Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service

Protecting Our Community

Health & Safety Strategy 2015 – 2020
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This strategy sets out how the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) will underpin organisational Corporate Aims and Objectives with a comprehensive Health & Safety Strategy for the period 2015 to 2020 and will allow NIFRS to keep abreast of European and UK legislation. This will help ensure organisational compliance and continued development of notable practice.

It sets out how NIFRS will protect our employees and others against accidental death, injury, or ill-health in the workplace. My aim as Director of Community Protection, together with every staff member under my command, is to do everything reasonable that we can to prevent any accident before it occurs and to develop best practice.

The strategy is intended to continuously improve safety provision, and to work in partnership with the representative bodies to make both the operational and support services workplaces as safe as we possibly can.

With regard to meeting the costs underlying this strategy, which is anticipated to be cost-neutral, NIFRS shall act responsibly to ensure the health, safety and welfare safeguards yielded by the strategy are ensured whilst operating within realistic budgetary constraints and guidance contained within the results of previous audits.

It supersedes our previous strategy and will last until April 1st 2020 unless circumstances dictate that we need an earlier revision; the implementation of the strategy will begin in 2014–15 when it has been agreed following all necessary consultation.

Where are we now?

Figure 1: Current Organisational Chart

Strategic Context

A time of Structural Change

In recent years, it has been a time of both great success and enormous challenge for the organisation. It has been an incredibly busy time for NIFRS because in addition to our core service delivery we have had the challenge of preparing for local events with global impact such as the G8 Summit and the World Police & Fire Games.

The Corporate Management Team is moving forward with a programme of extensive change management and organisational improvement while at the same time facing the challenges of managing an increasingly tight budget.

Looking ahead, 2014 and beyond will be a period of immense challenge and change. The financial pressures that we, as an organisation, face in the coming years mean that all of us need to be prepared for and open to the necessary changes that will be required. While our priority will always be to protect our core service delivery we will have to look at every aspect of our business to identify ways in which we can do things smarter, more effectively and efficiently.

Work is well under way to lead the Service through what is likely to be a difficult period.

A time of Firefighter Fatalities

There has never been a more important time to direct the health & safety strategy for NIFRS and the wider Fire & Rescue Service; regrettably, despite the best efforts of many, there have been a number of notable firefighter fatalities in recent years.

It is only 11 years since the loss of our colleague Leading Firefighter Joe McCloskey at
The tragic fire at Gorteen House Hotel in Limavady on 1 November 2003.

On 14 July 2013 Firefighter Stephen Hunt from Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service died while tackling a large fire in Manchester City Centre, and Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service suffered the deaths of two firefighters, Alan Bannon and Jim Shears, at Shirley Towers in 2010.

Four firefighters from the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service were killed whilst tackling the blaze at a warehouse near the village of Atherstone on Stour – the largest loss of life for a fire service in the United Kingdom for 35 years; and in the Republic of Ireland Firefighters Brian Murray and Mark O’Shaughnessy died while fighting a blaze at a disused ink factory at Adelaide Villas, Bray in September 2007.

All these tragedies serve to illustrate that neither NIFRS nor the Fire Service nationally can afford to be complacent about the safety of our staff.

A New Framework

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Health, Safety and Welfare Framework for the Operational Environment

The DCLG Framework document is intended to assist Fire and Rescue Services in balancing risks, specifically in their wider role to protect the public and property, while meeting their health and safety at work duties to protect their staff and others.

The Framework is based on the systematic POPIMAR (Policy, Organisation, Planning and Implementation, Measuring, Auditing and Review) model for managing health and safety – a model which is described within Health and Safety Executive guidance document, Successful Health and Safety Management, HSG 65, around which NIFRS has structured its Health & Safety Management System since its publication.

The Framework is centred on the planning and delivery of safe systems of work based on the safe person principles. It was developed with input from the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser, the Health and Safety Executive, the Fire Brigades Union, the Chief Fire Officers’ Association, and devolved administrations.

The document cites that Health and Safety Executive inspectors may reference the guidance when inspecting a Fire and Rescue Service’s arrangements for managing health, safety and welfare. Thus NIFRS sees the framework document as the essential way forward, and undertake to work towards compliance with its principles.

