



Annual Health and Safety Update

Agenda Item 15

National Park Authority Board Meeting

09 March 2026

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1. Purpose

1.1. This paper provides our 2025/26 annual update to the Board on Health and Safety. It outlines our progress in reducing identified Health and Safety risk, and highlights priorities for the coming year.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. It is recommended that the Board notes the content of this report

3. Contribution to National Park Partnership Plan 2024-2029 and/or our Corporate Plan 2025-2030

3.1. This paper contributes to our Corporate Plan through our commitment to invest in our staff, as well as focusing on continued improvements of our systems and processes to ensure compliance with Health and Safety.

4. Background

4.1. Our Health and Safety Policy details our organisational responsibilities and approach to compliance with health and safety legislation.

4.2. The CEO has overall accountability while the Board’s responsibilities include:

- Assure itself that there is a written Health and Safety Policy, in which management responsibility for health and safety is clearly allocated at all levels;
- Receive and consider health and safety reports enabling evaluation and monitoring of the health and safety performance of the National Park Authority;
- Review significant risks faced by the National Park Authority; and,
- Adopt a scrutiniser role to ensure that the National Park Authority continually develops and improves the Safety Management System.

4.3. This report provides input to the Board to show performance against our policy objectives, including last year’s health and safety priorities, and support in evaluating our current health and safety position and in setting priorities for the coming year.

4.4. It highlights details on key achievements, the ongoing work undertaken to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all, provides an overview of reported health and safety incidents and safety concerns, and lists key risks and safety priorities to be addressed during 2026/27.

4.5. This report also contributes to our overall monitoring activity.

5. Progress on 2025/26 Health and Safety Priorities

5.1. Our Health and Safety plan for 2025/26 focused on key priorities. The table below sets these out and our progress on each.

2025/26 Action	Progress
<p>Policy Development and Documentation: All listed policies in this section are aligned and scheduled as per our 5-year Policy Review Plan.</p>	<p>Complete (general review and minor changes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display Screen Equipment (DSE) • Infection at Work • Risk Assessment <p>Partially Complete (will be complete by end of Fiscal Year)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety
<p>Compliance Check Programme: Continue our compliance check programme with a focus on identification of issues within functional teams, and</p>	<p><u>Scheduled Compliance Checks:</u></p> <p>Complete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Team • Boat Team <p>Partially Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estates (Units)

<p>implementation of improvements.</p> <p>Compliance to Health and Safety Arrangements: Continue to review and monitor to ensure all health and safety arrangements are embedded and effective.</p>	<p><u>Performance:</u> Results of the assessments undertaken highlight that while year-on-year improvements are being made our overall compliance to health and safety arrangements continue to need attention.</p> <p>Further improvements from this year's assessments have been identified, with these being in the provision of documented safe systems of work, and sufficient information, instruction and training.</p>
<p>Implement Incident Reporting App</p>	<p>Complete: Park Safe implemented and operational</p>
<p>Wellbeing provision</p>	<p>This continues to be monitored and promoted by both the Health & Safety Committee and the Human Resources Department.</p> <p>Our external contract with our wellbeing support provider has been renewed and expanded to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fortnightly drop-in sessions for all staff - Monthly focus sessions, addressing different topics of wellbeing - 1-to-1 coaching sessions for all staff who have requested it - Group welfare activities across The Park - Online resources such as videos, information and support tools.
<p>Other identified priority areas of focus</p>	<p>Review and ensure effective staff support within areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving Safely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review of staff training completed ✓ Additional Driving Safely guidance provided • Tick Reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Additional guidance provided ✓ Staff encouraged to report instances of bites • Unacceptable Behaviours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Policy updated to include Unacceptable Behaviours and Actions ✓ Suite of training, focused at different levels, developed for rollout in 2026 to support the new policy

5.2. Other Key Achievements in 2025/26

5.3. In addition to the above, we continued to engage and development improvement activities throughout the year. Details of these activities are set out in the table below.

