



Health & Safety Report 2011/12

**Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority – Health & Safety
Report 2011/12**

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Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority – Health & Safety **Report 2011/12**

1 Deputy Chief Fire Officer's Foreword

- 1.1 Welcome to Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority's annual Health and Safety performance report for 2011-2012. The report sees the introduction of a new Service mission; Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters and reinforces the emphasis we place on the Health, Safety and Welfare of our people. The Services provided by the Authority are undergoing a significant period of change and restructure predominantly brought about by a reduction in grant funding from central government. These changes will impact on the way we deliver services to our communities and there is no doubt that our speed and weight of response will be affected. It is clearly more important than ever that we adhere to our guiding principals and ensure that we work together to deliver a safe and effective workforce.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The *Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974* applies to all the activities undertaken by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service staff. The Act requires that we ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of our employees and that their activities do not adversely affect their health and safety or that of other people.
- 2.2 These health and safety duties are not absolute and each is qualified by the test of what is reasonably practicable.
- 2.3 The FRS nationally has come under scrutiny from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) following some high profile and tragic emergencies where firefighters have lost their lives. The HSE subsequently carried out an audit of 8 UK Fire and Rescue Services making a range of recommendations on incident command, personnel and instructor competence and the management of risk information.
- 2.4 A number of guidance documents have been recently produced that have endeavored to guide FRS's in their management of risk in dynamic environments. The HSE is clearly aware of the complexities of managing safety in a risk critical operational context.
- 2.5 The following documents have been published as a result and inform our guiding Principals for Health and Safety management:
 - Striking the Balance (HSE - 2010)

- Heroism in the Fire and Rescue Service (HSE - 2011)
- Common Sense, Common Safety (Lord Young – 2010)
- Reclaiming health and safety for all: (Löfstedt Report 2011)

2.6 In addition Chief Fire & Rescue Advisor's Unit (CFRAU) and Communities & Local Government (CLG) have jointly produced a draft Framework for the Management of Health Safety & Welfare in the Fire & Rescue Service. The Service has participated fully in the consultation process and constructive feedback has been submitted.

3 Guiding principles for management of Health and Safety for MFRS

3.1 The guiding principles for the health, safety and welfare of staff within Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service are,

- Clear and positive safety leadership from Principal Officer Level. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer – provides strategic leadership within the health and safety function in order to create a positive safety culture throughout the Service. The DCFO takes responsibility for the safety management process at an organisational level.
- Recognition that management are accountable and have constant active engagement in the Service operations, accepting responsibility for accident and ill health prevention including monitoring of employees health and wellbeing.
- Recognition that employee workplace health and safety representatives operating in partnership with management are an important part of realising health, safety and welfare benefits
- Engagement of the workforce, encouraging and establishing 'upward' and 'downward' communication systems and appropriate management structures in the promotion and achievement of a good safety culture
- The personal responsibilities of individuals are clear and health, safety and welfare is embedded into all activities and not seen as separate
- The scrutiny of the health, safety and welfare management system is an identified function of the Fire a Authority as the primary employer

- Well-established management and incident command arrangements are in place for controlling the operational risks to fire-fighters
- Appropriate resources are made available to ensure a high standard of safety management, incident command and the integration of good health, safety and welfare management within operational and business decisions
- Provision of high quality training to ensure fire-fighters are competent to perform their roles and make appropriate operational decisions
- Monitoring safety performance and incident command through a dedicated monitoring team to ensuring the operational risks are being effectively managed
- Ensuring internal standards and safe operating procedures aim to optimise the balance between risks and benefits – which does not mean avoiding risks but managing them responsibly on the basis of likelihood and severity

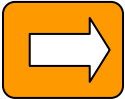
3.2 There are many areas of notable practice contained within the report together with identified areas where further improvement can be achieved.