Other changes in National Guidance

The DCLG Framework document does not sit in isolation, and there are many other changes nationally that impact on NIFRS, propelled by a devolution of central government powers, emerging and changing legislation, and a change to operational procedures in the light of terrorism attacks and threats. For instance, under the terms of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, the eight regional fire services in Scotland were replaced by a single Scottish Fire and Rescue Service for the whole of the country from 1 April 2013.

Owing to the nature and range of Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) activities, and to avoid having inconsistencies of approach across regional FRSs, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has produced a series of generic risk assessments (GRAs) to help FRSs in drawing up their own assessments meeting the requirements of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. Using the DCLG assessments as part of their own risk assessment strategy, FRSs are to assess their specific risks local to their region. The
GRAs provide a guide to the type of information, arrangements and training that should be given to the incident commander, firefighters and any other personnel likely to be affected.

The risks faced by FRs are today’s world pose threats far beyond those associated with residential fires and vehicle accidents.

FRSs face new challenges that demand diverse and in-depth knowledge, preparation, and resources. Use of biological agents poses a serious threat because they are relatively accessible and spread rapidly. Nuclear threats, incendiary threats, chemical threats and explosive threats add to the complex web of scenarios for which FRs must be prepared. In response, FRs are continuously learning about and applying new technology. For example, the New Dimension programme was established following the terrorist attacks on the United States of America of 11 September 2001.

The programme aims to enhance the capacity of FRs to rapidly, effectively and flexibly tackle the consequences of terrorist and other large-scale catastrophic incidents such as flooding, by providing appropriate specialist vehicles and equipment; training for firefighters to use the new equipment; and supporting planning for deployment of the equipment in the case of an emergency. DCLG committed £330 million to the deployment of the equipment in the case of an emergency. DCLG committed £330 million to the deployment of the equipment in the case of an emergency. DCLG committed £330 million to the deployment of the equipment in the case of an emergency. DCLG committed £330 million to the deployment of the equipment in the case of an emergency.

Outcomes from Peer Reviews and other Audits

NIFRS has undergone two Peer Reviews of Health & Safety practices since 2007. As a result of these a range of work has been undertaken to improve the Health & Safety Management System. As an organisation, NIFRS is extremely proud of its Health and Safety record, and continues to operate a robust Health & Safety Management System to keep all personnel and others safe.

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The hazards associated with NIFRS activities are multiple and include dealing with extreme temperatures, flame and toxic combustion products, unstable structures, infectious diseases, lifting and carrying hazards, and vehicle hazards. Consequently, HSPU is constantly enhancing the NIFRS Health & Safety Management System to provide managers with best practice and direction about what to do and how to do it in managing Health & Safety risks.

Health and safety is an inherent part of all NIFRS management activities and has links to all areas/disciplines of the service. The board-level champion of health and safety is the Director of Community Protection, who also chairs the Ops Policy & Safety Forum, where NIFRS management and representative bodies work in partnership as they also do on major accident investigations. The manager of the HSPU reports directly to the Director of Community Protection.

NIFRS is committed to further development of the (QSA-based) Health & Safety Peer Review Process with other Fire services in CFOA (Chief Fire Officers’ Association) North West Group. Over 120 personnel in NIFRS are trained to NEBOSH Certificate Level. Of these, a significant number are Senior or Middle Managers; several are Graduate members or Chartered members of IOSH. All NIFRS Officers are being trained to IOSH Managing Safely standard as part of the Integrated Personal Development System.

The H&S section of the NIFRS computer network provides a vehicle for rapid dissemination of occupational health and safety information ‘electronically’ H&S information is available in all workplaces, including 67 Fire Stations, through the computer network. Further to the established “navigation by folder” system having been expanded, NIFRS has designed, introduced and maintained a “web based” intranet service to all personnel. The recent introduction of the Document Management System has made H&S information even more accessible. Minutes of the Ops Policy & Safety Forum, along with Health & Safety Policies, Risk Assessments, and Health and Safety Bulletins are all published on the computer network. Further to the established “navigation by folder” system having been expanded, NIFRS has designed, introduced and maintained a “web based” intranet service to all personnel. The recent introduction of the Document Management System has made H&S information even more accessible.