Action	Progress and/or Changes
Unplanned Development of Policies and Documentation	
Incident Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy amended to reflect use of Park Safe application. • User guidance/training provided
Control of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hand Arm Vibration - Noise - Whole Body Vibration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced use of PeopleHR for Health Surveillance recording • Updated HAVS/Noise Recording Form (for daily exposure monitoring) to reflect current/new equipment
Driving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Safe Driving Guidance provided
Fire Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in Policy and Guidance documents to reflect amended Fire Warden responsibilities • New Fire Evacuation forms issued • Updated Fire Logbooks issued
AED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New arrangements for Defib unit testing and recording
First Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to reflect use of Park Safe
Ticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Toolbox Talk

5.4. Employee Engagement and Support Activity

5.5. We have continued to provide a range of operational and individual employee health and safety support. This includes, but is not limited to;

5.5.1. Continued active engagement with internal teams providing Health and Safety assessment and guidance, e.g. Projects, Estates, Rangers, Legal, etc.

5.5.2. Continued to actively work on improved staff information sharing and communications, which includes, but is not limited to:

5.5.2.1. Ongoing support and development of our Health and Safety Committee

5.5.2.2. Targeted email communications on:

- Ticks
- Stress Awareness
- New and Inexperienced Workers
- Safe Driving

- Working in Low Temperatures

5.5.2.3. As part of our ongoing commitment to improve employee wellbeing, we retendered our Wellbeing contract. In addition to this, we made regular use of the staff intranet to share information from the NHS and our Occupational Health Provider about upcoming training courses that staff can attend. These have included;

- Female hormones through different life stages
- How to support staff during the menopause
- Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) awareness
- NHS24 and Breathing Spaces Mental Health Webinar
- Healthy Working Lives – Making the Most of Your Money Webinar
- Mentally Healthy Workplaces – Line Manager Training
- Home Energy Scotland – Saving Energy in the Home

6. Incident Reporting and Investigation

6.1. Summary of Reported Incidents¹

6.1.2. Yearly comparison of incident submissions by Type

6.1.3. While overall submissions for 2025/26 are down on the previous year, the decrease is due to a reduction in *Staff Accident* and *Near Miss* events, with increased reporting of *Incidents of Note*² events being a positive indicator on attitudes towards reporting

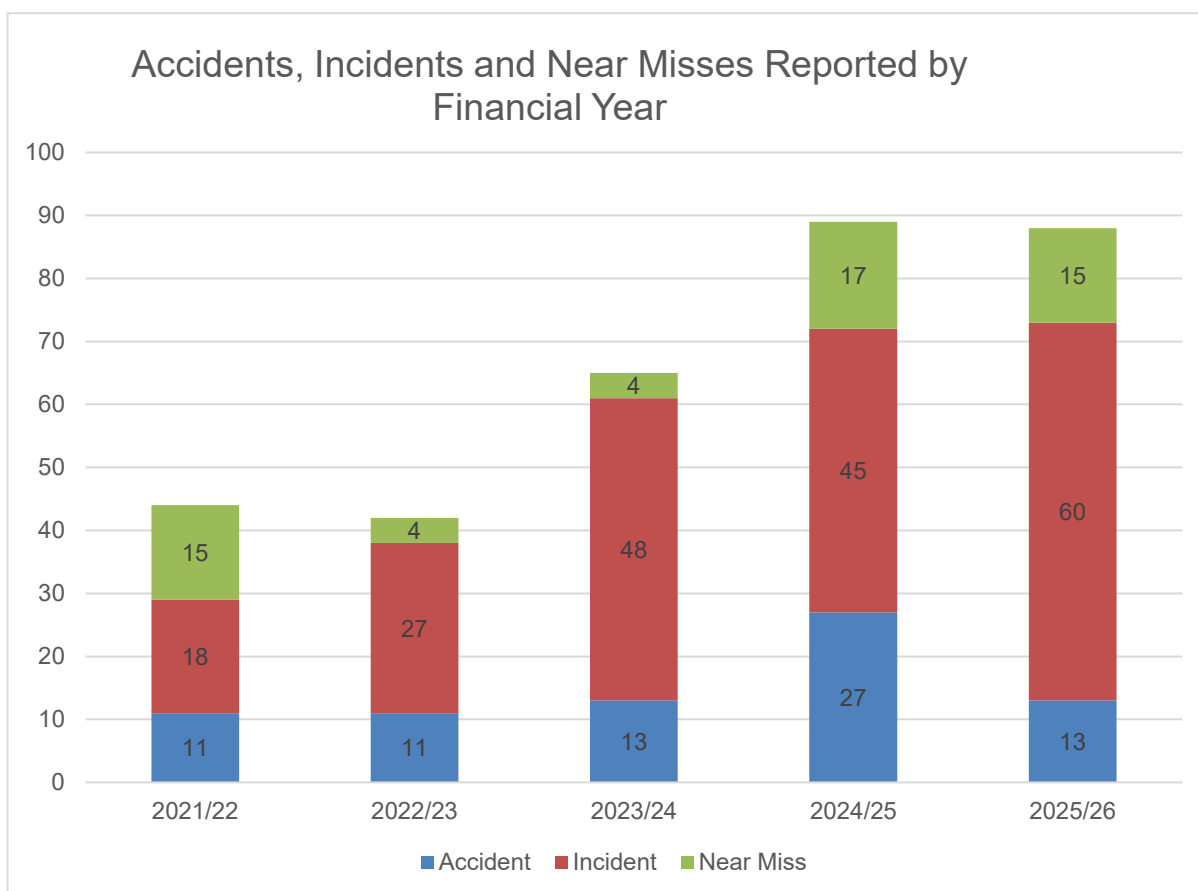
Reporting Year	Incidents Submitted
2021/22	44
2022/23	42
2023/24	65
2024/25	89
2025/26	88

