



Southern Rural Fire Health and Safety Update January 2015



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SECTION 1 - Introduction

The Southern Rural Fire Authority (SRFA) is responsible for all types of fires in the rural area which occur within the District and is committed to taking all practicable steps to ensure the health and safety of all personnel when training or working for the Authority.

This Health and Safety (HSE) report is to update the SRFA Committee any other stakeholder(s) on progress and activities relating to HSE within the District.

1.1 Overview

During the calendar year of 2014 SRFA volunteer, contract and agency fire crews committed to approximately 3966 man hours attending training, prescribed burning and responding to fires and other emergencies. Almost 30% of the total workload was spent undertaking response activities without incident.

There was one reported minor injury accident which occurred on a VRFF training night where a firefighter received some superficial bruising due to slipping while climbing down from the top of the tank on a fire appliance. This incident has been investigated and steps taken to ensure the hazard is minimised.

While completing this update, a vehicle accident has been reported on 1 February involving a VRFF fire appliance which has hit a bridge while returning from an incident. It is too early to provide additional detail of this event which did not cause any injuries and has been reported in this update as a near miss. Further detail will be provided in the next health and safety update.

Medical and pack testing is well underway throughout the District and the new policy appears to be working well. Recently it was found by the occupational health nurse that one of our contract firefighters, who was not a firefighter by choice, was deemed to be a hazard. SRFA took steps to remove the firefighter from the fire crew to ensure the ongoing safety of all personnel involved with fire suppression activities.

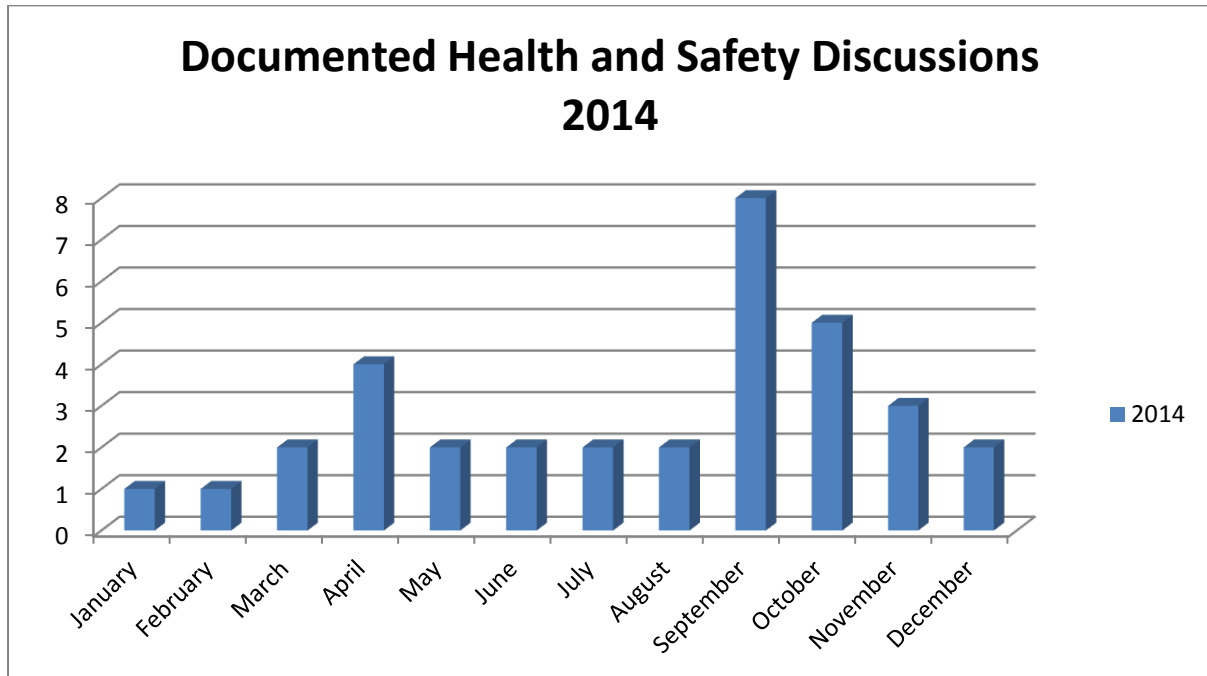
Local health and safety representatives have been put in place with the following VRFF: Blackmount, Hedgehope and Garston. Others will likely follow in due course.





