

East Ayrshire Council Health and Safety Review 2000

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper summarises the findings of a general review of East Ayrshire Council's Health and Safety Management System. The review was requested by the Head of Personnel as part of the Council's commitment to continuous improvement; it was conducted between 18th October 2000 and 18th December 2000.

The objective of the review was to assess the effectiveness of the health and safety management system, to ensure that it is up-to-date and to seek improvement opportunities.

1.1 Criteria for Review

The criteria against which the current practices were reviewed included the following:

- a) HSE document reference HS(G)65. (This is a widely recognised set of guidelines for implementing successful health and safety management. The principles of this document are reflected in the British and International H&S standards BS8800 & ISO 18001.)
- b) The Council's Health and Safety Policy and the associated standards and procedures.
- c) Current Health and Safety Legislation and Codes of Practice.

The Government's document entitled "Revitalising Health and Safety", which was published in June 2000, was also considered during the review.

1.2 Key Success Factors

The key elements of a successful H&S management system can be summarised as follows:

1. Visible management commitment and active H&S leadership.
2. Effective policies which set clear direction, are linked to business plans, and demonstrate commitment to Continuous Improvement.
3. Suitable organisation and management structure for delivering the policy, underpinned by employee motivation, and "ownership" in all matters relating to H&S - Good Teamwork.
4. Planned and systematic approach to implementing the Policy through a well thought out H&S management system.
5. Good communications.
6. Competent personnel.
7. Measurement of performance against known standards.
8. Auditing and reviewing performance to learn from all relevant experience and to apply the lessons. This includes external comparison and sharing of best practice with other organisations and competitors.

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1.3 Method of Review

The review was conducted by:

- a) Assessing the documented H&S policies, procedures and standards.
- b) Holding discussions with employees. (This included departmental directors, line managers, supervisors and "front-line" workers).
- c) Observing the day to day activities of the safety officers and safety co-ordinators within each department of the Council.
- d) Attending meetings. e.g. Joint Consultation/Risk Management/Emergency Planning/Community Safety Forum/H&S Committee/Working Groups
- e) Time-study exercise within the H&S section.
- f) H&S questionnaire survey.
- g) Review of records held within H&S section.

1.4 Revitalising H&S – The Government's Strategy

The Government's initiative to revitalise H&S was announced by the Deputy Prime Minister in March 1999. A strategy document was issued in June 2000 following consultation. At the heart of this are the first ever targets for Great Britain's health and safety system: e.g

- Days lost from work-related injury and ill health to be reduced by 30% by 2010.
- Incidence of fatal & major injuries to be reduced by 10% by 2010.
- Incidence of work-related ill health to be reduced by 20% by 2010.

The strategy includes a detailed action plan, which may have a direct effect on the Council's activities E.g. Proposals for:

- Public bodies to summarise their H&S performance and plans in their Annual Reports.
- New Code of Practice on Directors' H&S Responsibilities, also, legal changes to make these responsibilities statutory.
- Revised incident reporting regulations.
- More powers for safety representatives.
- Easier prosecution processes.
- Increased involvement of Insurance Companies.
- Improved H&S in construction activities. (Public bodies to achieve "exemplary" standards).
- New Occupational Health strategy.
- Next stage of new deal for disabled workers is to strengthen rehabilitation services for people who become disabled or have persistent sickness.
- National Curricula for Schools to include H&S skills. (England & Wales at present)

A summary of the Government's action plan for Revitalising H&S is presented hereafter as **appendix (v)**.

By implementing the recommendations given under section 4 of this report, the Council will be well placed to meet the Government's proposals.

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2.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

(Note: The strengths and improvement opportunities noted below are not listed or ranked in any particular order).

2.1 Strengths

- a) The organisational structure for H&S.
- b) Staffing resources allocated to Health and Safety section.
- c) Health and Safety Policies at Corporate & Department level.
- d) Master Safety Files.
- e) Risk Management Meetings.
- f) Consultation Meetings.
- g) Commitment to Health at Work.
- h) Community Safety Forum.
- i) Provision of Training and Training Facilities.
- j) H&S Communications: H&S induction, Master Safety Files, H&S notice boards, departmental information booklets, leaflets, training, risk management meetings, consultation meetings, the Intranet, and "Eastwords" magazine.
- k) Employee Counselling Service.
- l) 24 hour Emergency Telephone (Community Alarms and Help Line Service).

The above points represent examples of good management practice, and are strengths on which to build continuous improvement.

AGENDA