

Health, Safety & Welfare – Annual Report 2015-2016

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Purpose of the Report

In order to keep Members informed of health, safety and welfare issues relevant to South Somerset District Council activities and undertakings, an annual report is presented to the Audit Committee.

This report covers the period from March 2015 – April 2016.

The report contains an overview of health and safety matters and /or concerns, details of any new or impending Health & Safety legislation and comments on other health, safety or welfare matters that may have some impact on Council activities.

Recommendation

(1) That member's note and comment on the report.

Health & Safety Management

Following the last report to Member's I am pleased to be able to report that there has been significant progress in a number of areas of health & safety management.

Safety Panel

In 2015 the Safety Panel was relaunched, with members from all services taking an active part. The panel now looks in more depth at specific issues in a 'spotlight' section; recent items have included Lone Working, Working at Height & Driving at Work. The standing items include accidents and incidents, legislation changes, recent prosecutions & fire risk matters. Future Safety Panel meetings will spotlight Service risk assessments and provide support and advice to Managers.

Health & Safety Management System

The TEN Health & Safety Management System is regularly used by all services to enter and update risk assessments and to enter incident reports. There are now over 1000 operational risk assessments spread across the Councils services, entered onto the system. There are also a significant number of COSHH assessments that have been entered onto the system.

Lone Working Audit Report

Recently SWAP has carried out an audit on the Councils Lone Working arrangements. Several recommendations were made that have been agreed. The Civil Contingencies manager will give a verbal update to Members on progress at the meeting.

Annual Health & Safety Inspection's

All Council Offices have been inspected this year, and Property services have an action plan of works or modifications that are required.

Accidents Statistics

Period covered March 2015 – April 2016

Service	No of Reported Accidents	Days Lost	Comments
Streetscene	18	81.5	Mainly minor accidents with two injuries that were reported under RIDDOR
Building Control	1	0	One minor accident
Economic Development	3	2	All minor incidents
Crematorium	1	0	Minor Accident
Revenues & Benefits	9	TBA	All one person with a continuing problem*
Countryside	1	-	Minor accident
Arts & Entertainment	1	-	Minor accidents
Property & Engineering	5	-	Minor accidents
Licensing	2	0	Minor Accidents
Total	42	83.5	

Incident Statistics

Period covered March 2015 – April 2016

The Civil Contingencies Manager will give a verbal update on the incident statistics at the meeting.

Health & Safety Training

Funds are available for Health & Safety training and bids for training are made to the Safety Panel for approval. A number of training events have been arranged for services in the past year, these include working at height for all services and working in water for Streetscene and other staff who work in flooded areas. In the coming weeks Streetscene staff will also be taking part in specific driving in water training that has been arranged by the Streetscene Manager as part of a review of the Councils response to flooding incidents.

Lone working workshops have been held for all services and specific workshops for IT & Development Control were held to assist those services with their Risk Assessments.

Priorities for 2016 - 17

- Review all Health & Safety policies
- Manage the Health & Safety system
- Annual Health & Safety Inspection of all Council Offices
- Review Case Law and how that may affect Council operations
- Manage & Chair Safety Panel

Recent Cases:

Council road sweeper kills biker

Sevenoaks District Council pleaded guilty to safety failings after a member of the public was killed when he collided with a road sweeper.

On 13 September 2010, a council road sweeper lorry was cleaning the outside of a dual-lane slip road when Derek McCulloch, 58, drove into the back of the sweeper on his motorbike.

Maidstone Crown Court heard the road sweeper had been travelling approximately four mph and there was a bend in the road which likely prevented the motorcyclist from seeing the road sweeper. Mr McCulloch was pronounced dead at the scene.

Despite the road sweeper having flashing beacons and a 360 sign on the back (a big arrow that indicates vehicles to pass by) there should have been significantly more controls in place for sweeping a stretch of road like this.

A Health and Safety Executive investigation found there was no road specific risk assessment in place, just a generic one covering all road sweeping done by Sevenoaks District Council. This did not identify all suitable control measures needed for sweeping this dual-lane slip road.

Sevenoaks District Council, was fined £40,000 in total after pleading guilty to breaching sections 2(1) (£10,000) and 3(1) (£30,000) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and ordered to pay £32,000 in costs.

HSE Inspector Guy Widdowson said: "Competent risk assessments are essential when carrying out any significant task. These risk assessments need to identify the appropriate controls and such controls need to be implemented and checked to ensure they remain suitable and sufficient. Relevant industry guidance is there to be viewed when deciding what controls are needed.

"This incident shows how important it is for local councils, and other companies, to properly assess the risk of work tasks. If the task had been properly risk assessed, planned and suitable controls used Mr McCulloch would not have been killed. This is truly a tragic case and was entirely preventable."

Source: HSE Website

Date: 15 December 2015

Recycling firm fined £200,000 after employee struck by vehicle

A national recycling firm was fined after an employee was struck by a 7.5 tonne telehandler.

Preston Crown Court heard Sita UK Limited failed to provide adequate segregation between pedestrians and moving vehicles at a waste transfer station in Darwen, Lancashire.

As an employee walked across an outside plastics hand sorting area, he passed behind a stationary telehandler. The telehandler began to reverse and struck the worker who was

knocked to the ground and then run over by the rear wheel of the vehicle. His resulting injuries caused him to be hospitalised for two months.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) prosecuting told the Court the company had identified the risks but failed to put in place suitable controls to stop people being hit by vehicles.

HSE inspector Stuart Kitchingman said after the hearing: "Employers need to look carefully at their workplaces regularly to make sure that pedestrian routes are clearly marked and physically separated from vehicle routes wherever possible.

"The employee could have easily been killed and still has severe mobility problems as a result of the accident. He is unlikely to be able to work in the near future."

Sita UK Limited of Grenfell Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and was fined £200,000 with £11,998 costs

Source: HSE Website

Date: 13 October 2015

No risk assessment in South West Water drowning


No risk assessment was done for an operation which may have led to the death of a man at a Cornish sewage treatment plant, an inquest has heard.

Robert Geach fell into a filtration tank at the Falmouth Water Treatment Works in December 2013.

A colleague told the hearing he was not aware of any risk assessment linked to Mr Geach's job at the time, which was unblocking filters above the tank.

The inquest in Truro heard the South West Water employee drowned.

The hearing was told the maintenance procedure Mr Geach was carrying out involved the opening of a safety hatch.

 But when questioned by legal counsel for the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), a colleague of Mr Geach said he was not aware of any risk assessment being undertaken.

South West Water colleague Peter Colley said workers had been given personal alarms since Mr Geach's death.

He told the inquest that Mr Geach was unblocking a sand filter, which involved removing metal grating and operating valves positioned above the water in the tank.

Mr Colley said the gratings were now screwed down and a much smaller hatch installed to access the valves.

The inquest previously heard from Mr Geach's widow Sylvia who criticised South West Water's lone worker policy.

Source: BBC News

10 November 2015