

15 November 2017

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Purpose

1. To update the National Committee on Health and Safety performance of FCE.

Discussion

Data Report

	Near Misses Reported	Staff Accidents	Staff RIDDOR
2015/16	1682	80	4
2016/17	902	111	8
April-June	284	27	1
July-Sept	306	36	0
Oct	68	9	0

	Contractor Accidents	Member of Public Accidents	Member of Public RIDDOR
2015/16	1	830	3
2016/17	1	961	5
April-June	0	295	0
July-Sept	0	361	0
Oct	0	58	0

Information Report

2. Contact with both underground and overhead cables is amongst our most significant risks and another recent incident has once again highlighted that we still need to do much more work to ensure that our management systems are as robust as possible.

Underground cable Incidents	Overhead Cable Near Misses (struck goalposts, got too close to cables etc)	O/H Cables Incidents
8	23	5

3. Of the incidents concerning underground cables, those involved in the work were:

Contractors	Lease/Permissions	Employees
5	1	2

4. Of the incidents occurring with overhead cables, those involved in the incidents were:

Standing Sales	Direct Production	Recreation/Project Contractor
23	3	2

5. Of the five OHPL strikes, 2 were harvesting related, 2 were machinery haulage related and one was timber uplift related.
6. Of the OHPL near misses, activities involved were:

Timber Uplift	Harvesting	Civils/Other
11	9	3

7. An audit of the implementation of legal and best practice standards for the management of electricity was carried out in 2016.
8. Further work will be programmed into the HS&TT work plan to further raise the standards, highlight the issues and improve understanding and supervision around these work sites.

Conflict Situations

9. Some of the Forestry Commissions operations are highly sensitive and contentious in the public domain.
10. With the advent of social media, it is much easier for word to spread and for people to express their opinions on our activities, whether they have the correct facts about a situation or not. In some quarters, people simply do not want to listen to fact or reasoned arguments.
11. However, when comments become personal and threatening, it leaves our employees feeling particularly vulnerable and at high risk of developing wellbeing concerns, including stress, anxiety and even depression.
12. This in itself becomes a matter of compliance for the business, either in the way that employees feel that they have been treated or if they are deemed to be suffering from a mental health issue that requires them to be removed from normal duties (e.g. wildlife rangers carrying guns).
13. Work is required from all elements of the business to determine how best to support our employees and to try and educate those who use social media to promote their own version of the truth and where necessary to take legal action against them.
14. A working group has been established to review what actions are required and support visits are planned to staff currently being affected.

Chainsaw Operations

15. In the last three years (April 2015 to September 2017) a total of 28 unsafe chainsaw operations have been recorded. Of these recorded incidents 21 were by contractors and one by a third party who should not have been operating a chainsaw on FC land.
16. In light of the recent fatality in Wales and several in the arboriculture industry, chainsaw operations remain a high priority for the Health and Safety team and for Operations in England.

Lone Working Audit

17. The actions to close out the findings of the lone working audit have been agreed with the business. Further work will be done by the Senior Management team and Health and Safety Team to ensure robust implementation and ongoing maintenance of the system over the next year.
18. The risk to the business is still high, due to the nature of our work and the potential for the escalation system to fail if users do not check that the correct controls are in place every time they log on.

Future Work

19. The actions to close out the findings of the lone working audit have been agreed with the business. Further work will be done by the Senior Management team and Health and Safety Team to ensure robust implementation and ongoing maintenance of the system over the next year.
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FISA

21. The FISA Steering Group met in September. The main discussion was on safety issues due to 3 fatalities in the previous 3 months within the forestry sector. The Board recognized that this is unacceptable for any sector. FC continues to provide leadership within FISA and this collaboration is essential to continue building a greater awareness, understanding and action to address and drive improvement of health and safety within the sector.

Conclusion

22. A plan is being drawn up to address the above operational priorities through training and competence of operators and managers. This will focus initially on our own employees and improving supervision of contractors.
23. Other areas on which there will be a strong focus will be the provision of infrastructure and facilities for the public, wildlife management and employee wellbeing with a focus primarily on workplace stress and mental health.

Clare James
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November 2017