¹ Analysis is based upon incidents submitted during fiscal year periods. Consequently, the details for 2025/26 are only up to mid-February

² **Accident:** an unforeseen unplanned event, which causes injury to persons, damage to property or a combination of both.

Near Miss: an event that, while not causing harm, has the potential to cause injury or ill health.

Incident of Note: an incident other than an accident or near miss that we wish to record in order to monitor for awareness, and for possible future action. These will mainly involve members of the public and normally be circumstances out with our expected operational responsibility or control but provide useful data.



6.1.3. Yearly comparison of incidents by Affected Party

Incident Type	Staff ³					Member of Public				
	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26
Accident	10	9	11	23	11	1	2	2	4	2
Incident	17	13	24	21	30	1	14	24	24	30
Near Miss	13	3	4	14	9	2	1	0	3	6
Total	40	25	39	58	50	4	17	26	31	38
RIDDOR	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
MAIB	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

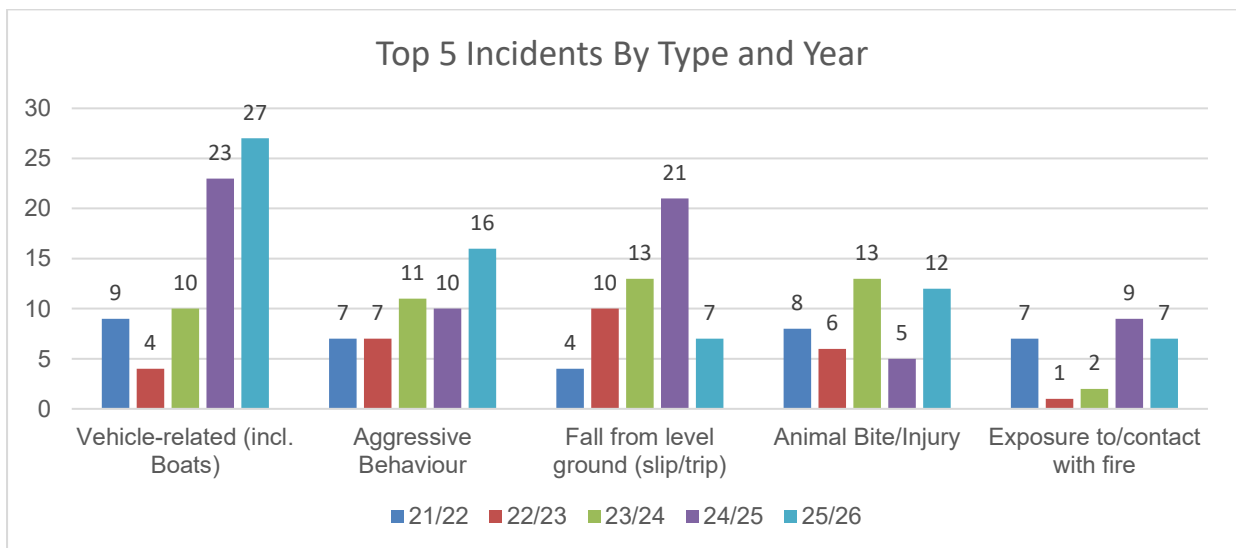
6.1.4. Comparison of Top 5 Incident Categories

