



# Health and Safety Annual Report 2014/2015



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## Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the Service health, safety and welfare performance achievements for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.

The report will be provided to members of Strategic Delivery Board (SDB), Strategic Management Board (SMB), Essex Fire Authority (EFA), and the Health, Safety and Welfare and Strategy Group (HSWSG). It will also be available electronically via the Service intranet.

The Service seeks continuous improvement in all aspects of safety, from promotion of a positive safety culture, identification and mitigation of risk and personal competence. The Service strives to make its employees and the county of Essex safer whilst delivering 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 need.

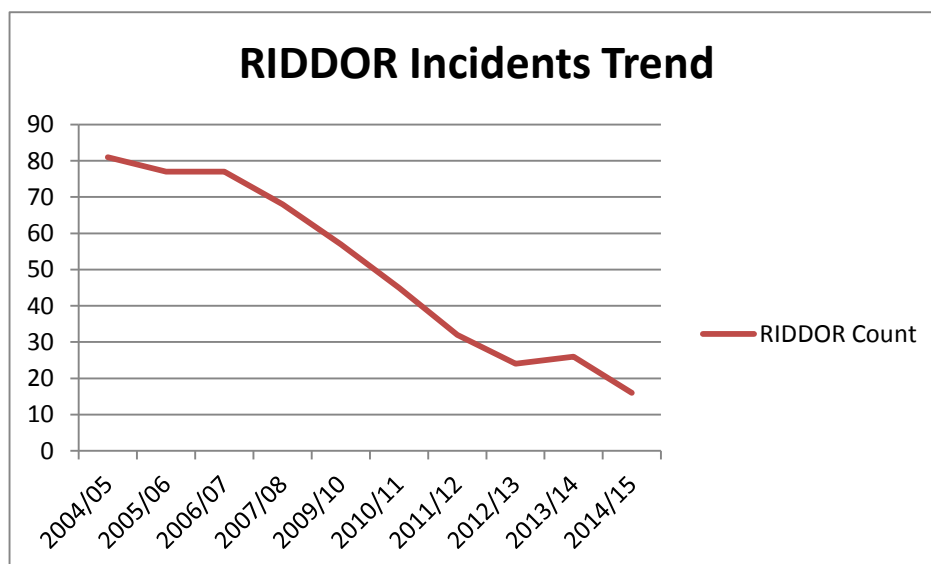
Active self-monitoring and reactive monitoring is carried out by the Health and Safety department to ensure that key risks and controlled, performance standards and risk assessments are actually used and monitored.

The continual monitoring of safety events on the Occupational Safety and Health Environmental Notification System (OSHENS) enable 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 data obtained from this is used to inform risk assessment authors to influence risk assessments to provide both continuity and ensure that risks mitigated to as low as is reasonably practicable.

Over the last three years the Health and Safety department has seen a moderate decrease in reported safety events.

However, RIDDOR reportable incidents which generally are the highest risk fell by 33% on last year and 80% since 2005, which demonstrates that

the Services statement of intent is continually achieving its goals.



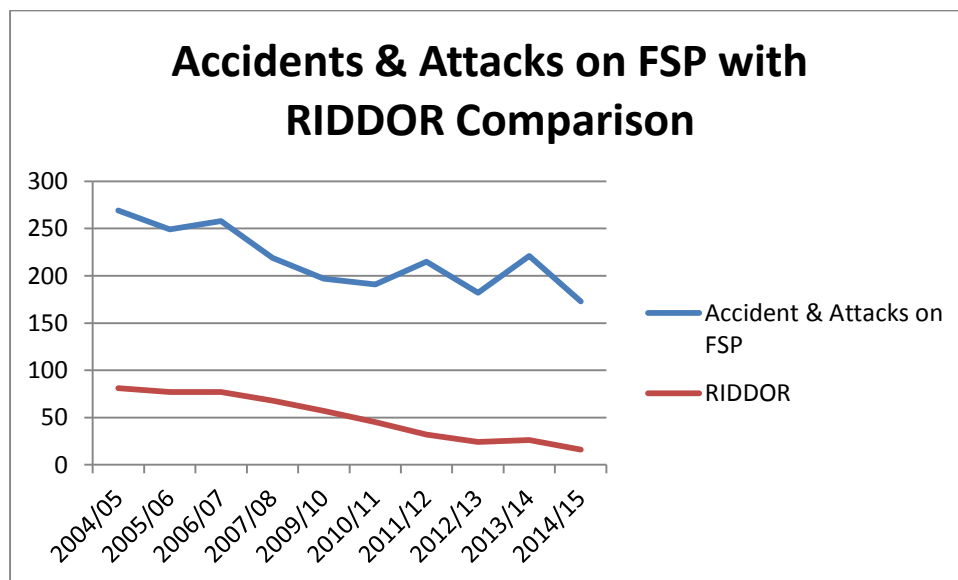
60% of RIDDOR incidents related to Dangerous Occurrences of which slips, trips and falls accounted for more than half of them.



