

# **Corporate Health, Safety & Emergency Planning**

**2012/2013**

## **Annual Report**

The Corporate Health and Safety and Emergency Planning teams work closely together providing each other with support and complimentary competencies.

Working in cooperation with external agencies they are an internal cross cutting resource which aspires to the prevention and protection of the Council's staff, other assets and the wider community and environment through the provision of a framework of strategic and operational plans, guidance and training which meet national standards.

This Annual Report provides statistical information on accidents and emergency events and summarises some of the activities during the past year to achieve these aims. Additionally it establishes a number of objectives for 2013/2014.

## **Accidents**

The total accidents reported have seen a 21% decrease on last year's reports as can be seen in the attached appendix 1. This marked improvement of results should be balanced against an approximately 8% fall in FTE employees across the Council.

Within the total reported, there has been a 15% decrease of accidents to employees, a 21% decrease to pupils and students, and a further 27% decrease to members of the public with a 12% decrease of accidents required to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive.

This is in part attributable to the work of the department with additional support from the Staff & Management at My Place, Parkfield and the Road Safety Team.

## **Audits**

The Health and Safety Executive carried out a follow up audit on our waste management operation and the contract monitoring arrangements undertaken with TOR2 in March. The audit was also an inspection of the plant, recycling operation and safe working practices on the rounds.

The results of the audit were again generally positive however there are some additional improvements to be developed and implemented which are currently being investigated by Tor2 management with input from us.

See HSE letter appendix 3.

## **Training**

The Health and Safety team delivered 26 corporate training events with 186 delegates attending from within the Council and our schools.

The team also delivered a further 13 bespoke awareness briefings to schools with 221 delegates attending.

Cabinet Member Champions were also in attendance at the Annual Health and Safety Forum and Elected Member Response Training.

The I-learn system is being continually improved with 5 mandatory Health and Safety courses available and further ones being added in the forthcoming year. To date over 2400 on line health and safety courses have been completed.

The Health and Safety team were granted a licence to run the First Aid at Work course by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health; the first course will be run later this year.

Changes and reductions of the admin support within the Health and Safety team will potentially affect the number of face to face courses available in the forthcoming year with only essential courses being available, it is expected that any gaps will be backfilled with an increase in the number of I-Learn modules being developed.

## **Stress**

There were 42 incidents of stress related illness reported in the last year which is a 7% increase on the previous year. Given the structural changes undertaken and uncertainty on the future it is not unexpected. It should be noted that school reports are included in this figure and not all of the incidents will be considered as work related. Where referrals are made action is taken to ensure the necessary support and assistance is provided.

## **Policy**

The Corporate Health and Safety policy is due for revision in August 2013; this will be undertaken when the new Executive Director for Operations and Finance is appointed.

The Accident & Incident Investigation & Reporting policy and Guidance documents have been revised and published.

## **Radon**

Following on from the Radon reduction works carried out last year on the lower ground floor of the town hall, further reassurance testing has been carried out to ensure the measures adopted were successful. The results published by the Health Protection Agency show a reduction of Radon gas below the action levels. The results are available to be viewed at <http://insight/130424radonresults.pdf>

## **Continued Professional Development**

The Health and Safety team undertakes professional development training to ensure that their knowledge and understanding of the legal and scientific requirements of health are maintained at current standards.

Both members of the team have been listed within the Occupational Safety and Health Consultants Register (OSHCR).

## **Emergency Planning**

### **Training**

The Emergency Planning team carried out Emergency Response training with SLT with further briefings to individual Senior Managers. Council staff also attended a Civil Contingencies Seminar and Strategic Managers attended additional briefings on Gold and Silver Command Operations with a further strategic workshop on the integration of Public Health being planned in the New Year.

### **Emergency Plans**

Multi Agency Emergency Flood plans covering Torquay, Paignton and Brixham have been written in consultation with Council service areas and other emergency responders. The plans currently reside with the Local Resilience Forum and form part of the Councils strategy for mitigating the impact of major flood events.

### **Notable Events**

There were a number of notable events during the past year where the Emergency Planning team has had a role in assessing and coordinating the Council's response to the incident.

These included:

- Fire in Fore Street, Brixham May 2012
- Unexploded ordnance Goodrington July 2012
- Unexploded ordinance Preston Sands August 2012
- Fire aboard Ms Flaminias August 2<sup>nd</sup> September 26 2012
- Severe Weather Events throughout the year
- Landslide Warren Road November 2012
- Co-ordinated business continuity for Christmas shut down December 2012
- Landslide Vane Hill December 2012
- Endangered Tug Christos 22 and Sinking of MV Emstrom January 2013
- Arrests in Lymington Road under the Terrorism Act, January 2012
- Explosion and evacuation Steartfield Road March 2013

### **Future strategy**

During the forthcoming year the health and safety and emergency planning teams will:

- Undertake a review of the corporate training requirements with a view to achieving a balance between face to face and on line training to minimise cost and increase effectiveness of health and safety training across the Councils area of responsibility.
- As a priority ensure the Council's online accident reporting system is completed and implemented to all departments and schools within the councils area of responsibility with the provision of necessary training.

