
Safety Officers (SO) Annual Report for 2015

1. Context

This report will, in accordance with the General Statement and general arrangements for safety management, be submitted to the Health & Safety Committee, Senior Management Team and Local Joint Committee in the Spring of 2016.

The purpose of the report is to provide evidence that health and safety performance is satisfactory and continuously improving. Some good-practice examples initiated during 2015 are included.

The report includes

- An overall appraisal of health and safety performance for the PDNPA for the previous year
- Reference to improving competencies, particularly for risk assessments and risk management, through collaboration, training and in response to requests for assistance
- Accident and incident data and analysis for the year ending December 2015 for staff and visitors
- A report on services provided to other National Parks and other third parties
- Recommendations for further action through 2016

2. Health & Safety performance

The day-to-day routine management of health and safety matters is observed and judged by the SO during the continuous, rolling programme of visits to premises and staff 'at work'. During these visits opportunities arise to recognise and endorse good practice, respond to instances where some improvements are necessary and to further coach staff, enhancing their competence, understanding and use of resources and risk management techniques including, in particular, risks assessment.

Workplace visits typically take account of

- Safety related documentation. Good documentation is an essential component part of a safety management system. Use of and compliance with these documented systems is key to our overall success in implementing, maintaining and demonstrating good safety management. Key documents include: safety policies and associated procedures, safe working method statements and risk assessments, incident reports/records and follow-up/action reports. The SO continues to review and update existing and develop new, safety related documents. These documents, including many risk assessments and core Safety Policy are becoming more consistent across all NPAs allowing much more efficient and timely review, replacement and referral.

- Physical conditions and work activities – including: work space/light/noise/temperature/humidity/ventilation, access and egress, building conditions, work equipment, the use of PPE (personal protective equipment), workstations and waste disposal.
- Risk assessments – an improvement in the completion, use and review of risk assessments continues to build for a wide range of matters. The process of risk assessment review has driven an improvement in the understanding of risk for matters such as lone-working and better familiarity with key control measures. Replacement of older risk assessments continues ensuring that these assessments are current, valid and currently relevant. The SO will continue to focus on risk assessments and their improvement, as the key component in managing routine safety matters and for providing evidence that safety is being properly considered and well managed.
- Resources and competencies – closely allied to the production and use of risk assessments is the understanding and use of these resources. Through further training and collaboration, familiarity, confidence and an appreciation of the value of good risk assessments is continually improving. We can be confident that this will lead to enhanced and more reliable adherence to essential controls described within these key documents.

It is anticipated that a continuous rolling programme of visits, audits and inspections will continue to be performed by the SO with a continuing focus on visiting staff 'at work'.

3. The risk/action 'escalator'

Where a serious health or safety related matter is reported that requires 'escalation' to senior management for information and/or action, this will be so dealt with. This may include both serious incidents/accidents/near-misses and failures of line-management to adequately discharge their safety responsibilities. There have, for 2015, been no such identified serious matters requiring escalation.

4. Training, information and supervision

The provision of safety training and information continues to be a key function provided by the SO at all Parks advised. In 2015 significant developments include:

- Following significant changes to the Construction Design and Management Regulations (2015) a series of updates and other guidance has been produced by the SO highlighting the key changes and implications for NPAs
- A new risk assessment workshop has been developed and commenced delivery in 2015 (February) for Field Services. This new training event introduces a series of key performance indicators arranged around the concepts of *Awareness*, *Competence* and *Compliance*. This course supports the move toward a new Health and Safety Policy that embraces these concepts and introduces a more thorough use of performance criteria. (Further priority groups to receive this training in 2016 include *Property* and the casual *Survey Pool*).

- Specific coaching/mentoring continues, for individuals, groups and teams needing to address safety matters that are particularly relevant to their own activities and responsibilities.
- During 2015 the SO has provided a number of training events for other NPs focussing particularly on line-management competence and involvement.
- The Moors for the Future Team (MFF) continues to review and improve their safety management processes. A very good system of control for Lone Workers (the ‘buddy system’) has been fully adopted and shared as an example of good-practice with others. Safety working near water courses has been reviewed and the documentation for CDM compliance reviewed and simplified.