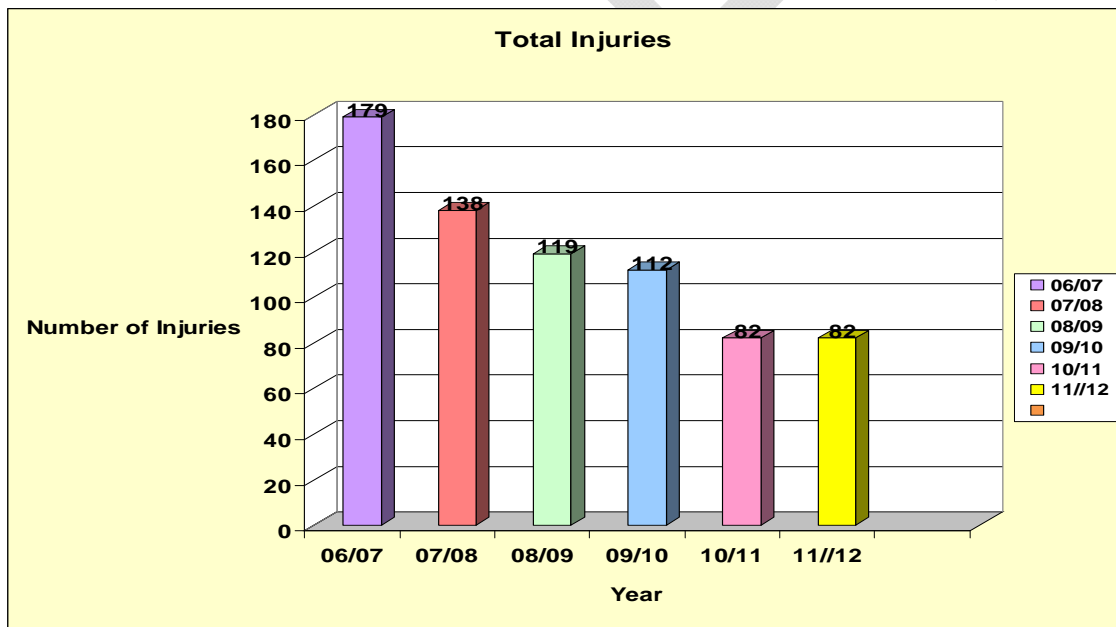
4 Indicators 2011 / 12

4.1 Statistics are collated and monitored through the accident reporting process. Accidents, Near Miss / Near Hit Reports and Hazard Reports are analysed to establish any trends, improvements or areas for development.


4.2 The following is a summary of our performance. – a detailed analysis of accident and Injury statistics can be found at Appendix 1

