

<b>Health and Safety Executive Board Paper</b>		<b>HSE/05/046</b>	
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	7 September 2005	<b>FOI Status:</b>	Fully open
<b>Type of Paper:</b>	Misc	<b>Paper File Ref:</b>	
<b>Exemptions:</b>	Post meeting		

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE**

### **The HSE Board**

#### **Monthly Health and Safety Report - September 2005**

##### **A Paper by Tim Beaumont**

**Advisor(s): Health and Safety Unit, PD**

**Cleared by Justin McCracken on**

#### **Issue**

1. The monthly report on health and safety issues in HSE including incident and sickness absence statistics. The paper describes some of the implications of recent incidents. A lists of recommendations requiring the Board's endorsement is at the end of the paper.

#### **Timing**

2. For discussion at this meeting

#### **Recommendation**

3. There are a number of points for decision through out which are summarised at section '11 – Action'.

The board is asked to discuss the current health and safety performance. A number of items of significance are also included. These are:

- Recent reports of assault/racist abuse of inspectors.
- Summary of Corporate Health and Safety Committee meeting of 4 August 2005.

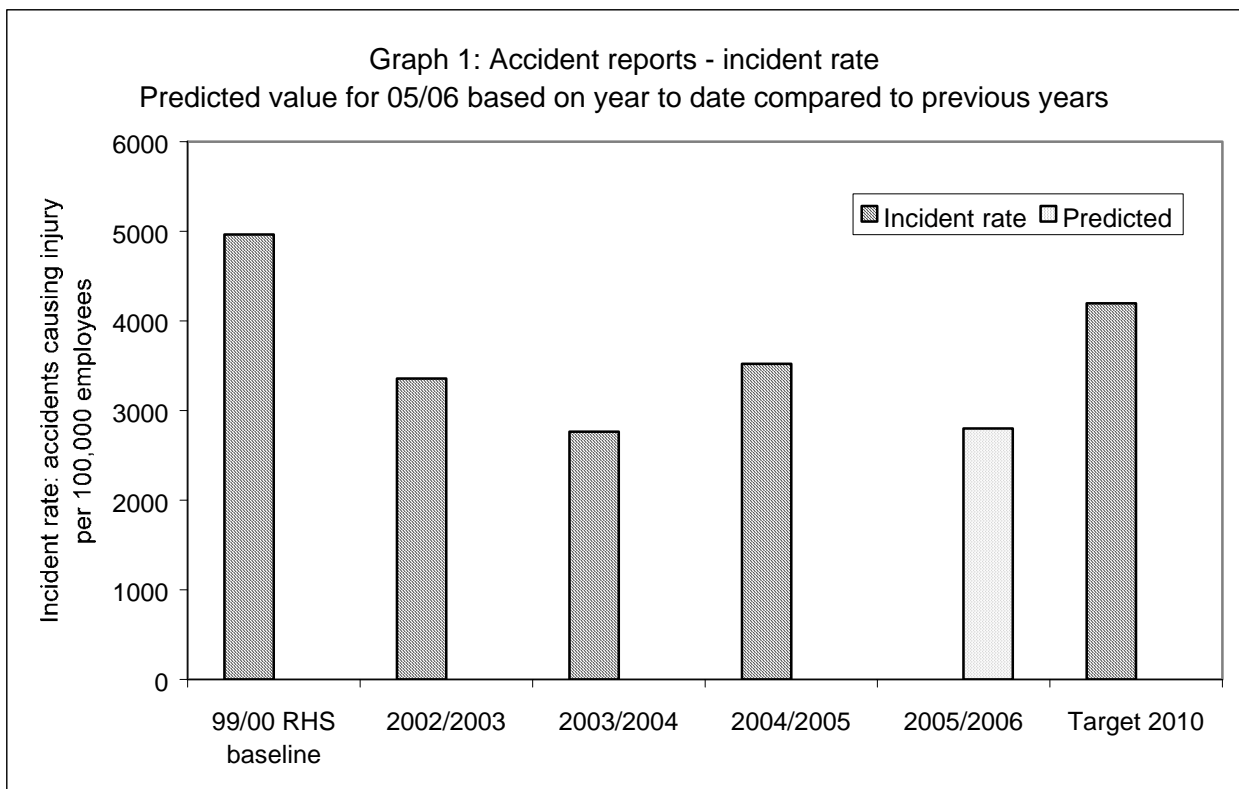
## Argument

### 4. Progress against targets at 26 August 2005

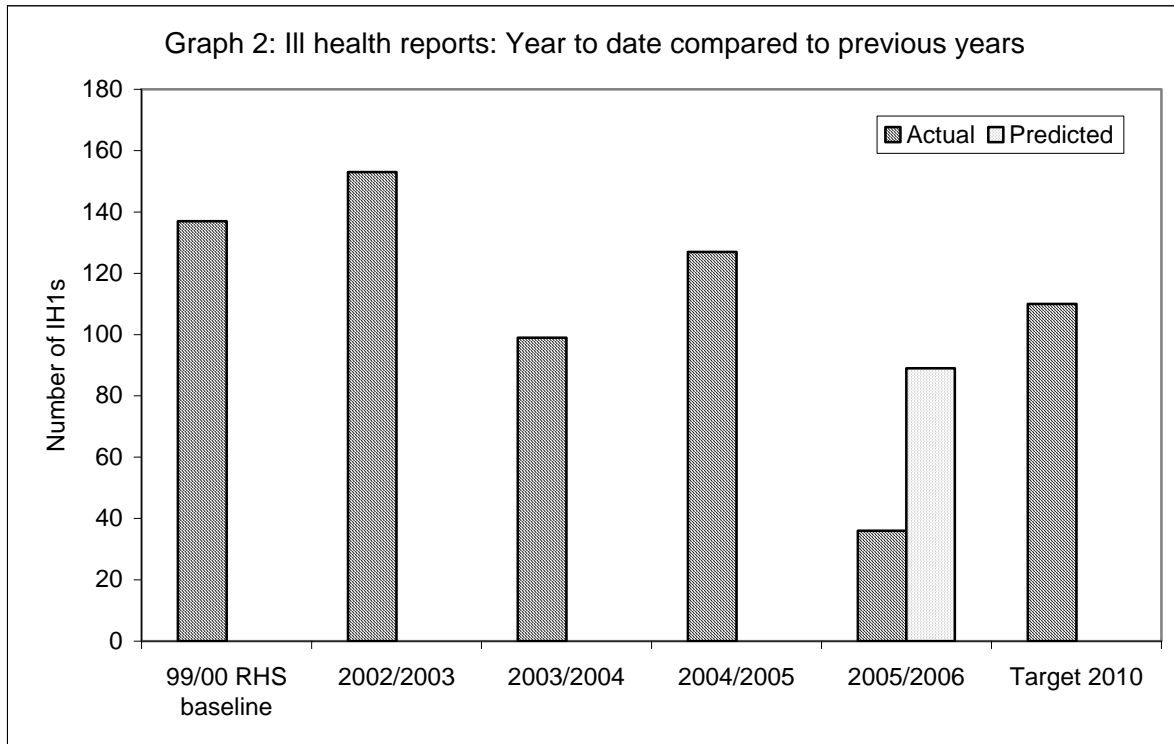
There have been 38 incidents/ill health reports for the period 23 July – 26 August

Category	Actual number reported	Number required to achieve target	Target for 2005/06
RIDDOR reports	4	4	<10
DSE/IH1 reports	10	23	<57
Slips/trips causing injury	18	19	<47
Near misses	37		

DSE IH1s remain well on course to be below the target number, which is very encouraging. The other two parameters are still just on course for us to achieve our goal of incident reduction.



Based on the incidents that have occurred in the last month, the predicted incident rate has risen from 2172 to 2799 since the last report. This is still below the 2010 target but the increase needs to be monitored.



In the year to date there have been 36 IH1s received. This gives a prediction of 89 for the year as a whole. The predicted number is still below the 2010 target.

