

Status: OFFICIAL

Health and Safety

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to ask the Executive Board to approve the Forestry Commission Health and Safety Policy (Part 1) and to provide the Board with a brief update on the work of the Health and Safety Strategy Group.

Introduction

2. It is a legal requirement for the Forestry Commission (FC) to have a Health and Safety Policy. As a result of our organisational structure, the FC has three levels of Health and Safety Policy Statements:

- Part 1 the FC's overarching policy
- Part 2 one each for England, Scotland, Forest Research and Shared Services/ Corporate Forestry Support
- Part 3 for each Management Unit e.g. Forest District.

Details of Policy

3. The overarching FC Health and Safety Policy has been revised. The Policy demonstrates our commitment to improve our management of health and safety as set out in the FC Health and Safety Strategy. It has been reviewed by the Health and Safety Strategy Group and agreed with the Trade Unions. It has been drafted in line with HSE guidance.

4. The draft revised FC Health and Safety Policy is attached at Appendix 1 for EB approval.

Health and Safety Strategy Group

5. After the Health and Safety Strategy was published in June 2013, the Health and Safety Strategy Group asked teams from across the FC to feedback their thoughts on how the FC could manage health and safety better. The Group received lots of detailed and well thought out feedback which is now being used to inform local and organisational Action Plans.

6. The feedback indicated that we need to focus on four key health and safety themes. In order of priority these are:

- culture change;
- training, mitigation and reporting;
- driver safety;
- lone working.

7. Health and Safety Committees are now well established in all areas across the organisation and are working to deliver against these themes using their Action Plans.

8. The Health and Safety Strategy Group has also purchased the Safety Climate Tool. This is an on-line survey software tool that helps companies measure their safety culture, explores individual's attitudes and perceptions and provides evidence-based improvement. We have agreed that the FC will run the survey in December 2014 to measure its safety culture baseline, provide evidence-based improvement and evaluate progress.

Resource Implications

9. There are no resource implications.

Risk Assessment

10. The FC will not be meeting its legal obligations if it does not have a suitable Health and Safety Policy.

11. If the FC does not improve its Health and Safety culture then its health and safety record will not improve.

Communications Issues

12. FC Communications are represented on the Health and Safety Strategy Group and have been involved in the drafting of the revised Policy. The FC Health and Safety Policy will be published on the Health and Safety pages of the FC internet and intranet and in the Connect Bulletin.

Implementation and Evaluation Proposals

13. The Part 2 Health and Safety Policy Statements for England, Scotland, Forest Research and Shared Services /Corporate Forestry Support will also be reviewed in line with the revised overarching Policy. Support will be provided to Management Units to review their Part 3 Health and Safety Policy Statements.

Recommendation(s)

14. The Executive Board is asked to:
- Agree the FC Health and Safety Policy as at Appendix 1;
 - Note the work of the Health and Safety Strategy Group and Health and Safety Committees as outlined in paragraphs 5 – 8 above.

Emily Ramsay
Head of Safety, Health & Environment
September 2014

Forestry Commission Health and Safety Policy Statement

At the Forestry Commission we are committed to managing health and safety effectively across the whole organisation. The Forestry Commission Executive Board provides leadership on Health and Safety. Looking after the health and safety of the people who work for us and those who visit our estate is at the heart of our values. The Forestry Commission manages health and safety by:

- Clearly defining responsibilities and standards for health and safety.
- Locally delivering our health and safety policy.
- Complying with relevant legislation.
- Providing resources and support.
- Sharing information and good practice and celebrating success.
- Putting systems in place to monitor and review our progress.

The Health and Safety Strategy Group regularly reviews and monitor safety performance and report to the Forestry Commission Executive Board.

Each Country, Forest Research and Shared Services (including Corporate Forestry Support) has a Health and Safety Policy and a Health and Safety Committee. Managers within these areas are responsible for ensuring this policy is put into practice day-to-day.

The relevant Executive Boards and Management Boards are responsible for ensuring:

- Health and safety policy and procedures are readily available to all staff.
- Risks to health and safety are identified, assessed and appropriately managed.
- Effective communication and consultation with employees and other relevant stakeholders on health and safety matters.
- Appropriate training and other resources are available.
- Periodic audits are carried out.

All employees are expected to:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others.
- Understand how the health and safety policies and procedures apply to them and their areas of work.
- Co-operate with the Forestry Commission to deliver the management of health and safety.
- Report any accidents or near misses.

Jean Lindsay
Director HR & Central Services
July 2014