## OUR GOALS

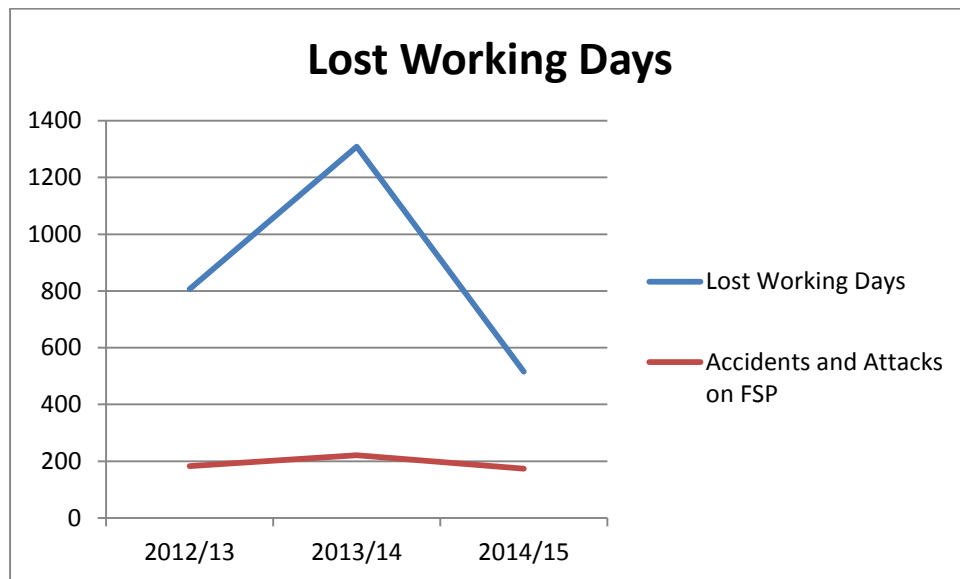
- Protect people, assets and the communities in which we work.
- Provide and maintain safe plant, equipment and safe systems of work.
- Apply best practice always and recognise that compliance with standards and legislation is a minimum level only that must be continually improved upon.
- Endeavour to 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 cooperation.
- Monitor and improve upon safety statistics and communicate lessons learnt and good practice throughout the organisation.

Minor accidents have also decreased by 22% on the previous year and 'attacks on Fire Service personnel' decreased by 50%.





The total number of lost working days from accident and attacks on Fire Service Personnel has decreased by 60% (a reduction of 794 days lost compared to the previous year).



## OUR COMMITMENTS

- Assign health and safety risks the same priority as other critical Service 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 and safety awareness training.
- Use, handle, store and transport of articles and substances safely.
- Provide an annual report on health and safety statistics and trends and continuously seek to improve upon performance.
- To ensure continual improvement, all ECFRS 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.



## **Current Resourcing**

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The Essex Fire Authority Health and Safety Lead Member was Cllr Ann Holland until August 2014 when Cllr Peter Wrexham was appointed to the position. Their contribution to the Health, Safety and Welfare Strategy Group over the year is greatly appreciated.

The Health and Safety department continues to be led by the Health and Safety Manager a uniformed Divisional Officer, who during 2014/15 has taken an active role as a member of the Strategic Delivery Board to ensure that health and safety is integrated in to day to day business at all levels of the organisation.

During the period of 2014/15 there have been various changes within the department including a change of personnel in the Senior Advisor Role. It is the department's objective to look at staff retention and continuity of the team over the next 12 month period.

During the 2015/16 period there will be a greater emphasis on expanding the core skills of the health and safety team, which will see increased diversity in respect of the internal training currently on offer in-house. Increased and dedicated training shall be undertaken to ensure the health and safety team can develop internal training courses whilst exploring opportunities to use our expertise and knowledge to external partners for income generation for the Service where possible.



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

**Chief Fire Officer  
Chief Executive**

Responsible for reporting to the Senior Management Board on the status of the safety management systems. Responsible for allocating resources to the Health and Safety department.

