



Agency Board Meeting 29 September 2020

Board Report Number: SEPA 31/20

Safe SEPA Digest May - July 2020

Summary:	<p>This is the quarterly Safe SEPA digest providing information about the activities shown in the diagram below. The reporting period is May – July 2020.</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;"> </div> <p>The report is divided into three sections which reflect the three areas of Safe SEPA: people, resources and services.</p> <p>Our Safe SEPA activity since the last digest remained on responding to and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>
Risks:	<p>Monitoring this information is one of the ways we are assessing the risks in the Safe SEPA activities.</p>
Resource and Staffing Implications:	<p>The COVID-19 emergency has many resource and staff implications. Section 2 of this report outlines how we are keeping our people safe at this time. Section 2.2.1 provides an update on staff work availability and non-working time over May, June and July.</p>
Equalities:	<p>We continue to recognise that all our people are different and COVID-19 will be affecting them all in different ways. We have supported staff to work only what they can do so safely. What we are doing to keep our people safe is described in section 2.</p>
Environmental and Carbon Impact:	<p>There are no environmental or carbon impacts.</p>

Purpose and audience of the report:	For information and discussion. Agency Board This digest was reviewed by the Audit Committee at the September meeting
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Appendices:	Safe SEPA Digest

Safe SEPA Digest

May – July 2020

Every day SEPA works to protect and enhance Scotland's environment, helping communities and businesses thrive within the resources of our planet.



We call this **One Planet Prosperity**

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1. Introduction

Safe SEPA is the way we keep our people safe, our resources secure and services operating. This digest provides an update on progress with Safe SEPA over the period May - July 2020. The digest is divided into three sections, representing the three areas that Safe SEPA protects.

Our focus throughout this period has remained on responding to and recovering from the COVID-19 emergency.

2. We keep our people safe

2.1 What have we done?

2.1.1 Our People

The majority of our staff are continuing to work from home.

We continue to recognise the pressure that the pandemic places on individuals and that everyone's circumstances are different. We have followed the principle outlined in the Scottish Government's COVID Protocol of Terms and Conditions of Employment. This states that staff will not face any detriment as a result of following Government guidance on dealing with COVID-19 nor any discouragement from following Government guidance fully. We have therefore continued to offer staff the option of paid special leave (using a specific CORO timecode) if they are unable to work all or some of their contractual hours as a result of the pandemic. As childcare provision begins to get back to normal and schools reopen in August, we anticipate that less paid special leave will be required. Managers will monitor this closely and sensitively with respect to individual circumstances.

Whilst we recognise that people's holiday plans may have had to change a result of COVID-19 we have encouraged staff to use annual leave to take a break and look after their wellbeing. Managers will continue to monitor accrued annual leave and encourage staff to achieve a good work life balance.

2.1.2 Our buildings and fleet

Our buildings remained closed with the exception of:

- Authorised essential services working out of our Angus Smith Building (including our contact centre and COVID-19 sewage testing in our laboratories). Risk assessments are in place for all authorised activities.
- Authorised exceptional access to our buildings and stores to collect equipment to enable our essential services (such as flood warning; incident response) and to protect and maintain our assets. Staff follow our exceptional access risk assessment when accessing our buildings or stores.

We have carried out a pilot in the Angus Smith Building to identify and implement measures to make the building COVID secure and enable increased capacity (within COVID secure occupancy rates) for additional authorised essential services to operate from the building as we move through our recovery.

As part of our recovery planning, we are working to prioritise and phase recovery of our fleet vehicles to enable increased field and laboratory work.

2.1.3 Staff in the field

Our COVID-19 Safeguarding SEPA's People Essential Office Access and Site Visits - Decision Making Framework determines approval of field-related activities that can be undertaken safely. Any activities require risk assessment and approval through the management chain. A generic field COVID-19 risk assessment is in place to guide staff when undertaking fieldwork.

The focus of our regulatory work continues to be on sites or events causing significant community concern or high environmental impact. From mid-July the bathing water sampling and analysis commenced, alongside the provision of electronic signage, to provide the public with advice about the safety of bathing waters.

The current focus of our flooding work is to ensure key flood warning sites are maintained and calibrated. We reminded staff visiting sites about social distancing and not to have direct interaction with operators, complainants and other members of the public.

2.1.4 Homeworking

Corporately there has been a significant shift in the focus of our Health & Safety work as we manage the impact of COVID-19. Our focus is on working from home and risk assessments in support of business critical activities. To help our staff with homeworking, we developed clear guidance, new Display Screen Equipment assessments tailored to working from home, and a new home working risk assessment. 98% of staff have completed full Display Screen Equipment assessments during the reporting period. We have funded additional equipment for staff where required, to ensure they can safely work from home.

2.1.5 Health and Safety training

As the emergency situation developed, the Agency Management Team approved the cancellation of all face-to-face Health and Safety training in March 2020. No Health and Safety training data is therefore being reported. Staff continue to have access to e-learning. New Health and Safety e-learning courses for our staff on risk assessments and personal safety have been developed during the reporting period, and are now available to staff.

