

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY REVIEW 2003/4

Employees

During the period April 1st 2003 to March 31st 2004, there were 25 accident book entries involving employees. None of the reported accidents could be classed as serious i.e. fell within the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) definition of a major injury, or led to absence from work for more than 3 days excluding the day on which the accident occurred. The number of entries for the previous twelve months was 41.

Under the principal causative headings, the breakdown in accident type were as follows (the figures for 2002/3 are in brackets):

Bruising	– 7 (17)
Minor cuts	– 5 (8)
Trips / slips	– 5 (7)
Minor assault	– 4 (3)
Musculoskeletal	– 4 (1)

Non Employees

There were 12 entries for the period in question of which 8 were at the Meadowside Centre and can be described as sports related injuries and 3 were in the Guildhall. Accident records for the River Park Leisure Centre are forwarded on a monthly basis to the Recreation Officer in Community Services. As this facility is not directly managed by the Council, unlike the Meadowside Centre, these figures are not included.

The number of entries for the previous 12 months was 34 of which 24 were sport related injuries at Meadowside and 5 were in the Guildhall.

Reportable Accidents

There were three accidents that were notified to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). All three involved members of the public who subsequently required hospital treatment. The figure for reportable accidents for the previous 12 month period was also 3.

Reported Incidents (Verbal abuse / threats)

There were 31 recorded incidents where an employee was threatened or subjected to verbal abuse and the perpetrator's home address could be identified and he / she resided in the district. In addition there were 9 recorded incidents involving parking attendants, two of which were classed as serious assaults. The corresponding figures for 2002/3 were 6 and 4 respectively.

Safety related training

During the period April 1st 2003 and March 31st 2004 the following safety training courses were run:

- Corporate induction training – 3 health and safety modules.
- Manual handling – 4 half day courses.

- Asbestos awareness – 6 half day briefings for staff and contractors.
- Display Screen Equipment assessment co-ordinators – 3 one day courses.
- Dealing with aggressive customers – 2 one day courses.
- Training day for museum staff / visitor assistants.
- Risk assessment training for departmental assessors – 1 one day course.
- Drug awareness – half day briefing.
- Specialist training for sheltered housing scheme managers, care assistants and mobile wardens in dealing with the elderly and tenants with mental health problems – 3 one day courses.
- Stress management – 2 briefings for managers.

Conclusion

Winchester City Council has a low accident rate as would be expected for an authority that does not have a Direct Services Organisation and has contracted out the management of the principal leisure centre. The introduction of a revised format for the accident book in January 2004 should improve performance monitoring as all accident book entries will now be entered on a separate page and must be forwarded to the Health and Safety Officer on completion. This change was in response to data protection issues.

Training

Health and safety training is targeted at the principal risk areas such as manual handling and dealing with potentially aggressive customers and as such these courses are run on at least an annual basis to pick up newly appointed staff and to provide refresher training as required. Other health and safety courses are run on an ad hoc basis.

Accident trends

Musculoskeletal injuries / conditions are normally the result of inappropriate manual handling techniques or poor posture and working practices brought about by unsuitable furniture and poorly set up workstations. Musculoskeletal injuries are second only to slips, trips and falls as the biggest cause of absence due to physical injury. The self assessment programme during the period in question, co-ordinated by trained departmental assessors should resolve most of the display screen equipment workstation issues, with new employees being picked up as part of the induction process.

It should be noted that there has been a steady increase in the number of threatening incidents, particularly in relation to on street parking enforcement that led to two serious assaults. Specialist training in dealing with potentially aggressive customers has in the past been provided for parking attendants.

Benchmarking

The Council does not currently benchmark accident and ill health statistics against other authorities, primarily because identifying authorities with a similar service profile and reporting criteria is not a straightforward exercise. The Hampshire Safety Officers' Group has set up a working party to review this topic and South East Employers may take on a co-ordinating role.