**Director of HR  
& OD**

The HSM has the responsibility for managing the activities (Strategic policy, planning and development) of each of the functions comprising of the Health and Safety department under the direction of the Director HR & OD. Designated 'Competent Person' in accordance with requirements under the Management of Health and Safety at work Regulations 1999.

**Health & Safety  
Manager  
(HSM)**

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

**Senior Health  
& Safety  
Advisor**

**Risk  
Assessment  
Advisor**

The Risk Assessment Advisor assists the HSM in the planning, development and implementation of Service health and safety policies, and is responsible for the management of the service risk assessment systems and procedures.

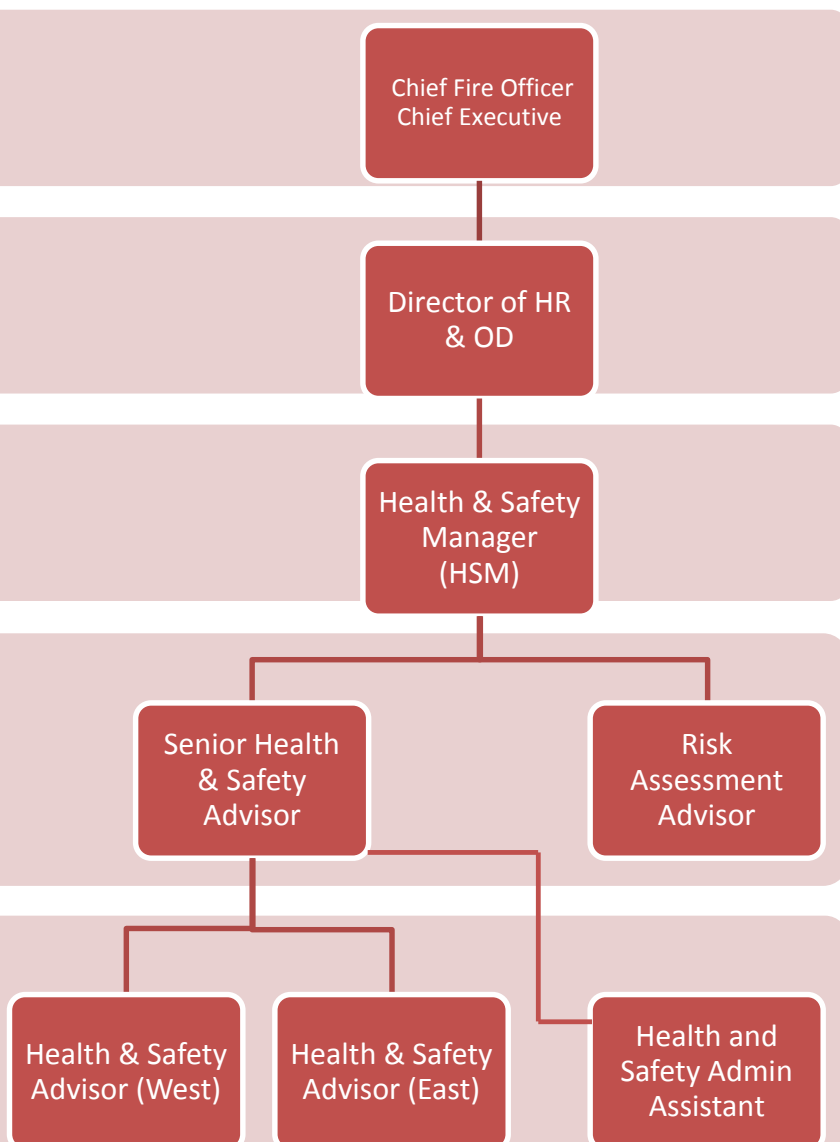
The Health and Safety Administration Assistant is responsible for managing the safety event electronic reporting system. Reviewing and monitoring progress of all accident investigation documentation as well as General Health and Safety department administration.

The Health and Safety Advisors (West and East) have functional and geographical responsibility to support station managers. Advise Service management on health and safety legislation/policy change and implementation. Have technical expertise to support the Service in achieving safety goals.