6.1.5. Compared to previous years, the profile for the Top 5 injury categories remains the same. The pattern in relation to Animal Bite/Injury relates to the years in which we have undergone a concerted effort to ensure that staff are reporting Tick Bites. This demonstrates that this needs to be included as part of our yearly communication calendar to ensure that we continue to see appropriate reporting of these types of incidents.

³ For the purposes of reporting, Board Members, contractors and volunteers are included within Staff as our Health and Safety responsibilities to them are almost identical.

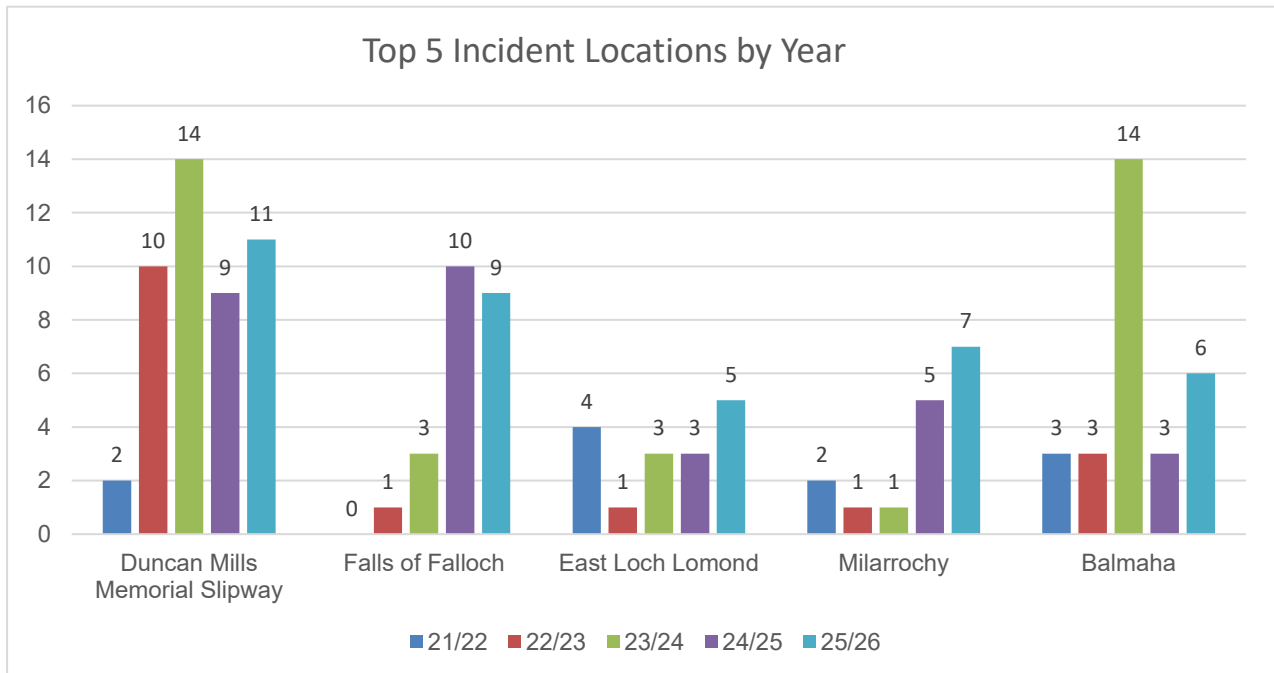
6.1.6. Increased reporting of matters related to Aggressive Behaviour and Vehicle-related Incidents reflect the ongoing relevance of these hazards, which are addressed regularly through our Health & Safety Committee. For example, Vehicle-related Incidents are being mitigated through mandatory completion of the “Driving Safely” e-Learning course. Ongoing monitoring of training compliance and adherence to relevant policies is in place to support a reduction in incident frequency throughout the 2026/27 financial year.