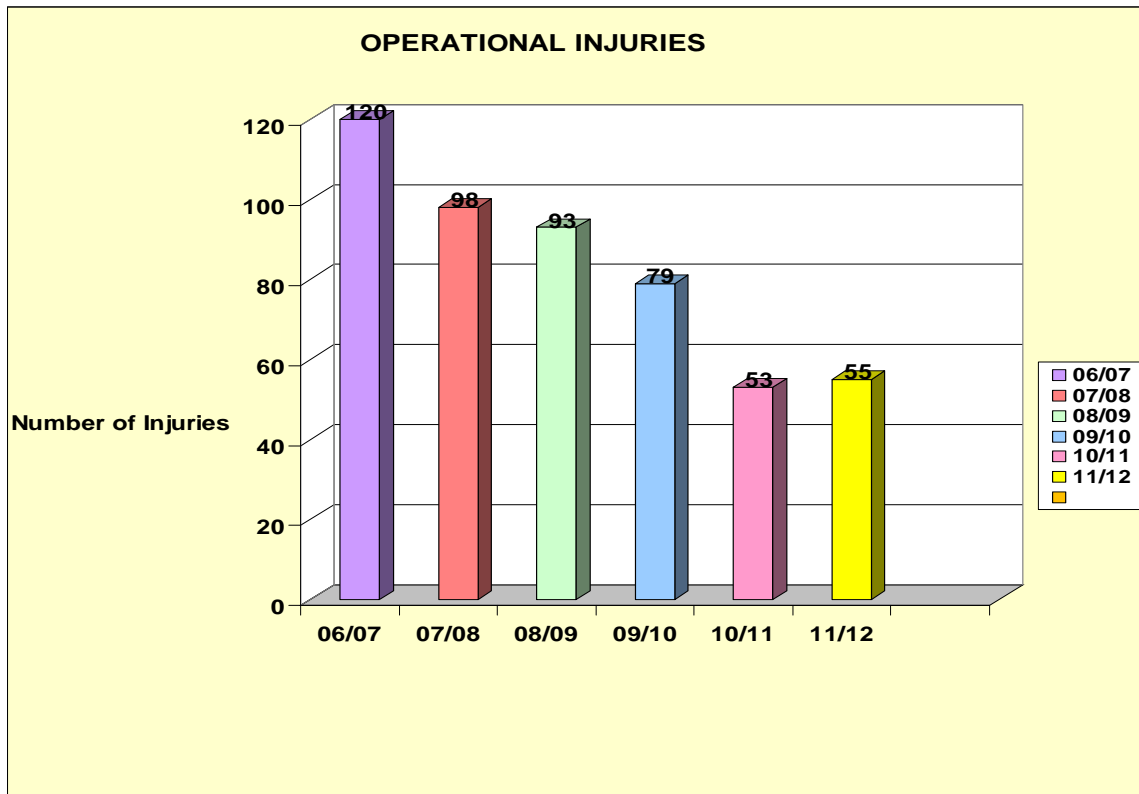
4.3 Accidents & Injuries

Total Injuries Reported	Previous Year	Reporting Period	
	82	82	




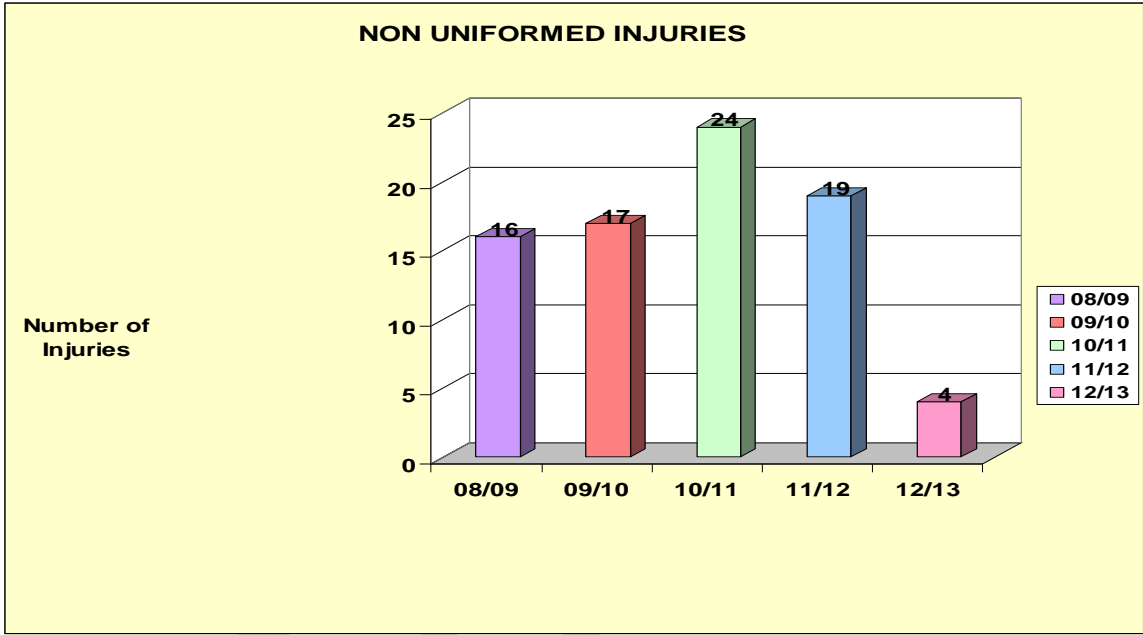
4.3.1 Of the 82 injuries reported during the year Manual Handling (24) and Slips Trips & Falls (17) remain the main causes with a disappointing increase in Manual Handling injuries of 50% (24 reports compared to 16 in the previous year) The reduction in injuries in these areas is considered to be a priority and the plans to address these issues are detailed later in this report.

LPI 98 Operational Staff Injuries – on duty (LPI = 63)	Previous Year	Reporting Period	
	53	55	




