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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

The HSE Board

Improving HSE's Health and Safety Performance

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Cleared by Justin McCracken on 30 September 2004

Issue

1. The number of Health and Safety incidents involving HSE staff reported in the first six months of this financial year is significantly higher than in the previous period and action needs to be taken to improve our performance and reduce the number of future incidents.

Timing

2. Urgent, for discussion at the 6th October Board Meeting.

Recommendation

3. That the Board
   a) agrees to the three pronged response set out below at paragraph 10
   b) agrees to use the new internal communication channels to raise awareness of this issue
   c) agrees to give a personal lead on these issues by their own involvement in the management cascade process and in activities during the European week of Health and Safety
   d) asks the Corporate Health and Safety Committee to develop a detailed programme of actions to support this approach.

Background

4. HSE has made good progress in its own internal management of Health and Safety in recent years. This was underlined by the Board setting and the organisation achieving three targets for Health and Safety improvement last year.

5. New targets (based on the number of incidents reported) were set for further improvements this year (based on the number of incidents reported) but progress in the first half year has been very disappointing.

6. The targets and the number of incidents so far reported are at annex a. The number of RIDDOR reportable incidents has been so high in the first half of the year that we have already missed our annual target for reducing the number of such incidents. The number of DSE related incidents and slips and trips are also clearly above the levels needed to achieve our annual target.

7. Analysis of the causes of incidents so far this year shows that there have been a high number of manual handling incidents, see annex 2.

Argument

8. The increase in the number of incidents this year is clearly a cause for concern and action needs to be taken both to understand better the underlying reasons for the increase and to deal with the known causes.

9. There are many actions already underway across HSE to improve our Health and Safety performance but the current situation is sufficiently serious to warrant a focused programme of action. If we move quickly we can take advantage of the forthcoming European week of Health and Safety (18th-22nd October) as a natural focus for this work.

10. The Board is asked to support a three pronged programme of actions;
    1. To raise awareness of the current Health and Safety performance within HSE and the important contribution which each member of staff can make to improving it.
    2. To highlight our particularly poor performance on manual handling, the risks associated with it and how they should be dealt with.
    3. To sharpen our response to Health and Safety incidents (this should cover the reporting of incidents, the pastoral care for the injured person, the investigation of incidents and the follow up of actions.)

11. The recently introduced communication channels within HSE of management cascade and e-express lend themselves well both to informing staff of the situation and crucially seeking feedback from staff about their ideas on what needs to be done to improve our performance. Health and Safety Unit will work with the Communications Directorate to agree how we best use these channels to support this initiative.

Consultation

12. The figures for the first six months of the year have only just become available so there has not been time for extended consultation. Informal consultation has taken place

with the corporate Health and Safety Committee Members, Health and Safety Unit and the Communications Directorate. Following the Board discussion more detailed involvement of both corporate Health and Safety committee and Communications Directorate are planned.

Presentation

13. It is of paramount importance that HSE as both Health and Safety Regulator and aspiring exemplar employer is seen by its internal and external stakeholders to respond positively and vigorously to reverse a short term downward trend in our health and safety performance.

Costs and Benefits

14. Time has not allowed a cost benefit analysis of the proposed programme to be conducted yet, however HSE's research shows that managing health and safety effectively is a sound business proposition so we can be confident that a properly targeted programme of work will provide a positive return for the organisation.

Action

15. The Board
    a) agrees to the three pronged response set out above
    b) agrees to use the new internal communication channels to raise awareness of this issue
    c) agrees to give a personal lead on these issues by their own involvement in the management cascade process and in activities during the European week of Health and Safety
    e) asks the Corporate Health and Safety Committee to develop a detailed programme of actions to support this approach.