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Current Health & Safety Delivery

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Accident levels in the past 3 years

Table 1 – RIDDOR Reportable Major

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Table 2 – RIDDOR Reportable over 3 days

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Table 3 – Near Misses

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NIFRS provides a suite of H&S courses detailed in the Annual Health & Safety business Plan, which includes Induction training for all new employees. Health & Safety training is linked to the appropriate developmental level, e.g. Induction training at entry level, Risk Assessment and Accident Investigation at supervisory level, and the specific requirement of the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) that Watch Managers must attain a specified standard of H&S training. Places are offered and readily made available on all NIFRS safety-related courses for Union appointed Safety Representatives, including the Risk Assessment and Accident Investigation courses. This equips the workforce to be in touch with management processes, and empowers the workforce.

Regular Health and Safety awareness visits to Fire Stations are carried out by HSPU in conjunction with Safety Reps. This is a demonstration of partnership working between NIFRS and the representative bodies. NIFRS has developed a bespoke database allowing managers to measure health and safety performance and run reports to identify where problems have arisen and improvement can be achieved. NIFRS communicates good practice and potential health and safety threats beyond the organisation through, e.g., membership of the Chief Fire Officers’ Association North West region (CFOA NW), attending quarterly meetings. The established NIFRS accident reporting and investigation policy was recently subject to a major review and revision. To learn lessons from accident investigative findings, NIFRS segregates unsafe conditions from unsafe acts during data analysis; examines working conditions, procedures, maintenance, supervision and training arrangements, and constructs a timeline / causal tree to establish the immediate, underlying, and most importantly root causes of the event. For any accident in NIFRS, cross-reference is made to any relevant risk assessment, to determine if it is suitable and sufficient. The investigation team must detail an action plan to prevent recurrence, with completion dates and managers responsible specified. The investigative findings must be validated for effectiveness by a Senior Manager, and either accepted or rejected by the H&S specialist team. Personnel who must be informed about the action plan, through to completion, are listed.

A number of NIFRS Officers have been trained in ‘Advanced Professional Certificate in Investigative Practice’ to help ensure a systematic and consistent approach to investigating accidents and incidents.

**Health & Safety Management System Delivery**

**Interrelationships**
The Health and Safety Executive publication Successful Health and Safety Management HS(G)65, as represented in and influenced by the more recent DCLG Health, Safety and Welfare Framework for the Operational Environment, remains the prevalent model for Health & Safety Management in NIFRS, and its principles have been adopted to provide a template for meeting statutory obligations and providing a healthy and safe working environment. According to HS(G)65, a Health and Safety Management System (HSMS) is an integrated organisational mechanism designed to control health and safety risks, current and future health and safety activities and ensure, as a minimum, compliance with legislation. It should be composed of interrelated and cohesive policies, plans and procedures that are designed to produce a consistent approach to meeting health and safety objectives. It should by creating awareness, understanding and commitment motivate all within the organisation to optimise health and safety performance.

In NIFRS, the HSMS comprises:
- Health and Safety-related outputs from other sources (e.g. Operational guidance FRS Circulars)
- Health and Safety Aide-Memoirs and Handbooks
- Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Bulletins
- Health and Safety Risk Assessments
- Health and Safety Training Courses and Information Workshops
- Health and Safety Accident and Near Miss Investigations
- Active Operational monitoring
- Health and Safety Communication documentation
- Health and Safety Committees / Working Groups
- Health and Safety Audits, Inspections, and Awareness Visits
- Internal and External Stakeholders and other sources of advice and information.

All of the above interrelate, and the list is neither exhaustive nor exclusive.

In order for the NIFRS HSMS to function effectively, it is essential that there is an unhindered two-way information flow between all of the relevant stakeholders, including external stakeholders, such as recognised Representative bodies (Trade Unions) and the enforcing body HSEN. Other information exchange includes communication with the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA), Department for Communities and Local Government / Office of the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser (DCLG/CFRA), the Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI), the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), and the National Irish Safety Organisation / Northern Ireland Safety Group (NISO/NISG). Again, this list is representative rather than exhaustive.