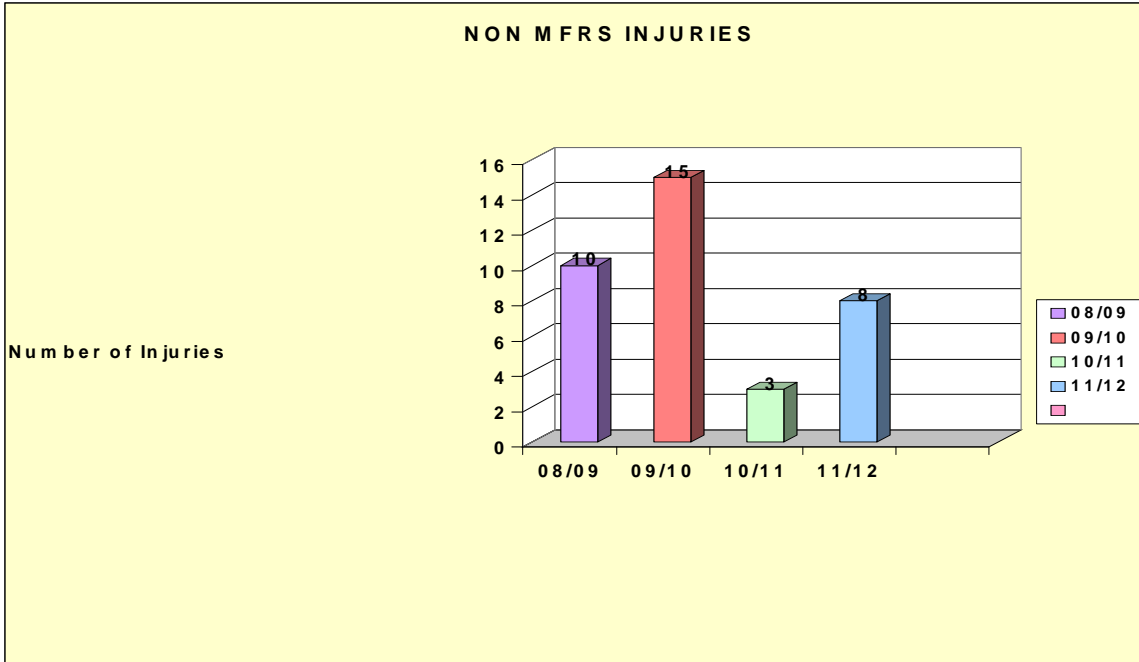
4.3.2 Whilst the number of injuries involving operational personnel was lower than the LPI set for the year an increase of two injuries over the reporting period from the previous year is noted. During the period an increase in on station training took place. 11 injuries were reported compared to 2 injuries attributable to on station training in the previous year. Also of note is injuries involving “working with hose” 10 incidents were recorded which is the same number as the previous year. This is consistent with the increased emphasis on appropriate extinguishing media being used for compartment firefighting, both during training and at operational incidents. Bespoke manual handling training for operational personnel is planned for the next year and emphasis will be placed on the correct techniques to be used when handling hose.

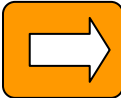
Non Operational Staff Injuries	Previous Year	Reporting Period	
	24	19	



4.3.3 A 26% reduction in injuries to non operational staff was recorded during the reporting period however again Manual Handling remains the main area for concern.

Visitors to MFRS premises	Previous Year	Reporting Period	
	3	8	



Slips Trips & Falls	Previous Year	Reporting Period	
	17	17	

- 4.3.4 Incidents of injuries due to slips trips and falls remained the same as the previous year, and analysis of the statistics indicates that occurrences occur across all working patterns and activities with no particular group or activity being more prone to this type of accident. A reduction of this type of injury will be brought about by a general increased awareness of safety issues and continuing to foster a safety culture. The next year will see the H&S team introduce the Organisational Safety Concept which has been developed around the principles of HS(g) 65 and in anticipation of the formal release of the CFRA Health Safety & Welfare Framework. It is believed that this concept will set the parameters by which a safety culture can be developed. (Appendix 2)

5 Other Notable H&S Activity during the year

5.1 Risk Assessments

5.1.1 Stress Risk Assessment

The Health & Safety team has been responsible for undertaking Stress Risk Assessments for MFRS staff on the request of the service doctor through the Occupational Health Department. A total of 37 assessments were carried out in the reporting period.

5.1.2 Analytical Risk Assessment

A member of the H&S team commenced delivery of training to Operational crews across all the watches from September 2011, this was completed in April 2012 and we have seen a marked improvement from crews, when submitting ARA forms and Risk Assessments.

5.2 Manual Handling

- 5.2.1 The H&S team has carried out a training need analysis looking at the number of employees who require manual handling training. Manual handling related injuries continue to be of concern across the organization. The MH package on learn pro has been completely reviewed and updated. Bespoke training has been planned for different roles with the content being 'job focused' and covering the manual handling considerations of the tasks likely to be carried out.

5.3 **Operational Procedures**

- 5.3.1 A major review of the Service Standard Operating Procedures commenced during the reporting period and this work is being led by the Operational Preparedness directorate. The new SOP's are being aligned to the Generic Risk Assessment and the work will include the creation of operational instructions and supporting training packages.
- 5.3.2 The use of SOP's which will ensure compliance with GRA's will be enhanced by the provision of quality Site Specific Risk Information.

