

North York Moors National Park Authority Finance, Risk, Audit and Standards Committee

27 August 2019

Health and Safety

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update Members regarding Health and Safety activity so far during 2019/20 and particularly on progress made on the Health and Safety work programme.

2. Background

- 2.1 At the March NPA meeting, Members agreed the health and safety work programme for the coming year. The purpose of the regular papers to this Committee is to update Members on progress made on the work programme, review accident/near miss information and to raise other health and safety matters

3. Accidents and Near Misses 2019/20

- 3.1 At the time of writing this report a total of 12 accidents to staff/volunteers have been reported since 1 April. The equivalent figure in 2018 was also 12. No lost time has been recorded as a result and all accidents were minor in their nature, involving slips or trips. A further 3 minor accidents involving either visitors or children on organised school activities were also recorded. All injuries were minor.
- 3.2 During the same period, 4 near misses were reported. All have been followed up and appropriate action taken as a result.
- 3.3 One near miss merits further reporting. The Northern Apprentice team used a boat to transport lengths of willow across Scaling Dam to their work site. This activity had been undertaken perfectly safely on a number of previous occasions and was fully risk assessed. The boat was hired and operated by a RYA qualified operator provided by Scaling Dam Sailing Club. During the course of the activity being undertaken the wind speed increased, making the water on the dam very choppy. This resulted in the boat taking on water and an apprentice, who was accompanying the boat operator, was told to jump out of the boat. Fortunately this occurred in relatively shallow water and the apprentice was able to make his way safely to shore. The Head of Recreation and Ranger Service investigated and concluded that there was considerable fault on the part of the boat operator who will not be used again. An alternative method of loading materials onto the boat may have helped avoid the incident as well.
- 3.4 It was reported to the Health and Safety Group that there was some concern from one of the volunteer groups, which comprises of mainly older, experienced volunteers, that they shouldn't report accidents or near misses. They were worried that if their group was seen to have a number of incidents, then Officers might take the view that the group should be disbanded. This was discussed at some length and the following points will be fed back to the group concerned;

- Task Day Leaders have an obligation to make sure that any health and safety incidents which occur on their tasks are properly reported as per the Authority's established practice. TDLs have been reminded of this.
- There is no intention whatsoever to stop groups volunteering based on the age of those taking part.
- If a particular group appears to be experiencing a disproportionate number of accidents, the Head of Volunteering will speak to them and, if necessary, make arrangements to find excellent tasks that are better suited to their capabilities.

4. Health and Safety Training

- 4.1 At the last meeting of the National Park Authority, a member asked for an update explaining how health and safety training is organised and managed. This is a subject which the Health and Safety Group discusses on a regular basis and has agreed refresher time periods.
- 4.2 There is no formal legislation governing how often health and safety training should be undertaken or refreshed. Employers are obliged to provide adequate training and the law leaves it up to each employer to determine what level of training is appropriate for their activities.
- 4.3 A member of staff working with the Head of Corporate Services has specific responsibility for overseeing the organisation of health and safety training and record keeping. They also ensure that staff undertake refresher training in accordance with the timescales in the table below. Individual members of staff have their own personal responsibility to ensure that their training is up to date as well.

Training Refresher Periods

Health and Safety	5 years
Water Safety Training	2 years
Manual Handling	3 years
First Aid	3 years
MiDAS (Minibus driver training)	4 years
Chainsaw	3 years
Brush Cutter	5 years
ATV	3 years
Risk Assessment	5 years
Fire Warden	3 years
Site Safety	5 years
Pesticide	5 years
Safe Driver	10 years
Winch	3 years
Mini-Digger	3 years
Trees Assessment	5 years
COSHH	5 years
Mental Health First Aid	3 years
Child Protection Training	3 years
Disclosure and Barring Service checks	5 years

- 4.4 The time periods in the table were agreed by the health and safety group in 2018 and will be reviewed again later in 2019.

5. Progress on the 2019/20 Health and Safety Action Plan

5.1 The focus of work for the Health and Safety Group each year is the Health and Safety Action Plan approved by Members. Please see below for a summary of progress made to date;

- Developing a consistent approach to driver training with an accompanying policy;

A trial tracking system was fitted to one of the pool cars to provide data about driver safety with regard to speed, braking and cornering. The system proved to need considerable administrative input to transfer the data to multiple drives of the same vehicle and Officers took the view that the benefits did not outweigh the costs. An alternative one to one approach to driver training is being adopted instead.

- Ensuring that lifting and moving training is more appropriate and effective;

Consideration is being given to training staff to be able to deliver this in-house as a way of ensuring that training is delivered effectively and quickly. Advice is also being sought from other National Park Authorities regarding the way in which they deliver this activity.

- Developing a formal register of relevant health and safety legislation and stating (briefly) how the Authority is complying with it;

Information has been gathered for this piece of work and Officers anticipate a draft being ready for members to consider at FRASC in November..

- Organising appropriate health and safety refresher training for members;

Included in the Members' training programme for 2019/20 and will form part of the training day in October.

- Consider updating the format used for risk assessments to make them more effective and more easily usable;

New format has been agreed and this is being rolled out as risk assessments are reviewed.

- Continue to focus on developing health and safety training for those who lead volunteers.

Staff in the Volunteering Team continue to undertake supportive spot checking of task day leaders (staff and volunteers) and walk leaders to ensure that safety briefings are undertaken to the required. Task day leader training and refreshers continues to emphasise the health and safety aspects of the role.

6. Health and Safety Policy

6.1 The revised Health and Safety Policy was approved by the Authority at the end of June and it has been distributed to staff (including all out posted staff) electronically with the requirement to acknowledge that the document has been read.

6.2 The policy has been distributed to members in the same way.

6.3 Volunteers have been treated slightly differently as follows;

- Task Day Leaders (mentioned specifically in the policy) have been sent a copy electronically with the requirement to confirm that they have read it;
- The policy is now on the front page of My Volunteering with a requirement that all volunteers have to tick a box to confirm that they have read it;
- The small number of longer serving volunteers who do not use My Volunteering have been sent a copy individually;
- Additional publicity about the revised policy and its implications for volunteers will be published in the next edition of Involved.

6.4 Officers will chase, as appropriate, to ensure that acknowledgements are received.

7. Other Health and Safety Matters

7.1 A review of the effectiveness of the Mental Health first aid training is being undertaken to see how it has developed skills within the Authority and to try to assess how many colleagues have been assisted as a result of the training.

7.2 The summer health and safety bulletin has been prepared and circulated to staff, including a wide variety of reminders and updates on health and safety issues.

7.3 Advice has been given to staff regarding ticks. This includes guidance on the clothing that should be worn, how to inspect for ticks, how to safely remove them and when to seek medical guidance. Advice for the public is also available at the Visitor Centres and on the Authority's website.

8. Financial and Staffing Implications

8.1 There are no significant additional financial or staff issues related to the contents of this report. Budgetary provision is sufficient to pay for all appropriate Health and Safety training and personal protective equipment.

9. Recommendation

9.1 That Members;

- Note the work undertaken since the May FRASC on health and safety

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Background documents to this report

File ref.

NPA Reports, December 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019

FRASC Reports 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019