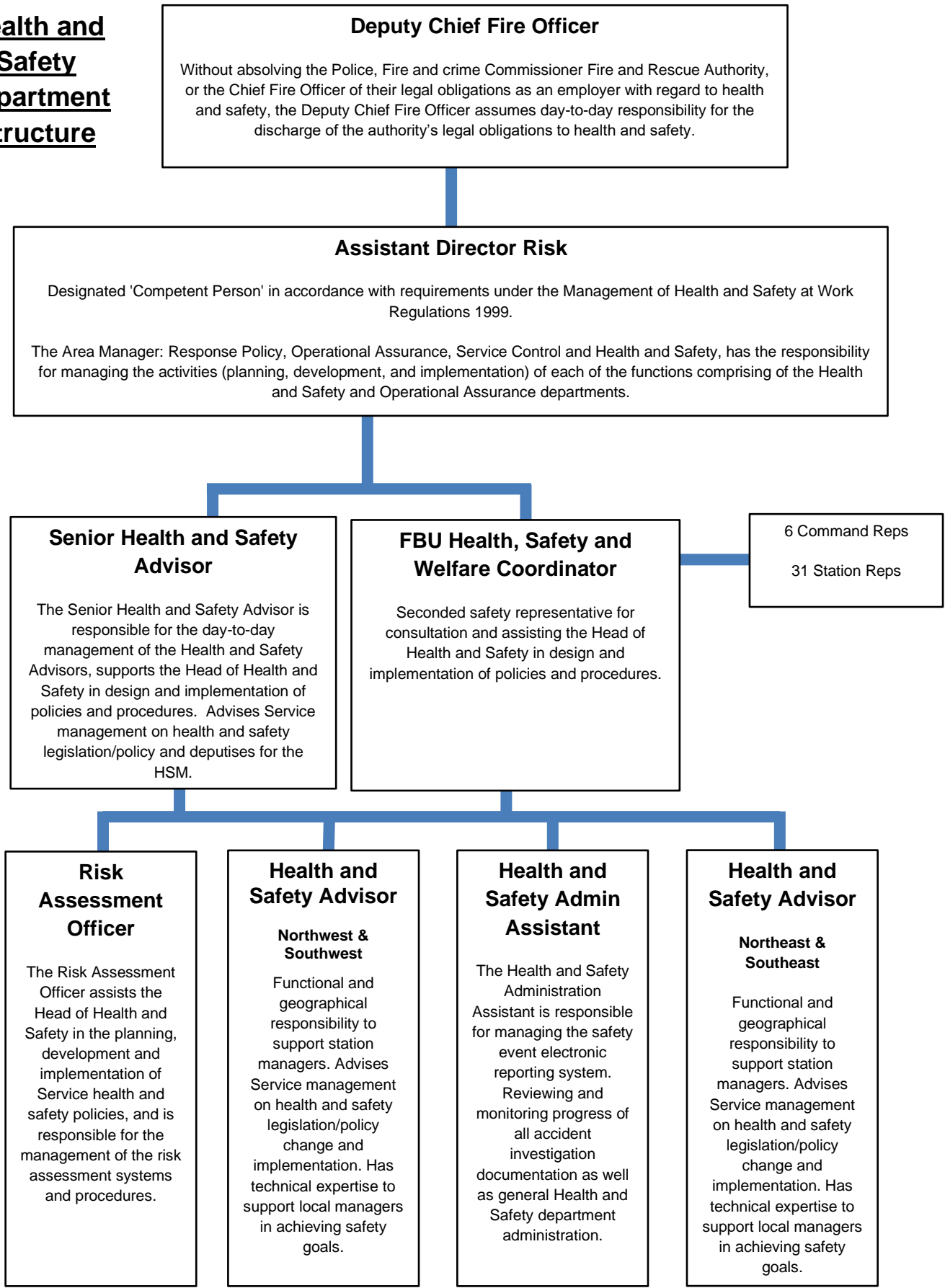
Over the last year, there has been a continual emphasis in expanding the core skills of the Health and Safety team to facilitate internal training courses and to enable them to continue to carry out their roles competently.

Our Service acknowledges the right of colleagues to nominate health and safety representatives and will consult and communicate with all trade union representatives, and colleagues, in good time. Currently our 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 Structure





4 2021/22 Department Achievements

Promote a positive culture in the workplace. Develop and broaden roles and range of activities undertaken by the Service. Be transparent, open, and accessible. Collaborate with our partners. Make best use of our resources.

In 2021/22, the Health and Safety department have issued numerous communications summarised below:

4.1 - 5 Safety Flashes were created to identify urgent safety messages:

SF21	Anti-Vaccination and Anti-Mask Posters
SF22	Physical Training – Suspension of Volleyball
SF23	URGENT - Seatbelts
SF24	Operation and use of Oxygen Cylinders
SF25	Fire Hydrant Outlet Extensions

4.2 - 11 Toolbox Talks were created to inform operational crews of updated health and safety information:

TBT 42	The Importance of Reporting Hazards
TBT 43	Reporting Safety Observations Through OSHENS
TBT 44	Accident/Incident Investigation
TBT 45	Appropriate Footwear for Driving Appliances
TBT 46	Guidance – Lifting of COVID-19 Restrictions
TBT 47	Correct use of Step Blocks to Support a Load
TBT 48	Guidance –COVID-19 Additional Control Measures
TBT 49	Guidance – COVID-19 Changes to Self-isolation Periods
TBT 50	Changes to the Highway Code
TBT 51	Management and Limitations of Structural Firefighting PPE
TBT 52	Management of Double Glazed, Triple Glazed and Wired Glass

4.3 The following departmental policies were reviewed in the last 12 months:

Policies	Date Reviewed
Service guidance for Workplace and Work-Related Deaths	April 2021
Health and Safety Policy	October 2021
Health and Safety Policy Statement of Intent	October 2021
Service arrangements for the provision and use of work equipment regulations (PUWER) 1998	October 2021
Manual Handling	March 2022



5. Case Study 1 – Broken seatbelts in Service Vehicles

Over the past few years, the Service has had several incidents of seat belt stalks breaking which prompted a significant accident investigation board to be arranged. Failures had occurred where the seat belt stalk had been forced under the BA cradle and fastened to stop the audible alarms sounding. The action plan identified 15 key points to be addressed including Technicians from Fleet Workshops visiting all stations to inspect every seatbelt stalk.

