

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, HEALTH AND INJURY MANAGEMENT

(Public Sector Commissioner's Circular 2009-11: Code of Practice: Occupational Safety and Health in the Western Australian Public Sector)

FESA is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors, and the continuous improvement of injury prevention and injury management programs.

The framework established in the *Workers' Compensation Code of Practice (Injury Management) 2005* has been used to inform the development of our injury management system. Our staff and volunteers are provided with guidance and training in the field, and at the FESA purpose built training facility in safe work practices to not only ensure compliance with relevant state and national legislation and Australian Standards, but also to manage the extremes experienced during the management of emergency situations of all sizes and types.

Operational personnel and administrative staff are expected to comply with occupational safety and health (OSH) policies, procedures and guidelines and to conduct business in a safe manner, not placing themselves or others at risk. Contractors working on FESA premises are also required to conduct their activities in a manner that ensures the health, safety and welfare of others.

We are also committed to assisting our people who are injured to return to work as quickly as is clinically appropriate and in a safe, supportive environment that enables them to achieve the best possible recovery. Our approach to injury management is set out in the [Chief Executive Officer's Statement of Commitment](#).

An external audit of our Safety Management System completed in June 2010 acknowledged our strong operational focus on safety issues and provides a platform for reform and enhancement of safety, health and welfare policies, structures and systems for the future.

During 2010/11, priority will be given to addressing the following recommendations:

- Refining occupational safety and health (OSH) policy which is aligned to, and reflected in, strategic objectives.
- Strengthening organisational mechanisms to improve the capture, analysis, management and reporting of OSH issues.
- Improving the integration of OSH across all FESA operations.
- Enhancing communication, consultation and decision making processes.
- Increasing focus on OSH issues through targeted engagement strategies.

Formal processes and mechanisms have been established to facilitate meaningful and effective consultation on occupational safety and health issues. These processes encourage staff and volunteers to contribute to the decisions that may affect their safety and health at work. These include:

- Establishment of our Fire and Rescue Service Occupational Safety and Health Committee, which meets at least quarterly.
- More than 30 fully-trained elected OSH representatives in the workplace.
- Standard procedures for consultation and communication on hazards and other work safety issues.
- Online access to a range of materials including safety circulars, guidelines, reports, research and standard operating procedures.
- Participation of OSH representatives in consultative groups.

We take a systematic approach to injury management that encourages:

- Early intervention to injury management.
- Early and accurate medical assessment, together with ongoing management of each case as required.
- A return to work as soon as is practical, including identification of alternative duties where appropriate.

The initiatives undertaken to prevent injuries during 2009/10 included:

- Strong Spines training.
- Biomechanical checks for firefighters.
- Committing to a national three-year retrospective cancer study, known as FireWatch, involving career and volunteer firefighters.
- Health monitoring programs.
- Wellness initiatives, exercise programs including yoga, pilates and walking groups, and promotion of healthier lifestyles through the Fruit at Work program and Weight Watchers.
- Mental Health Awareness program run on 'all shifts' of all career fire stations.

Two uniformed firefighters have joined the Health Safety and Welfare Branch, one as a Health and Safety Officer and the other as a Welfare Officer. This has improved communication between uniformed and corporate areas.

The number of reported hazards and injuries has increased significantly over the past year with hazard reports increasing by 39 per cent and injury reports increasing by 21 per cent. The increase in reporting is consistent with an increase in awareness of safety and health as a result of the re-establishment of the FRS OSH Committee, the safety and health audit, uniformed officers joining the branch, and a more consistent approach taken in the reporting of minor injuries and capturing some injuries through the workers' compensation system that had not been reported accurately in the past.

During 2009/10, FESA employees covered under the *Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981* lodged 218 workers' compensation claims. As at 30 June 2010, these claims amounted to \$4,116,208.

FESA volunteers are covered under personal injury insurance arrangements. During 2009/10, volunteers lodged 35 claims, with payments totaling \$141,429 at 30 June 2010.

Our indicator results for 2009/10 show an improvement on last year.

While the number of claims has increased (lost time injury/diseases (LTI/D) incidence rate), the cost of claims for 2009/10 has decreased by 22 per cent from 2008/09. The decrease in cost can be attributed to injuries of lesser severity and improved return to work outcomes.

As is expected, the average cost of claims is falling in line with the decrease in overall cost of claims. The average cost of workers compensation claims has decreased by 31 per cent and is at the lowest level in four years.

Indicator	Target 2009/10	Result	
		2009/10	2008/09
Number of fatalities	Zero (0)	Zero (0)	Zero (0)
		Achieved	
Lost time injury/diseases (LTI/D) incidence rate	Zero (0) or 10% reduction on previous year	9.54	7.52
		Not Achieved: 21% Increase	
Lost time injury severity rate	Zero (0) or 10% improvement on previous year	4.7619	6.6667
		Achieved: 28.6% reduction	
Percentage of injured workers returned to work within 28 weeks	Actual percentage result to be reported	99.12%	98.96%
		Achieved – improvement on last year	
Percentage of managers trained in occupational safety, health and injury management responsibilities	Greater than or equal to 50%	30%	30%

FESA RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

The [FESA Reconciliation Action Plan](#) (RAP) covers the period 2008-13. It was developed to support staff in embracing reconciliation as a means of securing a better future for Indigenous people. It is a commitment by FESA to take action to assist Indigenous people to enjoy the same advantages and opportunities as all other Australians and be able to participate fully in Australian society. The first FESA RAP evaluation report has been completed, indicating many of the focus area actions are well on target, with others to be progressed during 2010/11.

Significant achievements have been made during 2009/10.

Focus Area – Relationships

- A new RAP committee has been established.
- New partnerships with core Aboriginal groups in metropolitan and regional areas have been identified, developed and promoted across FESA.
- The FESA RAP communication strategy, developed and launched in 2008, is ongoing.

Focus Area – Respect

- New Aboriginal flags were purchased for FESA House and the FESA Training Centre. All FESA metropolitan and country facilities are encouraged to acquire Aboriginal flags to fly during significant Indigenous events.
- Three cultural awareness training sessions were delivered with approximately 80 staff participating.
- FESA actively participates in NAIDOC week and other Indigenous celebrations.
- Protocols for 'Welcome to Country' ceremonies have been included in the FESA Official Events Policy Statement 41.
- The promotion of Indigenous knowledge and learning through culturally appropriate community safety resources and programs has been progressed with the school education program Good Fire – Bad Fire in the Kimberley and Ngaanyatjarra Lands, road crash rescue training in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands and consultation with metropolitan community groups in the development of a targeted Fire Safety in the Home awareness program for Aboriginal groups.