**Health & Safety Policy Framework**
The principles of HS(G)65 also demand that a committed organisation identifies its mission, and establishes a framework of Health and Safety policies as appropriate guidelines for action by management. In line with HS(G)65, NIFRS believes in the fundamental necessity for the development of a Health & Safety Policy Framework – guidelines for action without which management do not know what they are expected to do, or how. The framework provides NIFRS with the tools to adequately address the specific requirements contained in statutory regulations and make suitable arrangements for conformity. It provides the necessary information for individual managers to know what to do and how to do it, in safety related matters. NIFRS Health & Safety Policy Framework is contained (electronically) within a readily accessible suite of folders which constitute the NIFRS Document Management System. The Document Management System is constantly under development, review, and expansion.

**Risk Management**
Within NIFRS Health & Safety Policy Framework are NIFRS policies which address:
- the undertaking of risk assessments
- the recording of risk assessment findings
- the implementation of actions required to adequately control risks
- the monitoring of risk control measures
- the regular review of risk assessments.
The Operational Policy & Safety Forum aims to include representatives of the recognised Trade Unions so that every type of worker group is represented. NIFRS Management Representation on the Forum comprises:
- Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Community Protection) (Chair)
- Area Commander (Community Protection) (Vice Chair)
- Group Commander (Emergency Response)
- Group Commander (4 x Operations (Areas))
- Group Commander (Technical)
- Group Commander (Operational Risk Management)
- Group Commander (Fire & Rescue Training Centre)
- Group Commander (Occupational Health & Welfare)
- Group Commander (Community Safety) Western Area HQ
- Assistant Group Commander (Health & Safety)
- Health and Safety Adviser
- Estates Manager
- HR Manager
- One Regional Control Room Representative

Recognised Trade Union Safety Representation on the Forum is made up of the following:
- two FBU representatives
- one NIPSA representative
- two UNITE representatives
- one RFU representative.

The Operational Policy & Safety Forum sits bi-monthly, and is scheduled to complement the schedule of the NIFRS Corporate Management Team meetings. This is intended to enable items agreed at the Operational Policy & Safety Forum to be informed to and processed by the NIFRS Corporate Management Team expediently, and fed back to the Forum at its next meeting.

Where do we want to be?

Our mission, vision and key areas of focus

The Mission of NIFRS is:
To deliver a fire and rescue service and work in partnership with others to ensure the safety and well-being of our community

Our Vision is:
Protecting our Community

Our values are:
- People – we value keeping our people safe and well trained
- Leadership – we value leading by example
- Teamwork – we value working together
- Integrity – we value the utmost integrity in everything we do
- Diversity – we value equality and fairness and we consider the needs of our staff and the community we serve
- Communication – we value open and honest communication with our staff and with all our stakeholders
- Partnership – we value working in partnership
- Pursuit of excellence – we value continuous improvement at all levels of the organisation.

In order to protect our community and keep our people safe, NIFRS is committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees and others affected by NIFRS activities. This shall be achieved by the control of foreseeable risks to their health and safety.

This commitment extends beyond legal compliance with the Health & Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and is intended to form a foundation for the pursuit of effective management of health and safety in all of the organisation’s work activities. People are the key resource within the organisation, and the cornerstone of NIFRS strategic objectives in the management of health and safety will be the development of a positive health and safety culture throughout the organisation. This can only be achieved through a spirit of participation, effective communication and co-operation between all personnel, and by consultation with employees and their representatives.

To “close the loop”, we will continually monitor what we do in order to ensure that we continue to provide the best possible service. The strategy will help us to achieve our vision, mission and values, and lead to better performance in our key areas of focus.
Key areas of focus

1. Safety of personnel

Accidents are the principal cause of premature, preventable death for most of a person’s working life.

Accidents are often relatively easy to prevent, mainly through education and information. Interventions are often both inexpensive and effective, saving money and suffering.

2. Transport Accidents

In NIFRS we make a lot of vehicle movements every year, and often our vehicles have to drive at high speed in difficult situations.