Unfortunately the sickness absence data for July and August is not yet available for inclusion.

### Recent significant incidents

#### *i) RIDDOR reportable incidents*

There were two RIDDOR reportable incidents in the period covered by this report. Both were back injuries related to manual handling. The first was to a member of REFIT. He was manoeuvring some flat pack boxes through the doors of St Hugh's house. In doing so he strained a muscle in his back.

The second happened to a member of NSD. She strained a muscle in her back whilst turning in her chair to obtain an item from her cupboard.

We are still awaiting the final report for both incidents.

#### *ii) Other significant incidents*

Aside from the two RIDDOR reportable incidents there have been three incidents that have involved HSE staff that have been RIDDOR reportable, but not by us. One was a dangerous occurrence at HSL - contamination of drinking water. The situation and its resolution were outside of the control of HSE due to the PFI nature of the building. There are possible learning opportunities for HSE from the incident, particularly as Redgrave Court is a PFI building. Furthermore any health and safety issues with PFI that we identify can be linked to wider construction policy work. The board is asked to

endorse the request that lessons learnt from this incident are fed into the Redgrave Court project and other future PFI contracts.

The other two related to tripping incidents that HSE staff have suffered. One was at a hotel during a business related overnight stay. The other was whilst travelling across a shared private road to a car park close to HSE offices. After taking legal advice from Policy Group and FOD the consensus was that we would not report these incidents. One key point in coming to this decision is that we would not expect another dutyholder to report these incidents.

However, it is appropriate that we, as a caring employer, log these incidents and do all we can to influence the duty holder to prevent recurrence. We should also note such incidents in our annual report, but not as part of our targets for RIDDOR. The board is asked to endorse this proposal.