6.1.7. Relating to the increasing trend in Aggressive Behaviours, we have taken steps as outlined above in Section 5.2, and we have undertaken a Deep Dive with the Audit and Risk Committee on 3rd March 2026 to provide additional assurance.



6.1.8. Incidents by Location

6.1.9. We track incident locations across the National Park at the point of data submission. This enables us to identify patterns of behaviour, both from members of the public and our staff at different locations. For the past two years, these Top 5 Sites for Incidents have been static; the historical data for the Top 5 Incident Sites is contained



below.

7. Key Learnings/Findings

7.1. With the introduction of our new Health and Safety reporting tool, **Park Safe**, the time taken to report an incident (from the date of the incident happening to when the report has been submitted) has dropped significantly from an average of 10 days to 3 days. Our target to report an incident is within 2 days of it occurring, so improvement can still be made here.

7.2. All incident types were fully reviewed, looking for improvement opportunities, with some form of action taken to implement improvements following submission of data via Park Safe.

7.3. No Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) or Significant incidents were reported, and while all incidents were fully reviewed, none required a detailed follow-on investigation by Health & Safety.

7.4. The majority of accidents in 2025/26 were vehicle-related, with a large proportion of these being whilst the staff member was undertaking a

reversing manoeuvre. We have taken steps to address this, as already detailed above, and we will continue to keep a watching brief on this over the next quarter.

7.5. There were 10 reported incidents of staff providing first aid support to members of the public visiting the National Park, which on occasion was detailed and of great value to the injured party.

7.6. Overall, no significant concerns are seen from the detail within submissions. The increased number of Incidents of Note received can continue to be taken as a positive indicator of a safety culture embedding into the work of the Park Authority.

7.7. We are anticipating an Internal Audit of Health and Safety in the 2026/27 financial year, and we are poised to work with Internal Audit to ensure that this is conducted timeously, with any recommendations being acted upon promptly. This aligns with the retirement of our previous Health and Safety Officer, and will establish a baseline for our new Health, Safety and Wellbeing Officer, who will be joining us in due course.

8. Risks

8.1. A key risk continues to relate to compliance with health and safety requirements. While no immediate concerns are evident, behaviour factors highlight the need to further reinforce expectations and practice. It is necessary, therefore, that we continue to focus on identifying improvements and ensuring arrangements and standards are maintained.

8.2. We will continue to focus on Staff Wellbeing this year and continue to ensure sufficient and effective support is provided to all staff.

9. Next steps

9.1. Our Key Health and Safety priorities for 2026/27 are outlined in the table below.

Focus Area	Planned Action
Planned Policy Reviews and Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accident & Near-Miss and Investigation Reporting • Construction, Design and Management Regulations (CDM) • Control of Arm Vibration Syndrome • Control of Noise at Work • Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) • Event Management • First-Aid

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety • Personal Protective Equipment • Water Safety • Whole Body Vibration • Working at Height
Park Safe	Embedding the change of reporting mechanism to ensure that reports are being submitted timely and investigated (where required) in line with the policy.
Driving Safely	Due to the numbers of incidents involving vehicles in 2025/26, this will be an area of focus for 2026/27
Tick Awareness	We will continue to develop Park Safe to ensure that Tick Reporting can be captured promptly and efficiently. We will also continue to encourage staff to report these matters to us.
Site Risk Assessments	Following a review of our internal processes and linked to the work of the Visitor Safety Group, we will be reviewing our approach to Site and Visitor Risk Assessments, reducing the number of risk assessments per site (from two to one), which in turn will generate efficiencies in our internal processes.
Staff Training	We will increase the visibility of completed training and conduct more thorough analyses of learning, training and development needs across the organisation.

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