SECTION 2 - Documented Health and Safety Discussions

To date there have been 34 documented HSE discussions. These include SRFA staff meetings where identified hazards have required review, meetings relating to the roll out and introduction of the HSE management system and training events where identified hazard controls contained in the HSE management system have been discussed and utilised.





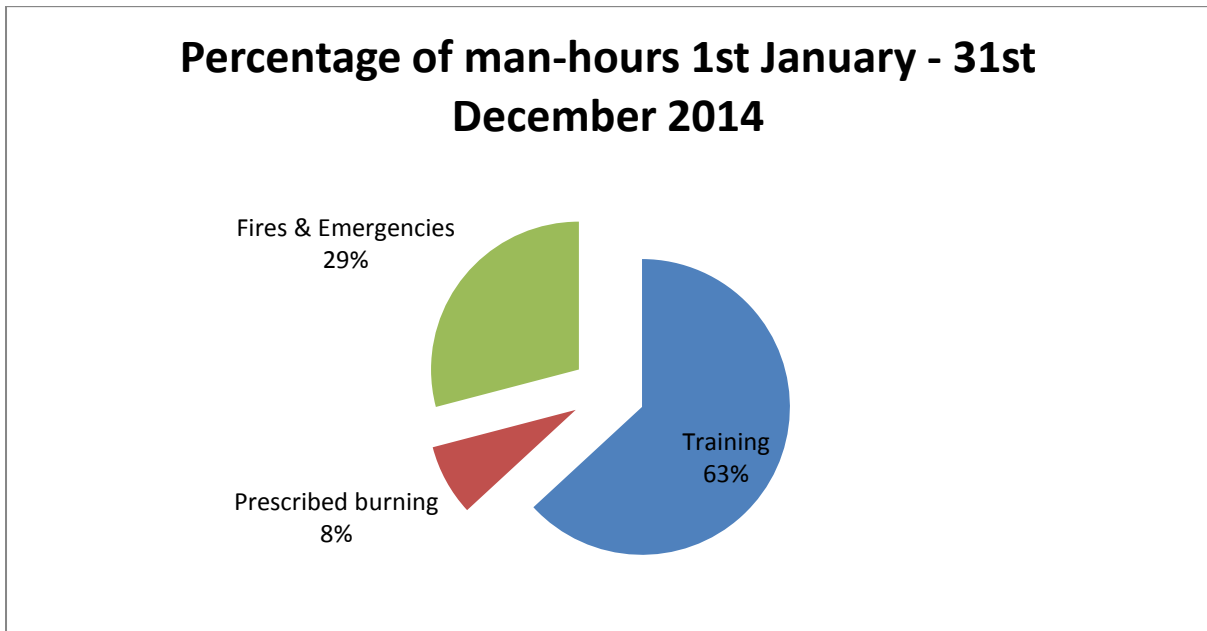
SECTION 3 - Reported Events

As of 1 February SRFA has achieved 137 days since the last recorded injury event. This related to a minor injury received by a VRFF firefighter on 16 September 2014 while climbing down off the tank of a rural fire appliance during training. Previous to this incident SRFA had achieved 268 days since its previous injury, which related to a NZ Fire Service volunteer on 20 December 2013.

While compiling the Health and Safety Update, an accident involving a VRFF rural fire appliance hitting a bridge causing damage has been reported which occurred on 1 February 2015. Detail of this accident are still being sought, however there were no injuries as a result and has been reported as a near miss in this update.