**Health & Safety  
Advisor (West)**

**Health & Safety  
Advisor (East)**

**Health and  
Safety Admin  
Assistant**





## 2014/15 Department Achievements

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In 2014/15 the Health and Safety department completed a number of achievements summarised below:

- A joint Health and Safety and Property Services department review for assessing contractors was carried out. This review was requested by the Significant Accident Investigation Board that was formed as a result of a release of asbestos at Leigh on Sea fire station. The report highlighted that there are three main processes in use that establish the competency of contractors, one which provides instruction and a process for audit and review. It was found that they provide a framework that is in keeping with current legislation and guidance. There was a number of notable good practices and then a list of 14 recommendations for improvement. Five joint recommendations were listed within the report and are being worked through to implementation stage.
- As part of the Workforce Transformation Programme and the Canvey Island Serious Accident Investigation Board, a review of the Technical Activities, Skills and Knowledge recording system (TASK) was carried out. This system is used to record Firefighter's operational training and one of the aims of the review was to ensure the content of TASK is realistic, achievable and relevant. The outcome is a new Firefighter Phase 3 TASK programme for 2014/15 that focuses on core skills and risk critical activities and, for the first time, includes a section on Station Local Risks. The Health and Safety section has been expanded to ensure that all personnel understand their own responsibilities for health and safety in the workplace. This will be further strengthened by the rollout of a Service-wide programme to deliver health and safety training relevant to their role for all personnel. This section has been produced in full collaboration with the Health and Safety department and Trade Union Safety Representatives.
- In April 2014 a letter was sent to the HSE following on from their visit to provide assurance that the Services Management of Operational Training was robust which included an overview of the TASK completion levels for the year end in April 2014. Also provided was an update of ongoing progress related to TASK, including changes made to TASK recording for 2014/15 and our future plans for 2015/16 onwards. The HSE were very satisfied with the progress and confirmed no further updates were necessary.
- At the HSWSG on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2015 it was agreed that there would be a merger between the HSWSG and the HSWCC meeting groups. The Health and Safety department carried out a review of the past agendas for the Health, Safety and Welfare Consultative Committee and it was noted that the items being raised had significantly reduced.



This is due to improved working relationships with the Trade Union Safety Representatives and health and safety issues raised being dealt with at the local Area Health, Safety and Welfare Forums or the Health, Safety and Welfare Functional Forum.





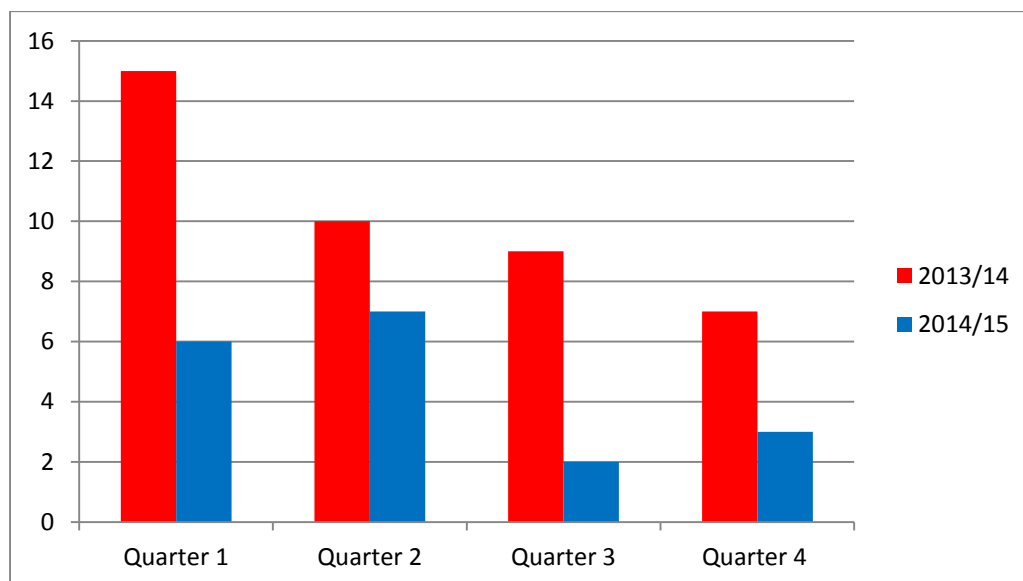
## Case Study: Slips, Trips and Falls Report

In early January 2014 the Health and Safety department issued a report reflecting on reported slip, trips and falls data captured over a five year period.

The report identified key areas for improvement across the service and instigated initiatives to raise awareness to the dangers of slips, trips and falls and their underlying causation.

The poster demonstrates one of the communication methods used to promulgate the risks associated with slip, trip and fall hazards.

During 2013/14 there was 41 slip, trip and falls reported incidents and during 2014/15 this had been reduced by more than half.