NIFRS need to make all of our drivers and our vehicles as safe as reasonably practical through the use of:

- training for our drivers, including refresher training
- appropriate specification for our vehicles and an appropriate renewal policy
- technology
- partnership with representative bodies and professional driving organisations to promote a safety culture in this important area of our work.

3. Health & well being

Staff well-being is an increasingly relevant and necessary consideration in the modern workplace. Well-being and stress management issues are within the overall ‘duty of care’ that an employer owes to its employees.

From an organisational management perspective, wellbeing is a major factor in quality, performance, productivity and therefore business effectiveness. Where a person’s wellbeing reduces, so typically does his or her performance and effectiveness.

Workplace stress has been defined by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as “The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work …”

The cost to the individual can be high, for example undermining quality of life, relationships, self-esteem and health.

This type of stress occurs where employees feel unable to cope with work demands or environment, and can result in decreased productivity and reduction in physical or mental health. The costs to the organisation are high in terms of reduced productivity, absenteeism, staff turnover, and potentially, civil claims arising from stress-related ailments.

NIFRS recognises the role of management in promoting wellbeing. Management is crucially positioned to identify and address signs of stress at an early stage.

NIFRS shall initiate appropriate and timely intervention to prevent problems from escalating, and shall endeavour to improve workplace activities through ensuring appropriate workloads and good interpersonal communication. This in turn will help to lower absenteeism and staff turnover, and to improve productivity.

4. Compliance with legislation and Health & Safety guidance

NIFRS recognises the importance of compliance with Health & Safety legislation. Employers have a duty enshrined in law to protect their employees from harm while in employment and to provide a safe environment in which to perform their duties.

NIFRS commitment to effective health & safety management extends beyond legal compliance. The organisation recognises that improving health & safety performance is also a business opportunity to reduce the costs associated with avoidable losses, and leads to a more productive, highly motivated workforce.
5. Working in partnership

In NIFRS we recognise the importance and the benefit of working in partnership with other stakeholders in order to improve the service that we provide to the public.

There are a wide range of partners that we may engage with, and many potential benefits. These include Representative bodies, HSENI, The Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) and other professional organisations such as RoSPA and IOSH.

NIFRS will continue to develop these relationships and seek to further embed the principles of good Health & Safety both locally and nationally; developing and learning from notable practice.

6. Planning informed by Active and Reactive Monitoring

Good Health & Safety management depends upon the supply of accurate and timely information. NIFRS will continue to develop systems to ensure this is available and the results form part of the planning process for service delivery.

7. Excellence

A fundamental challenge for NIFRS is to reach ‘Best Practice’ standards of excellence. In this regard NIFRS considers the pursuit of excellence in health and safety as important as the pursuit of excellence in any other of its activities.

Our Strategy – priorities and targets

In seeking to develop our strategy NIFRS will use the “Plan, Do, Check, Act” principles as outlined in HS(G) 65 as a framework for our objectives. This is not a one-off process but a continuous cycle, and the Actions required will be driven by the outcomes earlier stages of the cycle.

Plan

Objective 1

NIFRS will comply with Health & Safety guidance and legislation (key areas of focus 1 & 4). In accordance with publication HS(G)65, Effective Health and Safety Management, NIFRS is continuously engaged in:

• The development of a H&S Policy framework;
• The (planning and) organising of resources;
• The setting of standards;
• Audit, i.e. measurement of performance against the standards;

NIFRS has a framework of H&S policies established in an electronic system which constitutes a framework of Health & Safety policies within the Document Management System. These are intended to provide continuing guidelines for action by management. Without these policies, management would not know what they are expected to do to manage health and safety effectively, or how. The production and development of the policy framework by HSPU is a fundamental building block for achieving legislative compliance and effective H&S management in the organisation.

A major piece of Health & Safety guidance for Fire and Rescue Services was published in 2013 in the form of the Health Safety & Welfare Framework for the operational environment. NIFRS has a working group in place with the aim of securing compliance with the framework.

