
HEALTH AND SAFETY

Version 2

1. Policy statement

Police officers do a risky and dangerous job. It is vital that forces recognise the challenging nature of operational policing and the hazardous environments in which officers are required to work.

Effective health and safety risk management must be integral to the culture of the police service so that the right balance is achieved between operational policing and health and safety duties. Sound health and safety arrangements must be fully integrated into operational policing in order to reduce risks wherever possible.

It is also vital that PFEW provides a safe working environment for all staff members.

2. Responsibility

The INB is responsible for all policy formation.

3. Summary

Police officers inevitably face significant and serious dangers in the course of their work and health and safety legislation exists to provide protections for officers wherever possible. Health and safety law does not prevent police officers from delivering an effective emergency service.

The Police (Health & Safety) Act 1997 made police officers employees for the purposes of health and safety legislation. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA) and the regulations made under it apply to all work activities. A breach of any of these duties is a criminal act.¹

PFEW believes that there is no legal reason for the police service to be treated differently from any other service or organisation. Section 2(1) of the 1974 Health and Safety Act states that it is the central duty of the employer to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of all employees. The qualification “so far as is reasonably practicable” means that there should be no conflict between effective policing and compliance with health and safety legislation. Suitable and sufficient risk assessments should ensure that, whilst dangerous activities may need to be undertaken, the risk involved should be reduced to as low as is reasonably practicable.

Proper observance of health, safety and welfare must go hand in hand with the provision of effective policing. In the hazardous police environment, the legislation strives to create work surroundings,

¹ HSE Striking the balance between operational and health and safety duties in the Police Service: An explanatory note www.hse.gov.uk/services/police/explanatory-note.pdf

which are free, as far as is reasonably practicable, from risk, so that officers' working conditions are as safe as possible.

PFEW takes seriously its own health and safety responsibilities with regards to staff and is committed to meeting all relevant statutory requirements.

4. Procedures/implementation

PFEW will push to ensure that health and safety considerations are fully integrated into force operational policies and guidance. We will consult with our members on matters affecting their health and safety and we will provide information and training for our Health and Safety representatives.

We will ensure forces take seriously their health and safety responsibilities, in particular, to:

- Maintain safe and healthy working conditions, especially with regards to the adequate control of health and safety risks arising from the duties of police officers.
- Consult with officers on matters affecting their health and safety
- Provide the necessary equipment, information, training and supervision for officers.
- Prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health.

There is a statutory requirement for employers to consult with their safety representatives, at an early stage, on any health, safety and welfare issues which affect all staff; so that issues can be resolved, and where necessary, control measures put in place to improve working conditions for all. PFEW is committed to improving working conditions and protecting officers from accidents and ill health and will push forces to comply with this requirement.

In addition, PFEW supports the Health and Safety Executive's Strategy for 'The Health and Safety of Great Britain: Be part of the solution' and will encourage forces to use the Executive document as a way of reducing sickness absence.

PFEW firmly believes that an effective occupational health policy should include the use of rehabilitation programmes to facilitate the earlier return to work of individuals who have had prolonged periods of absence. A guidance paper on the use of fast-track intervention will be provided to Federation JBB representatives.

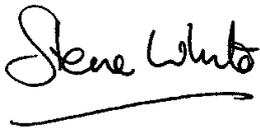
The Service's commitment to reducing absence will not be effective unless working hours are reduced to enable a proper work life balance and the first step would be to ensure they do not exceed the WTR's recommendation of 48 hours average per week. Excessive hours are known to lead to health problems, stress and higher accident rates. We have consistently supported the government's approach to introducing a work life balance and are firmly of the view that this will be helped by strict adherence to that legislation which promotes a healthier and safer workplace for all.

We are equally committed to providing a safe working environment for all staff members. We will consult with our employees on matters affecting their health and safety and provide relevant information, equipment and training, as appropriate.

Responsibility is delegated to the General Secretary and/or appropriate sub-committee.

	Author	Date	Date to be reviewed	Change
Version 1	EP-KP	June 2015	June 2016	
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Signed by:



Chairman



General Secretary