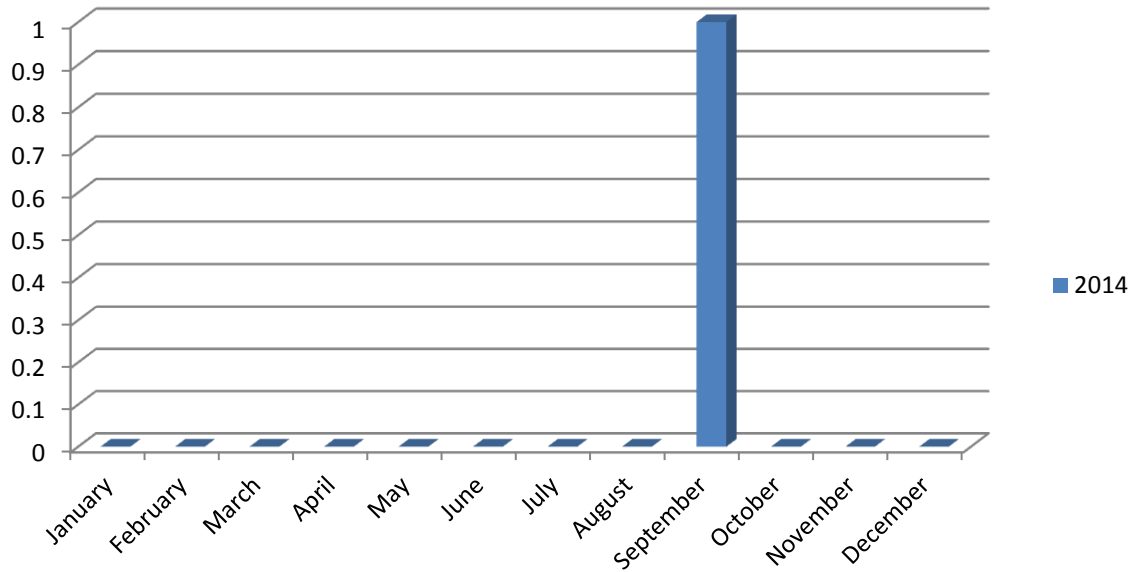
There was one reported near miss incident during 2014 which occurred on 11 March, however it was not formally reported until early April. This involved an incident previously reported on during a prescribed burn.

It is estimated that based on the frequency of trainings of agency and contract fire crews undertaken between 1 January 2014 - 31 December 2014 and the average attendance of each VRFF that approximately 2,504 man hours of training have been undertaken during this period. Approximately 309 man hours have been spent undertaking prescribed burning operations and a further 1,153 man hours in attending fires and other emergencies.