Objective 2

NIFRS will ensure that Health & Safety requirements are embedded into the Corporate and Operational Planning process (key area of focus 6). In order to ensure that Health & Safety issues can receive the necessary consideration as part of the wider planning processes in NIFRS, the organisation will be provided with a report on an annual basis outlining areas of Health & Safety need and performance. This report will be produced and approved by the Ops Policy & Safety Forum and will be published for CMT and the board to enable the contents to be considered as part of the organisational planning process.

To enable the best fit with the planning cycle the report will be published on 1st December each year reflecting the previous twelve months. The
Objective 2.1: NIFRS will produce an annual report outlining Health & Safety performance and areas of future need and publish this information to CMT and the Board on 1 December each year.

Objective 2.2: NIFRS will publish and display local Health and Safety plans for each District/district department.

The report will provide information on:
- Accidents and injuries
- Near Misses
- Equipment/vehicle failures
- Days lost due to injury
- Legislative changes
- Innovations in H&S delivery
- Statutory compliance

At a more tactical level NIFRS will produce localised action plans for each station/district department and these will be published and displayed locally along with relevant Health and Safety information.

Objective 3

Assessing, Controlling and Minimising risk (key areas of focus 1, 2, 3 & 4). Measuring risk is a sophisticated process. We will achieve this through the application of our risk modelling processes to address risk in a consistent and professional manner. Within the existing NIFRS Health & Safety Policy Framework, there are a cluster of NIFRS policies which provide a comprehensive structure for addressing:

- the undertaking of risk assessments
- the recording of risk assessment findings
- the implementation of actions required to adequately control risks
- the monitoring of risk control measures
- the regular review of risk assessments.

NIFRS will continue to operate the on-going risk assessment programme within the parameters of the systematic level risk assessment model nationally established in the Operational Risk Management Model. This process will continue to be driven, co-ordinated and monitored by the Health and Safety Policy Unit.

Control measures will be implemented in line with the internationally agreed hierarchy for risk control:
- the first and most effective method requires that we seek to eliminate the process/activity that is causing the hazard, e.g. remove a photocopier from a working area
- the second level is substitution, and involves replacing a hazardous activity/substance with a less hazardous one, e.g. using water-based paint rather than lead-based
- engineering controls seek to remove the operator from the hazard and involve such as interlocks on machinery
- administrative controls involve changing work practices/procedures to reduce exposure to a hazard, e.g. digging up a road on a Sunday when there is less traffic
- use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is the last and least effective method of controlling risk as it relies upon people to maintain and wear PPE properly and doesn’t reduce the hazard.

Relative to the rest of the organisation, the operational environment presents particular difficulties in the effective management of Health and Safety. These difficulties arise because NIFRS cannot control the work environment, which can be an inherently dangerous workplace, impossible to make safe. NIFRS shall, therefore, direct their efforts to making the Firefighter safe. In this scenario, NIFRS will continue to assess risk within the parameters of the dynamic level risk assessment model and Safe Person Concept nationally established in the Operational Risk Management Model.

Do

Objective 4

Achieve Health & Safety competence for all NIFRS personnel (key areas of focus 1, 2, 3 & 4). Health & safety competence is an important part of everything that we do. Unsupervised work activities will be restricted to trained and authorised personnel who are familiar with the work they are carrying out, the hazards associated with the work, and the safety precautions to be observed. Specifically:
- the risk assessment process will assist in determining the level of training needed for
each type of work as part of the preventative and protective measures
- new employees will receive basic induction training in health and safety, including arrangements specific to their particular workplace and role in NIFRS
- further training will be provided when an employee’s work environment may cause them to be exposed to new or increased risks.
- Refresher training, where appropriate, will be repeated periodically to ensure continued competence.

It is accepted and expected that all operational training will have a strong emphasis on maintaining safe systems of work, in line with the principles of OP20 this in conjunction with Standard Operating Procedures and appropriate risk assessment will help to deliver the “Safe Person Concept” as outlined in the Health & Safety Framework and the Operational Risk Management Model.

Health & Safety training requirements will be determined annually in line with the Training Needs Analysis process already established with the training function. As a minimum, the following will be provided to the appropriate staff by NIFRS:
- Induction
- Risk Assessment
- Accident Investigation
- Health & Safety for supervisory roles
- Health & Safety for senior executives
- Specialist H&S qualifications as required (e.g. Construction Skills Register training, NEBOSH etc.).