5.4 **Equipment**

- 5.4.1 The Health & Safety Committee following an investigation into a significant H&S event have issued joint statements with both FBU and FOA emphasizing the absolute need for all individuals to maintain, test and record the outcome of tests for all PPE and RPE issued for their use
- 5.4.2 Plans have been put in place for the sampling of performance in this area with particular attention being applied to the completion and recording of Breathing Apparatus tests. This process will be preceded by a full communication exercise.
- 5.4.3 The Authority has invested heavily in the procurement of the very best appliances and equipment and despite financial constraint the reporting period has seen the issue of PBI Gold Fire Kit which conforms the highest possible specifications for this type of PPE

5.5 **Safe Workplace**

- 5.5.1 This reporting period has seen the removal of the locality manager role from stations; consequently the responsibility for workplace inspection has been passed to the nominated person.

5.6 **Workplace monitoring**

- 5.6.1 Quarterly workplace inspections continue to be carried out jointly between management and FBU representatives with the significant findings being recorded on the OSHENS system
- 5.6.2 The Service has been committed to obtaining OHSAS 18001 accreditation in March 2012, utilising the Training and Development Academy as a 'representative site'. The process is both thorough and lengthy, with continual annual review over three years. The TDA was successful in obtaining accreditation to OHSAS 18001, it has been decided that the TDA has been under scrutiny through audit and proved to be successful; therefore we are looking at carrying out similar audits at Vesty workshops and Service Headquarters in the years to come.

5.6.3 Following the audit we received notification from the British Safety Council that:

“This assessment resulted in the raising of no Non Conformance Reports. The company is, therefore, informed that: Certification can continue”

The report did not contain any recommendations for corrective action

5.6.4 All current Risk Assessments have been reviewed and are in date, we are looking to transfer them from public folders to OSHENS to improve the review process (from manual to automated)

5.6.5 A Risk Assessment Booklet is being developed to reflect the recent publication of the Health, Safety and Welfare Framework Draft document issued by CFRA.

5.6.6 Five of the Seven PFI Stations have been demolished and replaced with temporary Accommodation which was erected by Balfour Beatty and occupied successfully, all sites were provided with a Risk Assessment for the complex and a Fire Risk Assessment was undertaken on each of the sites. Birkenhead and Southport Fire Stations have yet to commence decant, but will be doing so this summer.

5.6.7 All current COSHH Assessments have been reviewed and the process of transferring them onto the Health & Safety section of the service portal site has been completed.

5.7 **Safety Information**

5.7.1 During the reporting period the Health & Safety Team have significantly enhanced the Health & Safety area on the service portal, all service staff have ready access to a wide range of information including:

- A Knowledge Base
- H&S policies & Service Instructions
- Risk Assessments – including COSHH
- Minutes
- Newsletters
- Training Documents
- Statistics

- 5.7.2 In addition links to other informative web sites such as Health & Safety Executive British Safety Council and RoSPA are in place.
- 5.7.3 Information is promulgated via the Service website, bulletins, e-mails, monthly newsletters, minutes, and meetings. Accidents, near misses and investigations are managed through OSHENS and are open to Managers and Representatives. OSHENS also stores all risk assessments and has a library of relevant information. Training and support in the use of OSHENS is offered by the H&S team and underpinned through e-learning package on LearnPro
- 5.7.4 Systems are in place for communicating health and safety and risk critical messages which are cascaded via e-mail which individuals can access. At station level a Risk Critical Information Book is kept and completed to ensure the transfer of safety critical information to different watches by Watch and Crew Managers.
- 5.7.5 The H&S Management Review Group which meets monthly is a pivotal group which provides feedback from incidents/ debriefs accident investigation and Operational Performance audits OPERA / Operational Assurance audits OPARA audits. Representatives from the Training and Development Academy (TDA), Health and Safety team and the Operational Preparedness and Operational Response teams sit on the Group and feed back to appropriate departments within their directorate.
- 5.7.6 A representative from the Operational Preparedness function attends the CFOA Regional Training Group which comprises of neighboring Fire and Rescue Services. Good practices and information are exchanged at this group. The Health and Safety Manager is a member of the CFOA North West Regional Health and Safety Committee.

6 Notable and recent developments and planning for the next year

- 6.1 In addition to the ongoing work detailed in this report improvement in the following areas have been identified for action in the forthcoming year and form part of the functional planning aspirations for Health and safety in the following year
- 6.2 **Operational Monitoring Team**
- 6.2.1 A major contribution to the Safe Organisation concept researched during this reporting period has been the creation and implementation for this next year of the Operational Monitoring Team.