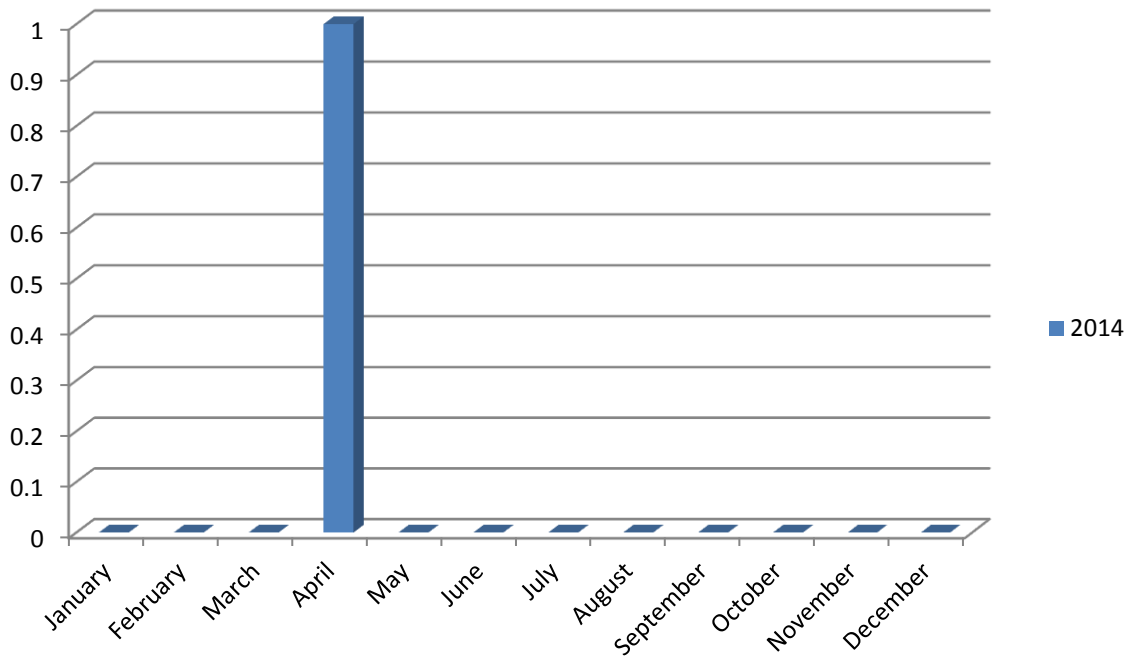




Number of injury accidents reported 2014

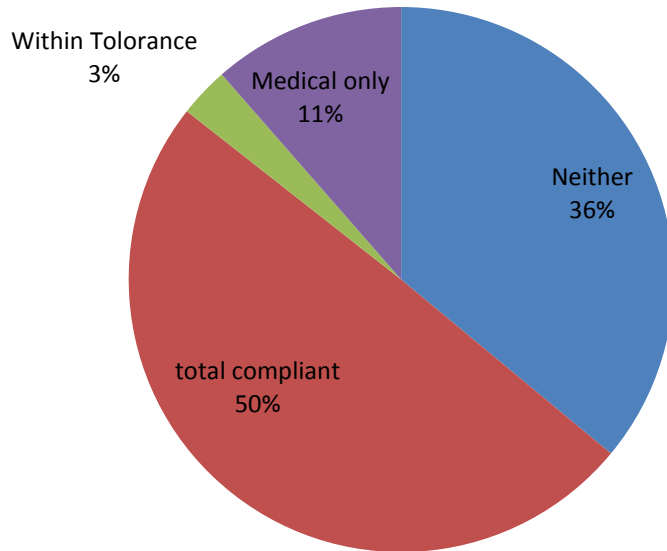


Number of near miss incidents reported 2014



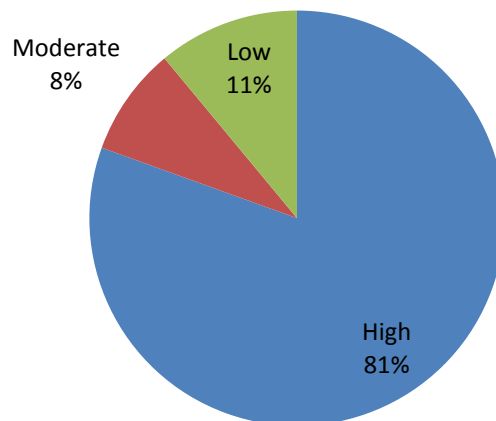


Current Pack Test Status



Note: Subject to consistent change. "Within tolerance" relates to personnel who have gone overtime in their pack test but within tolerance set in SRFA Health and Fitness Policy.