The resulting 51% decrease displayed in the 2014/15 reported incidents are testimony to the Health and Safety departments' commitment and focus on delivering awareness education throughout the Service.

Looking forward the Health and Safety department will continue to initiate and promote safety campaigns which will cover a broader range of health and safety topics during 2015/16.



## Case study: The “STAR” individual risk assessment/individual decision making model.

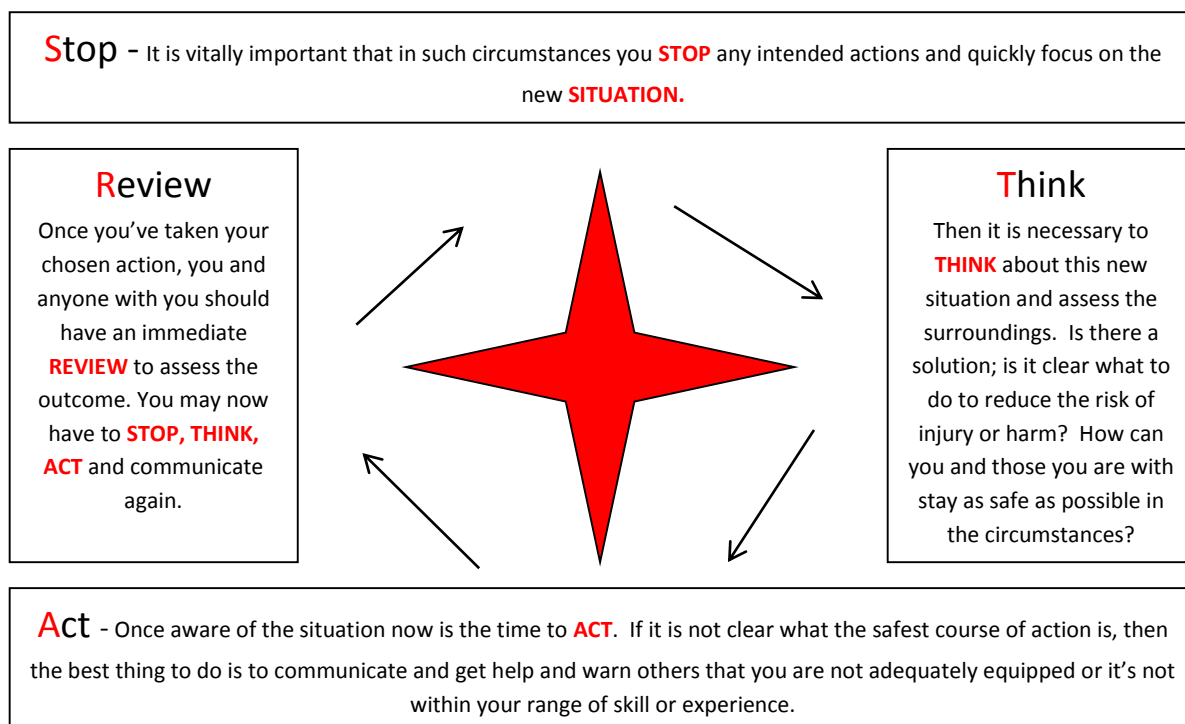
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This particular model has been adapted into the Service since April 2014. Although originally designed for operational Firefighters this helpful STAR model can be adapted and utilised by all staff within the Service.

Operational incidents are generally dealt with by firefighters working under the direct supervision of their line managers in line with incident command protocols. However, there may be occasions when firefighters are required to work remotely and make decisions for themselves. The Incident Commanders risk assessment alone will not be able to take account of all eventualities an individual may encounter in this situation.

Firefighters may need to make informed judgements regarding their safety whilst working remote from direct supervision. To support this, an individual decision making model has been published in the Health, Safety and Welfare Framework for the Operational Environment.

ECFRS have adopted the individual decision making model below. All firefighters can now use this when working remotely and there is a need for DECISION MAKING, particularly where there is little time in which to react. This will assist in the identification of hazards and assessment of risk in order to inform and influence the risk taking behaviour and action to take.



