

## Section 9: Health and Safety

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Kilkenny County Council is committed to safeguarding, as far as is reasonably practicable the Safety, Health and Welfare of all employees, contractors and visitors. Health and Safety underpins all aspects of fire service response. Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service operate in line with the Kilkenny County Council Safety Management System. Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service have a current Safety Statement in place.

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service have adopted the Standard Operating Guidance produced by the NDFEM and is localising it as required. Risk Assessments are in place for all incident types. Risk Assessments are in place for all fixed workplaces, equipment, PPE and general activities. Exercise risk analysis are carried out for offsite exercises and training.

Health and Safety Representatives have been elected in all Fire Stations. A representative from this group also attends the Kilkenny County Council Joint Consultative Safety Management Committee.

Health and Safety Representatives have been trained in the delivery of their role. They carry out inspections within their own stations, and identify issues as they arise. Any issues arising are tracked to closure. All Health and Safety Representatives meet with Fire and Rescue Service Management at safety management committee meetings each quarter.

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service recognises that the nature of the work carried out by the organisation may result in operational staff dealing with emergency incidents that might cause individuals or groups to experience critical incident stress. This will be a uniquely personal reaction that will be different for everyone. This reaction can be triggered by many different aspects of any emergency incident and these triggers will again be different for everyone. The recognition by an individual that they are experiencing Critical Incident Stress is not seen as a weakness in that individual by Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service.

*A **Critical Incident** is any event that generates such intense emotional energy that it overwhelms an individual's or a group's ability to cope and causes impairment in work or personal activities.*

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service has a critical incident stress management (CISM) policy and an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for all employees that are involved critical incidents.

All contractors and service providers are assessed as to their Health and Safety competency in providing service to Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service.

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service are in the process of attaining full compliance with the Local Authority Safety Management System (SMS) which is regarded as being the equivalent of OHSAS 18001 Accreditation. It is the aim of the Fire and Rescue Service management that when there is full compliance with the LA SMS, it can then be decided subject to resources, if it is appropriate to move to ISO 45001 accreditation. Safety management plans are developed on a yearly basis.

Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service use the National Incident Command System (NICS) to manage safety on the incident ground and on training courses. It provides for managing risk using a Dynamic Risk Assessment process.

Due to the nature of activities carried out by Fire Services, Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service is very conscious of continually striving to make the workplace as safe as possible. The continual improvement in all aspects of the Fire Service enhances Health and Safety for fire service employees.

The ongoing developments are reflected in the following areas (*note this is not an exclusive list*) -

- Organisation and Structure,
- Crewing Arrangements,
- Fire Station Infrastructure,
- Fire Appliance Fleet,
- Equipment and PPE,
- Water Supplies,
- Training,
- Communications,
- Operational Procedures and Standards,
- Fire Safety,
- Preparation for Major Emergencies.

**Objectives for the Period of this Plan:**

**Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service is committed to safeguarding, as far as is reasonably practicable the Safety, Health and Welfare of all employees, contractors and visitors.**

**Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service is committed to attaining full compliance with the Local Authority Safety Management System (LA SMS) and subject to resources may move to ISO 45001 accreditation.**