5. General Statement of Safety Policy for 2016

The PDNPA General Statement of Safety Policy for 2016 has been reviewed by the Health & Safety Committee, approved by LJC and is now in place.

A proposal for a new Health and Safety Policy was first introduced to HSC and SMT in the autumn of 2015. This was offered as a more straight forward and contemporary document that promotes the importance of developing a positive safety culture. The new policy explicitly supports a more performance driven approach and an implementation plan is being developed to support the adoption of this new policy in 2016.

6. Accidents and incidents data and analysis 2015

Staff

The PDNPA, in common with other NPAs continues to enjoy a low accident rate. Causes of accidents are familiar and only minor injuries have been experienced. These low numbers make any detailed analysis or comparison statistically difficult and therefore a simple analysis looking for more common circumstances of incidents and accidents is preferred.

It is encouraging that 3 near-misses were reported in 2015 (up from 1 in 2014 and none in the previous year). This is, perhaps, evidence that the value and importance of near-miss reporting is being more widely accepted.

There is no identified significant increase in the number or pattern of minor incidents. Of 10 reported incidents 6 affected staff and 4 volunteers.

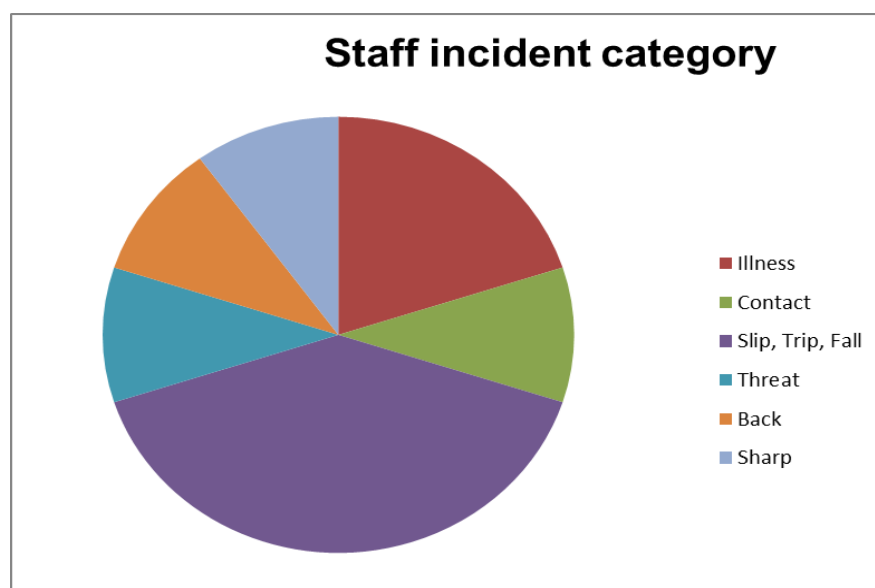


Fig. 1 Staff reported incidents by category

The trend in the overall number of reported accidents over the previous 15 years remains favourable.