The “STAR” individual risk assessment/individual decision making model forms one of the four pillars of operational risk assessment:

- **PILLAR ONE** - Generic hazard and risk statements
  - **PILLAR TWO** - Strategic risk assessment
  - **PILLAR THREE** - Dynamic/incident risk assessment
  - **PILLAR FOUR** - Individual risk assessment
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## 2014/15 Health and Safety Department Objectives Review

Each year a health, safety and welfare strategy and action plan is produced. This document identifies and sets out the strategic direction of the Health and Safety department over the coming year. The health and safety departmental objectives for the year 2014/15 were as follows:

- **Demonstrate measurable improvement in audit and benchmarking scores**

There has been continual improvement of health and safety management system. We can also highlight the closure of the RoSPA Peer Audit Action Plan. On the 15 December 2010 a report was presented to the Audit, Governance & Review Committee setting out the background and methodology of the ROSPA QSA process. The recommendations were translated into an action plan which was monitored quarterly by the AGR Committee until it was closed at the AGR Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

- **Improved risk assessment processes and timeframe for completion**

We have a robust risk assessment system that remains in place and all identified significant high risk activities are addressed through OSHENS within timescale. In February 2015 the Health and Safety departments Risk Assessment Advisor delivered OSHENS Risk Assessment training to 15 Trade Union Health and Safety Representatives and two Health and Safety Advisors. Positive feedback was received following the Risk Assessment training day with all delegates taking part stating they felt more confident in using the OSHENS risk assessment module.

- **Increased safety event (Hazard) reporting and 360 feedback for defects reported following quarterly inspections**

Relevant hazards identified and recorded on OSHENS and corrective action implemented and carried out. In April 2014 the first of the Health and Safety departments' safety poster campaign was launched with the first poster relating to Hazard reporting.

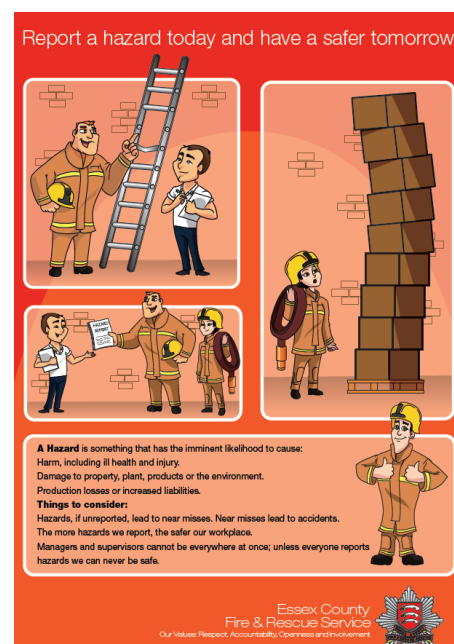
Looking at the Hazard reporting data for 2014/15 there has been a 2% increase on the previous year.

- **Ensure 100% of accident investigations are carried out within the Terms of reference timeframe**

All accident investigations conducted in a timely manner so that accident boards can act promptly and action plans can be implemented without undue delay.

Terms of reference deadlines adhered to. On 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014 at the Health, Safety and Welfare Strategy group it was communicated that all Historical outstanding Accident Investigation action points have now been closed.

This was through joint working with the Trade Union Health and Safety Representatives and the Health and Safety department.





- **Provide efficient safety event data reporting and monitoring system**

To ensure we provide an efficient safety data reporting system the Health and Safety department created an OSHENS survey which was sent out Service wide via Parade news on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2014. The survey received 88 responses out of 1600 employees which represents a 5.5% return.

34 additional comments related to their experience of interacting with OSHENS and many suggested improvements. The most positive responses found within the survey were those associated with the incident reporting module where 50% found the system easy to report safety events and 46.8% knew how to get technical support if required. 59% of the respondents also understood that reporting safety events was important to the organisation.



- **Increase staff retention**

Recruitment campaigns to attract suitable candidates and successful applicants want to stay with the Service. To reduce staff turnover by 20% each year for the next three years. All staff qualified as per job description and person specification.



## 2015/16 Health and Safety Department Objectives

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Each year a health, safety and welfare strategy and action plan is produced. This document identifies and sets out the strategic direction of the Health and Safety department over the coming year.

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

- To carry out all Accident Investigation within Terms of Reference timeframe on 100% of occasions.
- To review the current Accident Investigation process, identify and train accident investigators by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.
- To carry out a review of the CCTV Policy and Privacy Impact assessments by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.
- Incorporate vehicle accident reporting and investigation within OSHENS by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.
- Review of Welfare Facilities and Disability access for all Service Premises by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.
- To deliver Manual Handling training and Working Safely to 100% of all firefighters by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 in line with the Health and Safety department Training Plan.



### For further information please contact:

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**Doing more than we have ever done to make Essex safer**