

Occupational Safety and Health Adviser (OSHA) Annual Report for 2017

Context

This report will be submitted, for consultation, to the Health & Safety Committee and for approval by the Local Joint Committee, in the Spring of 2018.

The purpose of the report is to provide evidence that health and safety performance is satisfactory and continuously improving.

The report includes

- An overall appraisal of health and safety performance for the PDNPA for the previous year
- Reference to improving awareness, competence and compliance
- Accident and incident data and analysis for the year ending March 2018 for staff and visitors
- A report on services provided to other National Parks and other third parties
- Recommendations for further action through 2018/19

Health & Safety performance

The day-to-day routine management of health and safety matters is observed and judged by the OSHA during a 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 OSHA continues to review and update existing and develop new, safety related documents. These documents, including risk assessments, associated guidance ('best practice') 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 the use of work equipment and better familiarity with key control measures. A continuous review process for risk assessment, ensures that these assessments are current, valid and relevant. The OSHA will continue to focus on risk assessments and their improvement, as a 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.

The risk/action 'escalator'

Where a serious health or safety related matter is identified that requires 'escalation' to senior management for further investigation and/or action, this will be identified. There has, for 2017/18, been no such incident.

Training, information and supervision

The provision of safety training and information continues to be a key function provided by the OSHA at all Parks advised. In 2017/18 significant developments include:

- A new Line Manager briefing module for Health and Safety, part of the 'How We Work Around Here' series of events for 2016/17 focused on key functions for Line managers in determining, assessing and improving: Awareness, Competence and Compliance. This laid important foundations for the introduction of key themes included in the new Health and Safety Policy for 2017 based on the same principles.
- Work has continued, focusing on these themes, particularly in the Commercial Development and Outreach Directorate. A project group which continues to meet is producing documentation that more clearly identifies the controls for safe operation of equipment including, training, qualification, operation and maintenance.
- During 2017 the OSHA has provided further support to other NPs including reviews and developments of Health and Safety Committees and the role of committee members.

Health and Safety Policy for 2018

The PDNPA adopted a new Health & Safety Policy in 2017 to replace the General Statement of Safety Policy.

The new Health and Safety Policy offers as a more straight-forward and contemporary document that promotes the importance of developing a positive safety culture through the principles of Awareness, Competence and Compliance.

A new version of the 2017 Policy incorporating a detailed list of responsibilities for specific OSH matters as an Appendix was adopted for 2018.

Accidents and incidents data and analysis 2017/18

Staff

The PDNPA, in common with other NPAs continues to enjoy a low accident rate. Causes of accidents are familiar and generally, 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.

Only 1 near-miss was reported in 2017/18. This is a significant decrease from 4 that were reported in 2016 and 3 in 2015. The importance and value of near-miss reporting will be reinforced through the HSC and by H&S Representative Members of the Committee.

There is no identified significant increase in the number or pattern of minor incidents. For 2017/18 there were 18 reported incidents to visitors and 11 affected staff and volunteers. The most common incident for staff was slips, trips and falls with 7 reported in the year.

The trend in the overall number of reported accidents over the previous 16 years remains favourable.

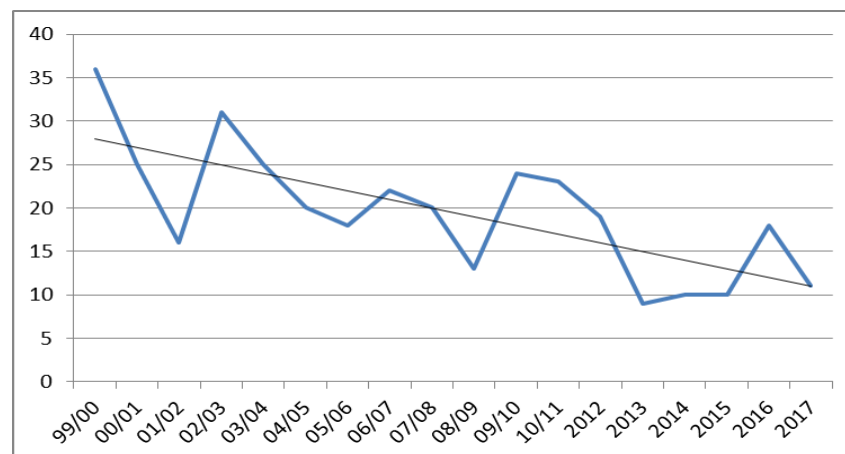


Fig. 1 Staff accident trend 1999-2017

Visitors

Eighteen accidents to visitors were reported in 2017/18, up from 12 in 2016, 7 in both 2015 and 2014 and 14 in 2013. As in previous years these incidents were most commonly slips, trips and falls (8) and bicycle related accidents (3). Eight of the incidents reported were for students on school visits (the same figure as 2016). All of these incidents are investigated.

Efficiency/cost savings

The OSHA now provides professional OSH advice to Northumberland, South Downs and Dartmoor National Park Authorities through agreed Service Level Agreements (SLAs). The SLA with South Downs NPA has been renewed to 2020. The SLA with Dartmoor also runs until 2020. The SLA with Northumberland has been extended until at least October 2018. By using a common OHS service not only are costs supported but problems and solutions are shared, common formats for policies, risk assessments and accident reporting are agreed and consistent training and guidance is provided. Through the *Working Together* initiative a number of priority OSH issues will be considered and addressed more widely by the NPA family. This has started with a review of Lone Working arrangements. The OSHA is providing advice and support to this initiative.

Priorities and actions for 2018/19

The SO will continue to perform a rolling programme of workplace visits, audits and inspections and provide OSH advice to staff 'at work'.

Other specific priorities for 2018/19 include:

1. PDNPA has recently undergone significant organisational change. At the same time a move to more explicit accountabilities for OSH management is being promoted. This has raised some concerns about individual staff accepting responsibility for matters for which they may feel less competent. A consequence of this, is the questioning of the role of the OSHA and whether sufficient OSH resource is available to meet the needs of the organisation as it now stands.

A study is proposed to critically look at the current arrangements for OSH management, to identify weaknesses and to propose improvements.

The study is anticipated to include:

- A questionnaire to be completed by Heads of Services and Team Managers
- An opinion survey to be completed by a representative sample of employees
- A number of site/task specific inspection/audit visits (for examples of OSH management)
- A review of current PDNPA OSH documentation

A subsequent report will be provided for consideration by a suitable senior management group.

2. Continuing to support the work of a project group set up in the Commercial Development and Outreach Directorate to complete work identifying more explicitly the controls necessary for a range of occupational activities.
3. Implementing and developing further the enhanced role of the Health and Safety Committee and members of that Committee to enhance the overall OSH resources at PDNPA.
4. Ensure that PDNPA is addressing appropriate priorities for OSH.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The value of work summarised in this report in delivering continuing improvements in overall OSH management at PDNPA, is recognised.
2. Proposals for continuing/further priorities and actions for 2018/19 are endorsed.

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Safety Officer
May 2018