**Objective 5**

Improve Health & Safety communication to promote Health & Safety and help deliver a safer workforce (key areas of focus 1, 2, 3, 5 & 7).

Delivery of this strategy is dependent upon effective communication at all levels of the organisation. NIFRS will strive to ensure that two-way communication is maintained at all levels and that information received can be put to good use.

It will be a further principle of this strategy that communication should be in person where appropriate and that feedback and suggestions should be actively sought.

**Objective 6**
The pursuit of excellence in Health & Safety (key area of focus 7).

Where possible within the constraints of personnel and financial resources NIFRS will examine the possibility of seeking third-party accreditation of our Health & Safety processes through external professional bodies. The principle involved will be such that such accreditation will only be sought where success in achieving it will add value to the organisation and any resulting actions are fed into the organisational business planning process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>15/16</th>
<th>16/17</th>
<th>17/18</th>
<th>18/19</th>
<th>19/20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.1 NIFRS will provide appropriate Health &amp; Safety training to all members of staff as required.</strong></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.2 NIFRS will carry out a Health &amp; Safety training needs analysis on appointment for individuals and annually for the organisation.</strong></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.3 NIFRS will ensure that contractors working on our premises can demonstrate appropriate levels of competence.</strong></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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**Objective 6.1**
NIFRS will communicate Health & Safety messages to our staff regularly through:
- Core Brief
- Health & Safety posters
- Health & Safety workplace visits

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.1 NIFRS will communicate Health &amp; Safety messages to our staff regularly through:</strong></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.2 NIFRS will seek appropriate Health &amp; Safety information from the workforce through:</strong></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.3 NIFRS will develop and maintain a network of trained Health &amp; Safety champions in all areas of the organisation to help promote and deliver a safer workforce</strong></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.4. At the regional and national level NIFRS will engage with appropriate professional and statutory organisations in order to ensure that we remain abreast of developments in the Health &amp; Safety environment.</strong></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Check**

Objective 7
Monitor our performance and use the information to guide future Health & Safety development (key area of focus 6).

A hugely important aspect of the “POPIMAR” system as outlined in HS(G)65 is the whole area of Audit and review. Successful Health & Safety management depends upon the ability of an organisation to examine its performance, look for areas of improvement and develop safer systems through a risk-based approach.

Health & Safety monitoring falls into two broad categories, “Active” and “Reactive” monitoring. Active Monitoring within the NIFRS Health & Safety Management System (HSMS) shall include:
- Health and Safety Near Miss Reporting and Investigation
- Active Operational Monitoring, involving direct observation of operational work by NIFRS Officers to assess compliance with established procedures and risk control measures.
• Systematic scrutiny of the Health and Safety Management System to assess the degree of compliance with organisational procedures and the achievement of specific objectives; and identify activities where procedures either do not exist or do not provide adequate guidance
• Health and Safety Audits, Inspections, and Awareness Visits, in conjunction with the representative bodies, to ensure the on-going operation of safe practice
• Health and Safety tours by NIFRS managers
• Health and Safety attitude and behaviour Questionnaires / Surveys to monitor employees’ opinions of Health and Safety arrangements
• hazardous substance monitoring and health surveillance to check the effectiveness of COSHH controls and detect the early signs of effects on health
• direct observation of work activities and behaviour.

In terms of Reactive Monitoring, NIFRS shall continue to apply established accident reporting and investigation procedures outlined in the appropriate, regularly updated, policy.

We shall also utilise the bespoke database to allow managers to measure health and safety performance and run reports to identify where problems have arisen and lessons can be learned. We will publish performance of departments, stations etc. in the form of ‘Accident Free Days’.

NIFRS will continue to run accident investigation courses for supervisory level personnel, to equip those with accident investigation and risk assessment duties to effectively perform them, and we shall continue, as part of the Accident Investigation procedure, to make an appropriate cross-reference to any relevant risk assessment, to test its suitability and sufficiency. NIFRS established attendance management procedure shall be used with local management intervention for managing sickness absence, and appropriate referral to NIFRS contracted occupational health services and private medical treatment as appropriate.