### *iii) Assaults on staff*

There were two serious assaults on visiting staff in this reporting period. One was an actual assault on an inspector intervening in construction activity within sight of the relevant office. There are two points to note. Once again a challenge by a inspector of minor construction work at height results in an assault. The lone working group set up to review our policy will be considering the pattern emerging that this type of visit has a higher probability of resulting in aggression being experienced by the enforcing officer.

The police were involved and a letter had been sent to the perpetrator inviting him to accept a caution for common assault - with the proviso that if he didn't a file would be sent to the CPS for a prosecution to be considered. A prosecution for obstruction is unlikely at the moment.

The incident once again illustrates the importance of supporting HSE's visiting staff who may be exposed to violence, if necessary through the courts. There was a concern at the start of the investigation that the police were not taking the incident seriously enough. This was addressed to HSE's satisfaction through intervention of an Operations Manager. Board are asked to agree that where necessary local action is required to ensure that assaults on staff are dealt with appropriately by the police. Board members are also asked to agree to actively encourage reporting of all incidents of verbal or physical assault or abuse.

The second incident involved racist abuse of an inspector. This incident is highlighted, as I believe that under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 there is a duty on public bodies such as the HSE to take positive action against racism. Our guidance has covered this in the form of an OC for inspectors about what to do if racism is encountered during the course of a visit. Nowhere is there any specific guidance about what to do if a member of HSE is racially abused by a member of the public.

In the event the incident was reported to the police as a crime with a racial element. HSE needs to clarify its position about what to do if a member of staff is racially abused, particularly regarding reporting to the police. In effect abuse of this kind is directed at us all as it attacks the fact that HSE strives to be a diverse organisation. The board is asked to support an amendment to our guidance specifying that racial abuse of our staff should be reported to the police inline with the requirements set out in the OC.

*iii) Meeting of the Corporate Health and Safety Committee – 4 August 2005*

There were several things for the board to note arising from the meeting –

- It appears that health and safety messages from management board levels are not cascading down the organisation to team meetings. Health and safety is a standing item on the agenda of management board meetings. This does not seem to be the case at team meeting level. Board members are asked to ensure that health and safety information effectively cascades in their part of the organisation.
- A number of different groups voluntarily fill crucial health and safety roles in the organisation. These include TU safety reps, fire wardens, DSE assessors and first aiders. It has been noted that sometimes these volunteers feel unappreciated. The board is asked to agree how HSE can give recognition and encouragement to members of staff who take on extra duties for the benefit of the organisation through e.g. thanking individual volunteers in person; including in PWP so that the voluntary safety work counts towards their appraisal.
- A new 'Your health and safety' intranet site is about to be launched. It completes the process of improvement and consolidation of health and safety guidance that was started two years ago. The expectation is that only in exceptional circumstances will Directorates need to have their own health and safety supplements, e.g. some of the safety requirements that apply only to nuclear inspectors or HSL. For most hazards, particularly the key hazard areas (MSD, slips and trips, DSE, lone working, work related travelling and stress) the new intranet site will contain all the information that will be necessary. Board members are asked to ensure that this message is cascaded down their management chains
- After the board's acceptance the health and safety annual report was agreed by the CHSC and has since been published.
- A successful pilot in encouraging reporting of near misses will be rolled out across the country in the Autumn of this year.

**Consultation**

5. The HSE's trade unions are represented on the Corporate Healthy and Safety Committee. They are also involved in all incident investigations.

**Presentation**

6. n/a

**Costs and Benefits**

7. n/a

## **Financial/Resource Implications for HSE**

8. n/a

## **Environmental Implications**

9. n/a

## **Other Implications**

10. n/a

## **Action**

11. The actions required from the report are summarised as below.

That the Board agrees to:

- endorse the policy that RIDDORS that occur to HSE staff, but not under HSE's control are recorded separately to the RIDDORS that are counted for our targets;
- endorse the request that lessons learnt from this incident are fed into the Redgrave Court project and other future PFI contracts.
- ensure that, where necessary, action is taken so that the police deal appropriately with assaults on staff;
- actively encourage reporting of all incidents of verbal or physical assault or abuse;
- endorse an amendment to our guidance specifying that racial abuse of our staff should be reported to the police in line with the requirements set out in the FOD OC;
- ensure that health and safety is addressed at all team meetings;
- ensure that duplication of safety information on the 'Your health and safety ' intranet site is avoided in their area of responsibility; and
- give recognition and encouragement to members of staff who take on extra duties for the benefit of the organisation through e.g. thanking individual volunteers in person or including in PWP so that the voluntary safety work counts towards their appraisal.

## **Future Board Papers**

12. October – Stress Management Standards – final report of assessment process

November – Lone working safety group – report paper