

Status: OFFICIAL

HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGY

Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to inform the Executive Board of the progress made against the Forestry Commission (FC) Health and Safety Strategy – attached at Appendix I.

Background/Introduction

2. The FC Health and Safety Strategy was published in June 2013. As part of the launch 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 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.

3. The FC now has well developed national and local Health and Safety Committees in England and Scotland. Also national ones in Forest Research and Shared Services/Corporate Forestry Support. They are all working to deliver against these themes and other emerging issues.

4. Recent examples of activity include poster campaigns, the Safety Climate Tool survey, the creation of localised Action Plans, cross team sharing of information and initiatives, and selling the H&S message as evidenced by the increase in entries into AIRS. We are in the process of launching a new lone worker system, integrating a fail to safe management system with a satellite location facility and are about to set up a reference group to assist developing the specification for a replacement AIRS system.

Details of policy, proposals, etc.

5. The main area of concern raised by staff in their feedback was our health and safety culture. Health and safety culture is defined as “the way we do things around here”. In January this year as noted above, we ran the Safety Climate Tool survey to

EB – request for papers

measure our safety culture baseline and to identify areas where we are performing well and those where we should target our efforts to improve. The FC results were feedback to the EB in April.

6. The Health and Safety Strategy Group has provided feedback to all staff on the FC Safety Climate Tool results. The results for the Countries, FR and SS+CFS have been sent to Directors and the Chair of each Health and Safety Committee.

7. The results for Costs Centres will also be sent to Cost Centre managers and the Chair of the local Health and Safety Committees. Safety, Health and Environment will support Managers to communicate and act on the Safety Climate tool results.

8. The results across the organisation were fairly consistent. In the FC Survey the factors with the most favourable responses were:

Organisational commitment – the plant/site encourages suggestions on how to improve health and safety (80% agree/ strongly agree)

Health and safety trust – the plant/site really cares about the health and safety of the people who work here (77% agree/strongly agree)

9. The factors with less favourable responses and ideas of what we can do are:

Areas for improvement:	What we can do?
<i>Engagement in health and safety</i> - my supervisor often talks to me about health and safety (18% disagree /strongly disagree).	Lead by example: talk regularly to staff about health and safety.
<i>Accident and near miss reporting</i> – near misses are always reported (42% disagree / strongly disagree)	Lead by example: report near misses and encourage teams to report them. Thank people for reporting near misses.
<i>Usability of procedures</i> – some health and safety procedures are not really practicable (36% disagree / strongly disagree)	Release staff and give them time to get involved in writing and reviewing procedures.

10. The “What we can do” fits with the view of leadership set out by Tim Marsh in his book “Safety excellence and leading safety practice”. The transforming leader:

- leads by example;
- uses (sincere) praise as often as possible;
- coaches (selling) when they can, rather than telling;
- involves the workforce in safety as much as possible.

The message is clear – if we want to continue to build upon our successes to date, leaders must continue to lead by example and being seen to do so.

EB – request for papers

Resource Implications

11. There are no resource implications except for peoples time required to embed changes to our health and safety culture.

Risk Assessment

12. As noted above leadership is a cornerstone to improving health and safety culture. If the FC does not continue to move forward on its health and safety culture then its health and safety record will not improve.

Communications Issues

13. FC Communications are represented on the Health and Safety Strategy Group. Communications staff are also members of the Scotland and England Health and Safety Committees. They have helped us to communicate the Health and Safety Strategy, the results of the feedback on the Strategy and the importance of the Safety Climate Tool. They are now working with us to feedback and follow through on the Safety Climate Tool results. We are working on other communication ideas, such as posters, an improved H&S intranet site, and a newsletter to learn from incidents and to address trends.

Implementation and Evaluation Proposals

14. The Health and Safety Strategy Group will ask Directors and Health and Safety Committees to lead on improving in the areas where they had the most unfavourable responses. We will run another Safety Climate Tool survey in 2017.

Recommendation(s)

15. The Executive Board is asked to:
- Note the work of the Health and Safety Strategy Group and Health and Safety Committees;
 - Consider their leadership shadow and what they have done to contribute to the favourable responses to the Safety Climate Tool and what they can to help improve the health and safety culture.

Les Bryson
Chair Health & Safety Strategy Group
18 May 2015

Emily Ramsay
Safety, Health & Environment