Active and reactive monitoring information will also be fed into the Ops Policy and Safety Forum. This information will then be produced and published in the appropriate format to enable decisions and actions to be taken appropriately by those concerned i.e. IRMP team, Technical Research & Development department, Estates etc.

Objective 15/16 16/17 17/18 18/19 19/20
7.1 NIFRS will introduce Active and Reactive monitoring as standing item on the agenda of the Ops Policy and Safety forum. ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
7.2 A standardised reporting mechanism will be introduced to enable Active and Reactive monitoring information to be communicated and utilised by the relevant departments. ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

Act
By planning, doing, and checking, NIFRS will progressively establish how effective the Health & Safety Management System is in managing risk and protecting staff. The organisation shall learn from accidents and incidents, ill-health data and other experiences; including that from other organisations similar to our own. If and when we do find any issues, NIFRS shall take swift action – strategies, policies, procedures, plans and risk assessments will be revisited and updated accordingly. Problematic issues uncovered by audit shall be prioritised and effectively dealt with to reflect that we are a learning organisation.

We will measure our performance utilising information collated from a number of relevant sources, these will include for example (but not exclusively):
• the Incident Recording System
• financial records.

Performance Indicators
The table below shows the performance indicators that will show how well we are meeting the targets outlined in this strategy.

Reporting our performance
NIFRS will report on our performance through our annual report. The NIFRS Board meets monthly in a public meeting. We will report our performance monthly to the board based upon the indicators outlined above. The NIFRS Board is the primary policy maker for NIFRS; Accountability for the discharging of all statutory duties under current Health & Safety legislation lies with the Board. The Board has undertaken to discharge its duty within the legislation.

Responsibilities
• Responsibility for delivery of this strategy lies with the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO),

Consultation and review
This strategy will be consulted upon in line with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. We also want to allow the public to have their say in relation to what we are planning for their service, so we would like to invite everybody to make contact and share their opinions with us.

Review
NIFRS will review this strategy 12 months after implementation and at any time when there is reason to believe that the strategy is no longer fit for purpose.

Measuring our performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>What does this show?</th>
<th>Metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The number of accident-free days across NIFRS.</td>
<td>How well we are carrying out our duty to prevent accidents in the workplace; the effectiveness of the NIFRS HSMS.</td>
<td>This is a competitive metric. The results will be published by station/department to allow management to concentrate on areas where results are not as good as others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The percentage of H&amp;S policies and Risk assessments reviewed and updated on time.</td>
<td>How well we are meeting our statutory duty to comply with H&amp;S legislation.</td>
<td>NIFRS target is to achieve 100% compliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The number of H&amp;S visits and inspections carried out across the organisation within the last 12 months.</td>
<td>How visible we are, from the top of the organisation and throughout it, in demonstrating commitment to a positive H&amp;S culture.</td>
<td>Each workplace should receive a H&amp;S awareness visit once every 3 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The cost of days lost due to accidents at work.</td>
<td>How well we are preventing and mitigating the effects of injuries at work.</td>
<td>NIFRS will seek to achieve a 20% reduction over the life of the strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headquarters</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Fax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIFRS Headquarters</td>
<td>1 Seymour Street, Lisburn BT27 4SX</td>
<td>028 9266 4221</td>
<td>028 9267 7402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Centre</td>
<td>79 Boucher Crescent, Belfast BT12 6HU</td>
<td>028 9038 9800</td>
<td>028 9066 4888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Area Headquarters</td>
<td>22–26 Waveney Road, Ballymena BT43 5BA</td>
<td>028 2564 3370</td>
<td>028 2564 5673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Area Headquarters</td>
<td>Thomas Street, Portadown BT62 3AH</td>
<td>028 3833 2222</td>
<td>028 3835 0341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Area Headquarters</td>
<td>6 Bankmore Street, Belfast BT7 1AQ</td>
<td>028 9031 0360</td>
<td>028 9031 3226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Area Headquarters</td>
<td>10 Crescent Link, Londonderry BT47 5FR</td>
<td>028 7131 1162</td>
<td>028 7134 1926</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

08/2014