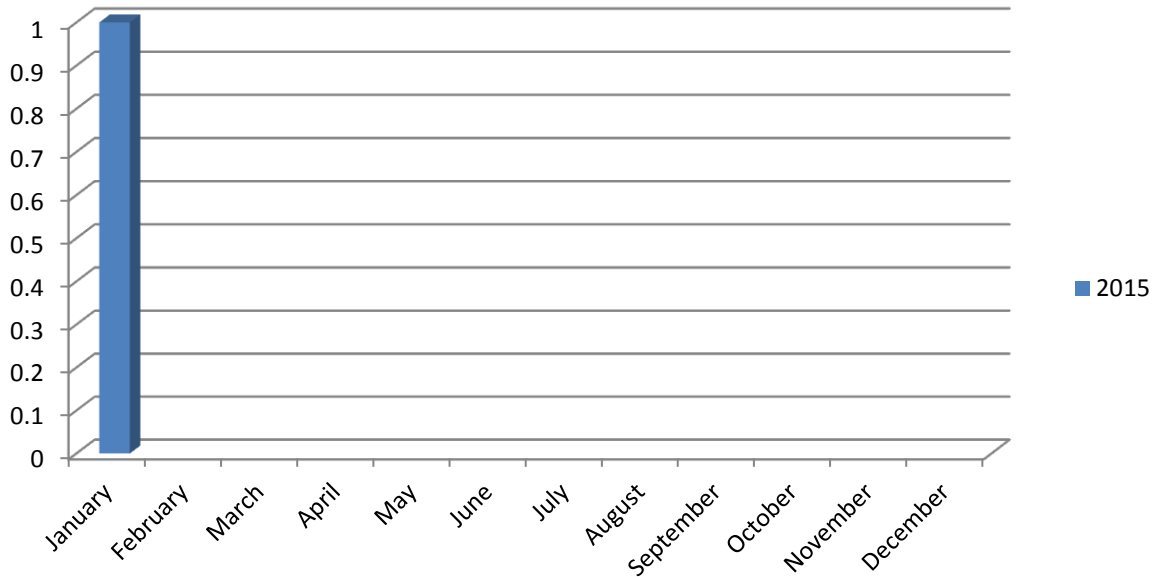
Type of pack test personnel require



Note: Data above provides an overview of the total pack test requirements for all personnel involved with SRFA.