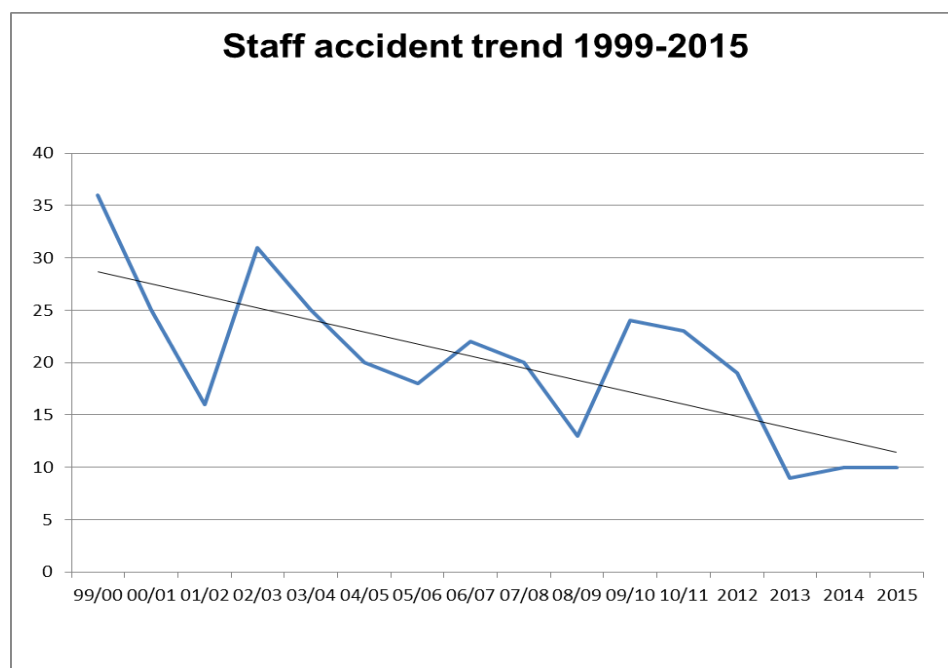


Fig. 2 Staff accident trend 1999-2015

Staff incidents reported in 2015 include: zero road-traffic accidents (a concerns in previous years), one incident of violence and aggression (a threat) and two cases of ill-health (believed non-work related).

Visitors

Seven accidents to visitors were reported in 2015, the same figure as 2014. This compares to fourteen in 2013 and eleven in 2012. As in previous years these incidents were equally split between slips, trips and falls and bicycle related injuries. There was one reported injury to a student on a school visit.

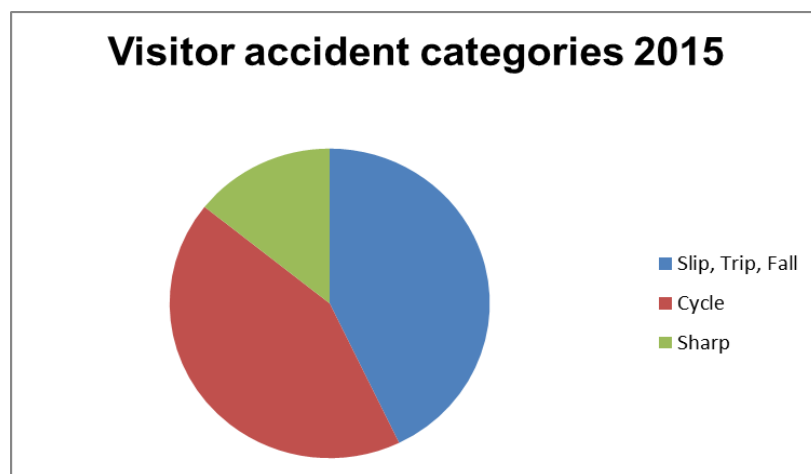


Fig. 3 Visitor accidents 2015

7. Efficiency/cost savings

The SO continues to provide advice to Northumberland and South Downs National Park Authorities. The SLAs with both parks now realise similar income levels with respect to resource demands. These opportunities for sharing the costs associated with providing a professional health & safety advice service between several Authorities also realise a number of efficiency savings. Problems and solutions are shared, common formats for risk assessments and accident reporting are agreed and consistent training and guidance is provided. Performance data will be used for comparison (benchmarking) commencing in 2016.

8. Priorities and actions for 2016

The SO will continue to perform an annual inspection programme, visiting all key premises and aiming to spend time observing staff 'at work'.

Other priorities for 2016 are carried over from work commenced in 2015 and are included in the implementation plan to improve important strategic H&S goals, linked to the adoption of a new H&S Policy and the use of performance data. All managers will receive training for this as part of a series of *Line Manager Briefings* planned for delivery from summer 2016. Senior Managers will be included.

These priorities include

- a) All managers are **aware** of their health and safety obligations and how these relate to the areas of work that they and their staff are involved in.

- b) All managers are **competent** to recognise significant hazards and risks and to apply the correct methods of risk assessment and suitable and sufficient risk controls.
- c) All managers can demonstrate **compliance** in taking all necessary actions to minimise health and safety risks.

9. Recommendations

It is recommended that continuing improvements in the overall safety management of PDNPA throughout 2015 are recognised and those proposals for further priorities and actions for 2016 are endorsed.

Jon Wayte, Safety Officer