The Technicians visits identified 32 additional stalks that needed to be replaced. The Health and Safety department released Toolbox Talks and worked with Corporate Communications and the Road Safety team to initiate a Service wide campaign for re-education on the wearing and storage of seat belts. The work of the SAIB was shared at Station Managers and Managers Briefing meetings to ensure dissemination throughout the Service and the Training department were involved to ensure inclusion in all Driver Training. The Operational Assurance department will also include seat belt checks during station audits. The Trade Union Rep bodies involved in the SAIB also supported by communicating the safety messages to all their members. The Management of Road Risk policy was also reviewed to re iterate the need to wear seat belts.

The pictures below show how seatbelts have repeatedly been bent behind the BA cradle and fastened which bends the stalk causing the breakage.





6. Case Study 2 - COVID-19 Department Work

At the start of April 2021 Covid-19 was still playing a major part in all our lives and we continued our work in the department to ensure sufficient control measures were in place and up to date information was available to all staff.



Bureau Veritas COVID-19 Workplace Assurance Assessment – A Workplace Assurance Assessment was 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 was awarded with a full assurance certification from Bureau Veritas.

Lifting of Government Guidelines for COVID-19

During quarter two the Health and Safety department created a new risk assessment to reflect the lifting of Government guidelines for COVID-19, and this informed the Service position in response to our exit strategy. The COVID-19 Handbook and Safety Flash 11A (COVID-19 Operational Response) were updated to align with the new risk assessment.

During quarter three the Health and Safety department reviewed the COVID-19 generic workplace risk assessment in line with changes to Government guidance and then all COVID-19 workplace risk assessments were reviewed.

The Service continues to comply with the requirements for cleaning, ventilation, and welfare facilities in the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 and the Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015 to control occupational health and safety risks within the Service. All COVID-19 workplace risk assessments have been archived and generic workplace risk assessments apply.



7.2020/21 Health and Safety Department Objectives Review

Promote a positive culture in the workplace. Develop and broaden roles and range of activities undertaken by the Service. Be transparent, open, and accessible. Collaborate with our partners. Make best use of our resources.

Below are the key objectives from 2020/21 with updated commentary on progress:



- Replace the current Health and Safety Management System (OSHENS)
 - A new management system has now been procured and work is ongoing to configure and launch the new system in 2022.
- Implement a Service-wide training package for the new management system prior to going live
 - Training package is scheduled into the roll out programme.
- Review reporting data for quarterly and annual health and safety reports
 - The new Health and Safety Management System will allow more in depth and accurate reporting.
- Review of hose management and guidance
 - All Service hose has now been tested by an external company and an electronic recording system has been implemented to record all on going tests carried out on station.
- Support our Service in the continual works relating to the COVID-19 pandemic
 - The department continues to monitor Government guidance and will update local risk assessments accordingly – see COVID-19 case study on page 14 above.
- Review DSE requirements for staff that continue to work from home post pandemic
 - The Health and Safety department encouraged all staff to review their DSE assessments for home working, and the team followed up on all results.
- Continual review and promotion of our “No Time to Lose” pledge
 - The No Time to Lose meetings were re-instated and the pledge revised and updated. These meetings will continue to proactively seek opportunities to reduce contaminates in the workplace.
- Review the effectiveness of the induction process
 - A working group was set up to implement the new on boarding process and contributed to the new On Boarding App which includes the FB340 Health & Safety Induction.
- Review the Health and Safety department structure
 - The Health and Safety Manager now reports to the Assistant Director Risk. A temporary Health and Safety Manager is in place whilst we seek to recruit a permanent candidate in 2022.
- Continue to support the Eastern Region and London Health and Safety Group
 - The department actively engages with the Eastern Regional and London Health and Safety Group through the regional meetings and as part of day-to-day work to share learning and best practice. RTC reduction initiatives contributed to a 5% decrease from the previous year.



8.2022/23 Health and Safety Department Objectives

Promote a positive culture in the workplace. Develop and broaden roles and range of activities undertaken by the Service. Be transparent, open, and accessible. Collaborate with our partners. Make best use of our resources.

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

- Implement the new Health and Safety Management System (Assure)
- Implement a Service wide training package for 'Assure' prior to going live
- Engage in new Service wide Health and Safety Roadshow to familiarise crews with new Health and Safety Management System 'Assure' and promote awareness of ongoing trends
- Revise previous programme for internal audits and audit structure
- Review DSE requirements for staff returning to the office and support the New Ways of Working project in future DSE requirements for the workplace
- Continue to review COVID-19 documentations and update as required to align with Government guidance
- Proactively seek opportunities to reduce contaminants in the workplace through quarterly 'No Time to Lose' meetings and separate working groups as required
- Actively engage quarterly with the Eastern Region and London Health and Safety Group
- Continue to progress the reduction of RTC incident reports following a 5% reduction this year (see 2.3.6, page 8) through our Health and Safety roadshows and department communications. This will be monitored through the Occupational Road Risk Group



For further information, please contact:

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