- Review the emergency response plans to enable a seamless response from operational to strategic management of emergency events within the council's area of responsibility.
- Review the Council's training and exercise programme to take into account organisational changes and the Council's new Public Health responsibilities.
- Co-ordinate a review of Council's corporate critical functions with the aim of developing and implementing effective business continuity plans which mitigate the impact of losing resources (e.g buildings, staff, IT) over a period of up to two weeks.
- Develop, consult and publish policies and guidance on managing driving at work and managing working in partnership.

	<b>Total Accidents 2004 to 2012</b>								
	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Q1</b>	527	489	278	282	268	336	272	280	<b>330</b>
<b>Q2</b>	454	436	203	204	224	286	235	241	<b>241</b>
<b>Q3</b>	586	389	238	332	290	339	267	347	<b>286</b>
<b>Q4</b>	512	200	306	340	284	386	323	435	<b>172</b>
<b>Total</b>	2079	1514	1025	1158	1075	1347	1100	1303	<b>1029↓</b>
	<b>Accidents by Person Specification</b>								
<b>Employees</b>	592	560	565	537	415	457	385	387	<b>328</b>
<b>Contractors</b>	28	14	4	1	5	4	4	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Pupils</b>	618	450	387	538	565	546	495	610	<b>479</b>
<b>MOP</b>	812	480	64	57	85	160	203	294	<b>215</b>
<b>Property</b>	29	10	5	25	5	180	13	12	<b>7</b>
<b>Total</b>	2079	1514	1025	1158	1075	1347	1100	1303	<b>1029↓</b>
	<b>Accidents reported to the Health and Safety Executive</b>								
<b>Employees</b>	10	34	23	24	17	20	10	8	<b>15</b>
<b>Contractors</b>	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils</b>	5	25	18	17	35	12	9	3	<b>0</b>
<b>MOP</b>	1	0	0	1	3	2	3	6	<b>0</b>
<b>Property</b>	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	16	62	41	42	56	34	25	17	<b>15↓</b>

I - Learn	Business Unit	Details of courses completed				
		Asbestos	Back Safety	Fire Safety	First Aid	Stress Awareness
<b>Adult Services &amp; Resources</b>	<b>Adult Services</b>	2	2	2	2	1
	<b>Commercial Services</b>	12	12	13	13	11
	<b>Communications</b>	5	5	5	5	5
	<b>Supporting People</b>	3	5	7	7	7
	<b>Information Services</b>	47	48	41	46	44
	<b>Governance</b>	12	12	11	11	10
<b>Children's Services</b>	<b>Commissioning</b>	89	89	78	99	85
	<b>Locality Services</b>	24	29	22	28	18
	<b>Safeguarding &amp; Wellbeing</b>	29	33	24	30	23
	<b>School Improvement</b>	4	4	4	4	2
<b>Place &amp; Resources</b>	<b>TDA</b>	9	9	5	9	6
	<b>Business Services</b>	32	30	25	28	25
	<b>Finance</b>	40	33	29	32	26
	<b>Harbour Authority</b>	2	2	1	2	2
	<b>Residents &amp; Visitors</b>	120	123	118	116	112
	<b>Spatial Planning</b>	9	11	9	8	10
<b>Public Health</b>	<b>Community Safety</b>	66	69	60	73	59
	<b>Public Health</b>	2	2	2	2	2
<b>Total health and safety courses</b>		<b>507</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>448</b>



Health and Safety  
Executive

Health and Safety Manager  
Torbay Council  
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Reference 4277485

For the attention of Colin de Jongh

Date 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013

Dear Colin

Field Operations Directorate

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HM Principal Inspector of Health  
and Safety  
Paula Johnson

RECEIVED  
10 MAY 2013

#### HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK ETC. ACT 1974

I refer to my visit of 6<sup>th</sup> March 2013 when I was accompanied by my colleague Simon Hubbard. This visit was a 12 month follow up to the visits made in March 2012 as part of HSE's targeted intervention with local authorities who procure and manage municipal waste and recycling services. I apologise for the delay in providing this feedback but I wanted to check some of the standards with our waste sector.

I would like to thank everyone who helped to arrange the inspection and everyone who made time to speak with me on the day. It was not possible to see everything during the inspection and as such, this letter should not be considered to be an exhaustive list of issues.

