ABSTRACT
This report provides an update on key health and safety issues/actions within the Roads Department during the period 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004 and sets out further health and safety actions planned for 2004/2005.

1 RECOMMENDATION
1.1 It is recommended that the Committee agree to note and approve the contents of this report

2 INTRODUCTION
2.1 In accordance with the Angus Council Health and Safety policy, each department is required to monitor and evaluate its health and safety performance and prepare an annual report for submission to its service Committee. The Departmental Annual Health and Safety Report should list significant health and safety issues/actions that relate to the department for that particular reporting period, and any planned action or development of the departmental safety management systems during the next reporting period.

3 DETAILS
3.1 Review of Activity During 2003/2004

3.1.1 Accidents & Dangerous Occurrences (Near Misses) Reporting

There were six reported accidents involving staff during the 2003/2004 reporting period, none of which resulted in staff being absent from work. In relation to staff reporting Dangerous Occurrences or ‘Near Misses’ there were three separate incidents, one of which involved staff almost being involved in a road traffic accident, although no injuries resulted from this incident.

One of the accidents reported involved a member of the Roads Department staff on a construction site at Arbroath Harbour which was under the control of a Contractor. This accident, which was due to a crawler-mounted crane losing its balance, resulted in an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive and the outcome is awaited.
No incidents of violence or aggression were reported during the 2003-2004 reporting period.

3.1.2 **Roads Department Sickness Absence**

The total sickness absence recorded for the Roads Department in the period from 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004 represented 1.36% of the total number of working days lost against available working days. The overall Council sickness absence figure for the same period of time was 4.10%.

3.1.3 **New Safe Working Practices Procedures**

The Roads Department Safe Working Practices (SWP’s) have been prepared with the objective of providing guidance for all Roads Department staff on safe systems of work for the range of operations in which they are involved. Although comprehensive, the manual is not exhaustive and therefore staff must apply the principles of accident prevention through effective use of the risk assessment process in order to manage the inherent risks associated with their particular work activities. As a result of on-going reviews of both new and existing work practices, four new Safe Working Practices were produced, with a further thirteen being updated.

3.1.4 **Risk Assessment**

Risk assessments have been undertaken in all sections of the department during 2003/2004, with twenty-three new formal risk assessments being carried out to address identified hazards within the workplace, and five existing risk assessments being modified due to significant changes in the work activity. The Roads Department has also created a Stress Risk Assessment Programme that will assist in assessing potential stress related risk for all posts within the department. Approximately 60% of the overall Stress Risk Assessment Programme was completed during the 2003/2004 reporting period.

3.1.5 **Departmental Health and Safety Performance Monitoring**

Monitoring of the Roads Department health and safety performance during 2003/2004 was achieved through the following departmental forums & internal processes: -

**Forums**
- Road Department Health & Safety Co-ordinating Group
- Quality Management Team
- Joint Workplace Inspections with Unison
- Roads Management Team Meetings

**Internal Processes**
- Balanced Scorecard (Departmental & Corporate Model)
- Safe Working Practices
3.1.6 **Office Accommodation**

As a result of the information provided by the Roads Department Workplace Inspections, which are carried out jointly by Unison and the Director of Roads’ representative, a number of improvements were made to the offices located in County Buildings and Kirriemuir Road, Forfar.

Although both locations still have outstanding office accommodation issues, a number of which will be addressed during the 2004/05 financial year, the proposed relocation of staff based at Kirriemuir Road to County Buildings in 2005 will negate the need to find a resolution to the perennial issue of ambient temperature control at the Kirriemuir Road Office, which was highlighted in last year’s Roads Department Annual Health and Safety Report.

3.1.7 **Health & Safety Training**

A number of health and safety related training opportunities were attended by various staff within the department as a result of either being identified through the appraisal process or to meet legal/statutory requirements. One example of the Health & Safety related training that Roads Department staff received during 2003/04 was Emergency First-Aid Training, with over 50% of the department attending the training sessions which were both organised and delivered by the Roads Department’s Office Manager who is a trained and certificated First Aider.

A Men’s Health Workshop was held in October 2003 as part of the Department’s progress towards achieving the Scotland Health At Work (SHAW) Silver Award.

3.2 **Planned Activity 2004/05**

3.2.1 The Roads Department is committed to maintaining and improving its safety record through a combination of carrying out effective risk assessments and updating safe working practices to reflect the inherent risks associated with each task, and providing all staff with the most appropriate health and safety training to minimise the risks as far as reasonably practicable.

3.2.2 The key health & safety activities planned for 2004/2005 include the following: -

- Assessing the effectiveness of the trials of the Guardian Angel Lone Working System that was trialled by a sample of staff within the department who, due to the operational requirements of their posts, regularly work unaccompanied in remote locations.
- Health related workshops which in addition to meeting the specific health needs of the Roads Department staff, will also provide significant contribution to achieving the SHAW Silver Award, and continue to actively promote all corporate 2004-2005 SHAW events.
- Implement a Safe Working Practice Audit Regime to assess the understanding/application of Safe Working Practices by Roads Department staff.
- Develop the existing health and safety management system in order to provide more meaningful management information relating to the performance of the department in health and safety matters.
4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the recommendations in this Report. The costs of Health and Safety Training, etc have been allowed for within the Roads Revenue Budget for Departmental Administration.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Chief Executive, the Director of Law and Administration, the Director of Finance, the Director of Property Services and the Personnel Services Manager have been consulted in the preparation of this Report.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 The low number of accidents recorded in the Roads Department during 2003-2004 can be attributed to the pro-active approach to carrying out effective risk assessments in relation to the various service activities that the department carries out. Other contributing factors to the low accident figure include continuous review of staff’s health and safety training needs and regular monitoring of both the department’s health and safety management procedures and the working environment. The Roads Department will endeavour to build on its excellent safety record and to reduce the potential for accidents and lost working days that might result from such accidents. The recent incident which was investigated by the Health and Safety Executive emphasises the need for constant vigilance, safety awareness and implementation of health and safety policy and procedures.

R W McNeil
DIRECTOR OF ROADS

NOTE:

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

GH/JSG
12 May 2004
REPORTS/health&safety.june04