- 6.2.2 In April 2012 the Authority approved the creation of the Operational Monitoring team situated within the Health & Safety section of the Operational Response Function.
- 6.2.3 The monitoring team currently consists of two Station Managers for whom the implementation development and administration of active monitoring activity is their core role and two Group Managers – GM Health & Safety and GM Opps Response, who provide monitoring and operational cover within the existing Senior Officer Cover system.
- 6.2.4 The team's methodology for monitoring both incidents and training events will be based upon the requirement to actively monitor as detailed in the draft CFRA Health Safety & Welfare Framework Document which states:
- “Operational Assurance at incidents deals with the effectiveness of Fire and Rescue Service arrangements for implementation of guidance contained in generic risk assessments and standard operating procedures, incident command, operational training and the maintenance of competence. By ‘actively’ monitoring operational performance Fire and Rescue Service can maintain and improve their ability to manage risks in the operational environment by learning from experience through the use of audits, monitoring and performance reviews.*
- 6.2.5 Auditing and performance review are the final steps in the health, safety and welfare management control cycle. They are an important component of the ‘feedback loop’ which enables the Fire and Rescue Service to reinforce, maintain and develop its ability to reduce risks and ensure the continued effectiveness of the health, safety and welfare management system”
- 6.2.6 To this end a set of monitoring criteria has been drafted which has been designed to measure compliance with Service Standard operating procedures and Operational Instruction, in doing this compliance with national Generic Risk Assessment's (GRA) is also monitored. The monitoring will also review the command activities being performed in line with current command school teaching around the decision making model.
- 6.2.7 A bespoke Operational Monitoring Team audit has been created in the OSHENS system

6.2.8 The development of the Debrief Module in OSHENS has been arranged and is currently in the process of completion, in consultation with Operational Response/ Operational preparedness, TDA & IMT. On completion the module will be managed by the newly formed Operational Monitoring Team.

6.3 **Safe Person Assessments**

6.3.1 The Service recognises that people are its most vital asset and is therefore committed to enabling them to carry out their work as safely and as efficiently as practicable. This means the provision of appropriate training is essential to provide personnel with the skills, knowledge and understanding to make the correct decisions in a risk critical environment as well as during routine duties. This understanding helps to reduce the number of accidents and injuries to staff and ensures that a thorough and informed assessment of risk is an integral part of all activities undertaken.

6.3.2 During the reporting period the Operational Response Function which includes the Health & Safety team have produced a set of assessment criteria which are designed to enable supervisory managers to assess the competence of operational firefighters. This criterion will be used to carry out “safe person assessments” and ensure that all operational Firefighters maintain the core competencies required to carry out their role safely & efficiently (undergoing proof of concept testing)

6.3.3 The Health and Safety team will also be progressing work during the 2012/13 in the following identified areas.

- Introduction of an operational Fitness & Monitoring Policy. - General improvement of Firefighter Fitness this will have an impact on operational personnel improving Health and Wellbeing and reducing injury.
- To ensure that all current risk assessments are transferred to OSHENS Management System for document control - To ensure that all risk assessments are accessible and can be version controlled. All documents will be in one place and used
- To undertake a review of H&S packages on the Learn Pro system & to improve it's content - To ensure that all Health & Safety information within Learn pro is current & suitable for all operational incidents – to incorporate learn pro packages to be used by the wider service such as Manual handling
- Reduction of Injuries across the Service through improving communications and visibility of the Health and Safety department in the workforce- To ensure that manual handling training awareness and

importance is raised and that initial and refresher training is undertaken by MFRS staff

- Introducing a new debrief management tool to improve the effectiveness of the operational debrief system in order to ensure that key information from operational debriefs at all levels is captured and acted upon

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The Annual Health and Safety Report 2011-2012 details the Service's health and safety performance and identifies areas which will bring about continued improvement. There has been a significant improvement in performance during the reporting period however the maintenance and continual improvement of health and safety standards is essential.
 - 7.2 The report describes a mixed year in terms of reduction in injuries and accidents, however Manual Handling injuries remain of concern and plans are already in place to minimize these in the next year.
 - 7.3 The Service recognises the changes and challenges which are ahead; however the continued commitment of personnel and the continued development of a positive safety culture we will ensure that the standards in health and safety will continue to improve.
-