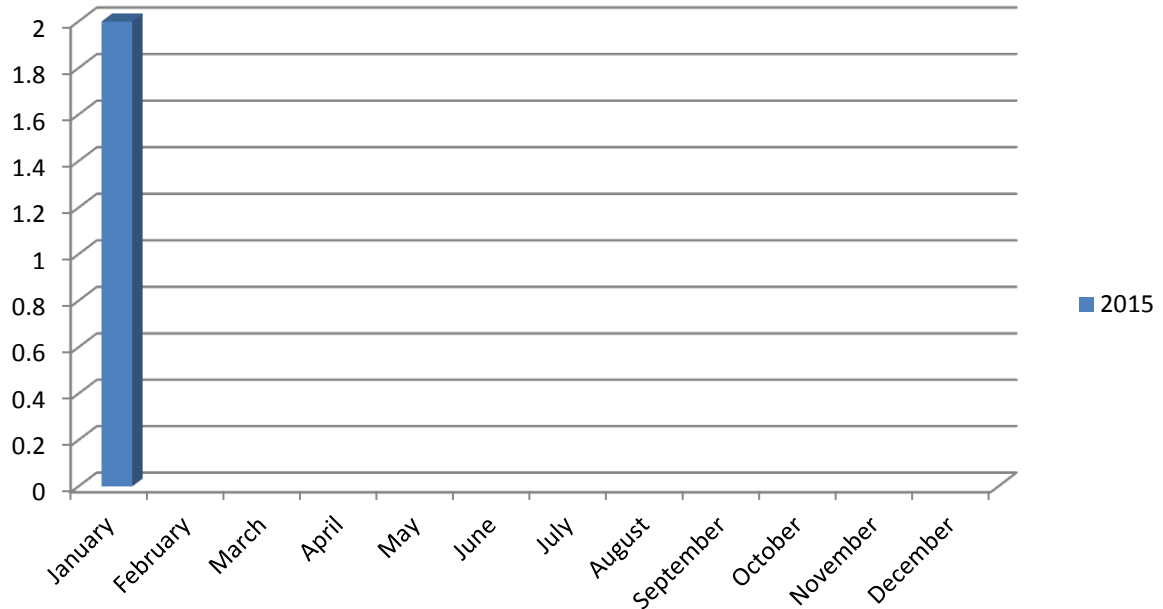
Number of near miss incident 2015



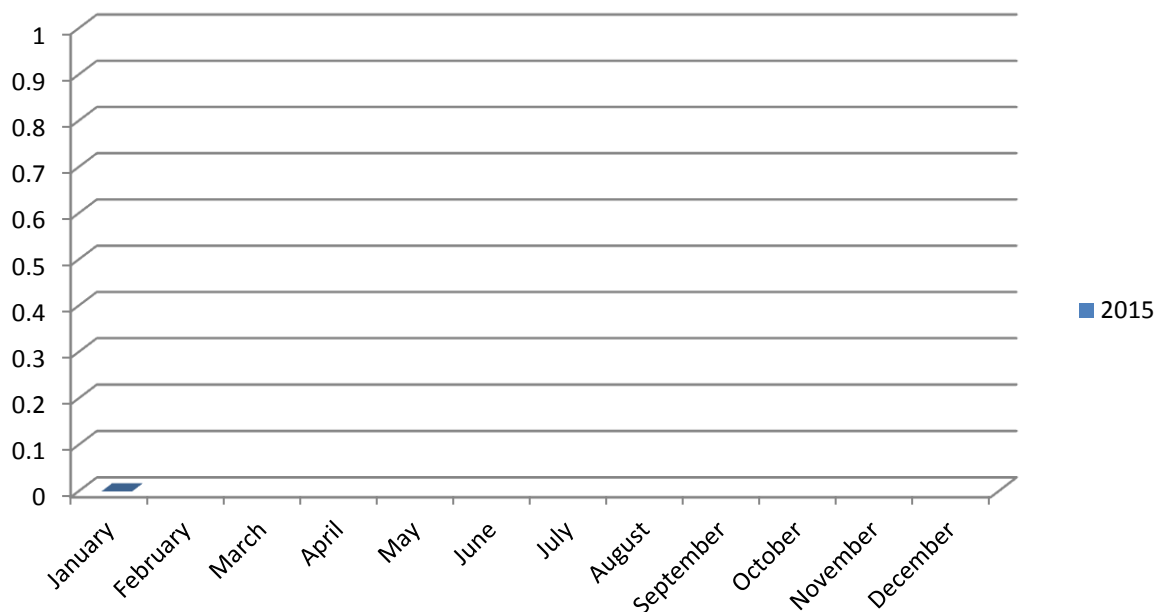
Note: Near miss incident relates to a non injury accident involving a VRFF fire appliance on 1 February. It is reported at a near miss for this report until further detail becomes available



Documented Health and Safety Discussions 2015



Number of injury accidents reported 2015





SECTION 4 - Safety Alerts



SAFETY ALERT

With our fire season well and truly under way - here's some essential lessons from recent incidents across South Canterbury, Otago and Southland:

1. WE NEED TO KNOW WHERE YOU ARE:

Make sure you use K-codes and if you are attending a larger incident always check in to the ICP. Do not self-deploy – everyone's safety depends on it.

2. YOU NEED TO KNOW WHERE YOU ARE:

It's common for our call-outs to be at night and to have uncertainty as to the location of the fire or how to access it. Always consider the condition of the road and whether you have any alternative escape route. Do not enter commercial forests unless you have an escort or have discussed previously with your RFO. You may need to confirm you have radio communication.

3. SCENE ASSESSMENT IS ESSENTIAL:

In these conditions fire behaviour is likely to be extreme and you need to adjust your initial attack to suit the conditions. Use lookouts and plan escape routes. Do not underestimate fire rate of spread or the ability of a fire to change direction or jump.

4. YOUR RURAL FIRE EQUIPMENT IS NOT INVINCIBLE:

Rural fire equipment is used in a number of challenging conditions but if damaged it can cause major gaps in our readiness and response. This is particularly true for fleet. Please be careful driving - look after yourselves and your equipment.