Overall, I felt that good progress had been made in relation to the issues raised at the initial inspection visit, particularly in relation to monitoring, supervision and audit both by TOR2 and Torbay Council. There were however a couple of areas where some further work is needed:

#### Manual Handling and Musculoskeletal Disorders

During the visit, we observed operatives carrying out frequent loading of waste above shoulder height and in some cases using dynamic movements. This was due to the height of some of the apertures on the recycling trucks. As a result of this, operatives are at risk of both cumulative injury or ill health and one-off manual handling injuries.

As this is essentially a vehicle design issue and one which I have observed elsewhere, I have raised my concerns with our waste sector. This is apparently an issue that is being raised centrally with manufacturers in the hope that future vehicle designs will be more ergonomically friendly. As there is little that can be done about vehicles which are already in use, the management of manual handling / musculoskeletal disorders should be as robust as possible:

- Where vehicles are fitted with lowering suspension, this should be used as much as possible and crews should be encouraged to do so even where this may add time to their rounds. We observed at least one crew who were not using this facility.
  - Consideration should be given to how waste is loaded on to the vehicles with higher apertures being reserved for lighter items where possible.
  - Vehicles should not be over filled as this means that there is less room for loading and there is a tendency to try and cram it all in.
  - We observed one crew member pulling 2 bins to a refuse vehicle. Another lifted a box and tipped it into the recycling vehicle rather than clipping it on and loading the waste by hand. Both of these individuals were up to date with their manual handling training. Poor practice like this should be challenged as part of the routine monitoring and supervision of the service.
  - It was clear that new vehicles were being trialled with a view to future purchases. Loading and manual handling should form part of the assessment and decision making process when new vehicles are chosen.
- X Continue to challenge poor practice by householders and ensure that operatives continue to be supported if they feel that something is too risky for them to collect.
- Ensure that decisions on manning levels (some rounds were crewed by a driver and one loader) take manual handling into account and that there are appropriate numbers of staff on a round to do the necessary work. Staff on crews with lower numbers should be consulted to see if they do find these rounds more fatiguing (drivers in particular may be at higher risk of injury as they will be getting in and out of their cab more often).

#### Noise reduction

At present, there is no damping fitted to the chutes or stillages on the recycling trucks to reduce the amount of noise created by the loading of glass. However, consideration has clearly been given as to how this may be done. During the visit, we were shown a modification to one of the glass stillages which had been fitted with rubber flaps. As the actual execution of this was incorrect, it is clear that this is a work in progress. However if a successful solution is found, please share it with us so that wider industry can benefit.

In the meantime, consideration should be given to the provision and use of hearing protection where daily personal exposure exceeds 85dB. The working environment during kerbside collection presents a number of risks to safety, including working around moving vehicles and working on the public highway. The use of personal hearing protection has the potential to increase these risks by masking important sounds, and by inducing a sense of isolation from the general working environment. It is therefore necessary to consider these issues, both when selecting personal hearing protection and devising systems of work:

- Provide systems of work to ensure that hearing protection is only worn during noisy activities and is not worn when it is not needed.
- Ensure that high risk roads are not crossed by operatives when collecting waste – i.e. single sided collection.

Where it is not possible to avoid crossing designated roads, you can minimise additional risks from the use of personal hearing protection by considering and implementing, as appropriate, the following options:

- introduce a system of work that includes a requirement to remove hearing protection prior to attempting to cross a road;



- provide 'level-dependent' (sometimes called 'amplitude-sensitive') hearing protectors which are designed to protect against hazardous noise while permitting quieter sounds to be relayed to the wearer in the absence of high noise levels;
- provide 'flat frequency response' hearing protectors which can, in some situations, improve the ability of wearers to hear certain sounds such as speech communication, warning signals and other informative sounds;
- in conjunction with the system of work above, provide hearing protectors that are simple to remove and replace as required, for example canal caps or earmuffs.

#### **Handwashing**

Some of the older vehicles did not have handwashing facilities and crews were relying on wipes and creams. On one truck where there was a sink, operatives said that they only used it in cases of spillage. See my previous letter for HSE's position on this.

You may also wish to distribute the following publication to staff which is available in an easy to carry format - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg415.pdf>

Please now provide me with a detailed time scaled action plan of how you have and will be continuing to deal with the points raised by this letter.

In order for me to meet with my responsibilities under Section 28(8) of Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, please ensure that a copy of this letter is provided to your health and safety representatives and employees.

I have arranged for copies of the letter to be sent to both Torbay Council and TOR2 Ltd. Some of the actions required are for Torbay Council to take forward in its role as client and other actions should be implemented by TOR2. Please use your existing liaison arrangements to discuss my letter and to agree a way forward that works for both parties. I would be happy to receive a joint response or for each party to contact me separately, whichever is most convenient. For ease, I have sent the letters to the Health and Safety leads for each organisation but please ensure that all relevant parties have sight of it.

I hope that this has been helpful but please let me know if you have any questions or comments.



**Emma O'Hara**  
**HM Inspector of Health and Safety**  
Public Services Group