We are continuing to implement our Health and Safety training plan which includes data cleansing from the January 2020 review; identifying root causes of issues and developing better process and capabilities to store, analyse and report the right data to provide assurance.

We have met with our Board Buddies to seek their advice and feedback on the training implementation plan and re-focus our efforts on developing a Health and Safety culture across the organisation.

2.2 Situational report

2.2.1 Staff status

This section provides an update on staff work availability and non-working time over May, June and July. The table below provides a summary of this.

Month	May		June		July		Combined Period	
	Hours	FTE***	Hours	FTE***	Hours	FTE***	Hours	FTE***
No. Hours CORO Hours	19066	129.7	18334	119.05	11531	71.62	48931	105.91
No. Covid Sickness Absence Hours	616.97	4.2	234.63	1.52	161	1	1012.6	2.19
No. Sickness Absence Hours (all other reasons)	2258.5	15.36	2552.3	16.57	2349.6	14.59	7160.4	15.5
Total Hours Working Hours / FTE Lost	21941	149.26	21121	137.15	14042	87.21	57104	123.6
FTE Working Hours Available * / % Working Time Lost**	176153	12.46%	184922	11.42%	192780	7.28%	553856	10.31%

* Based on FTE at month end x 7 working hours per working day in month (minus public holidays)

** Total Working Hours Lost/Working Hours Available *100

*** Based on 1 FTE = 7 hours per day

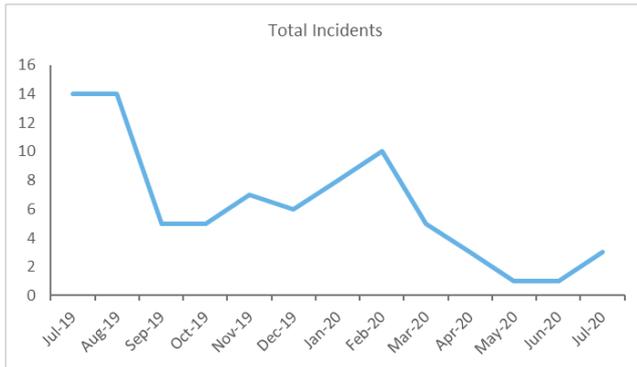
As referred to in section 2.1.1, in line with the Scottish Government's guidance around no detriment, in March a COVID-19 related time code was implemented in Agresso which staff could use to account for any of their normal contracted working time that they were not able to do. Using the specific CORO code means that we can easily identify this time, as opposed to other reasons which might require special leave. Our data, based on completed timesheets to end of July, shows that the number of hours assigned specifically to the CORO code in May, June and July was 48,930.75. This is the equivalent of 105.91 FTE over the period, based on 66 full working days.

Since March staff have been asked to maintain a COVID-19 Work Availability Tool which shows their status regarding work availability, which is updated if it changes. As at the end of July, 66 staff were unable to work from home. We have undertaken a comprehensive exercise to ensure that staff have the necessary equipment to support them to work safely at home where possible at this time and this has increased the number of staff able to work from home; this was 91 at the end of April. This figure for staff who cannot work from home includes staff who cannot work due to caring responsibilities (15), where individuals did not

have access to our systems (10) and also staff who are unavailable to work for other reasons, such as their job roles, sickness, maternity/paternity, unpaid leave, etc. Staff who are unable to work from home due to these circumstances are coding their time to the CORO status, though staff who are not working due to sickness, maternity/paternity leave or unpaid leave, would use different time codes to reflect this. Maternity/paternity and unpaid leave is not reflected in the figures included in this report.

With regard to sickness absence we have seen a significant reduction compared to the same period last year, with monthly totals being on average 60% less than in 2019. Anecdotal information would suggest that staff sickness levels have not actually decreased and mental wellbeing organisations are reporting that the COVID-19 situation may have increased anxiety and depression societally at this time, however this is not reflected in our sickness absence figures. It could be posited that the reduced sickness absence may be due to staff being home based and supported by our no detriment approach, so even if they are unwell, particularly in the case of short term absence, they are not reporting the illness and claiming sickness if they are not going to be in the office or working as they normally would.

Staff are being encouraged to use their annual leave as this is an important element in maintaining health and wellbeing and a good work life balance. As we have moved into what would be the normal school and peak summer holiday period, we have seen an increased take up of annual leave. Over the May-July period 44,475 days (96.27 FTE) of annual leave have been taken, with 65% of this being in July. However figures show that compared to the same period in 2019, 20% less staff have used annual leave, with 33% less time taken. A combination of being home based, so not necessarily needing to book time out of an office environment, along with the restrictions on and concerns about UK or wider travel during this period are likely to have had an impact on staff wanting to take annual leave. At the time of writing the Agency Management Team are considering options to address annual leave carry over and reduced usage.



2.2.2 Health & Safety Incidents

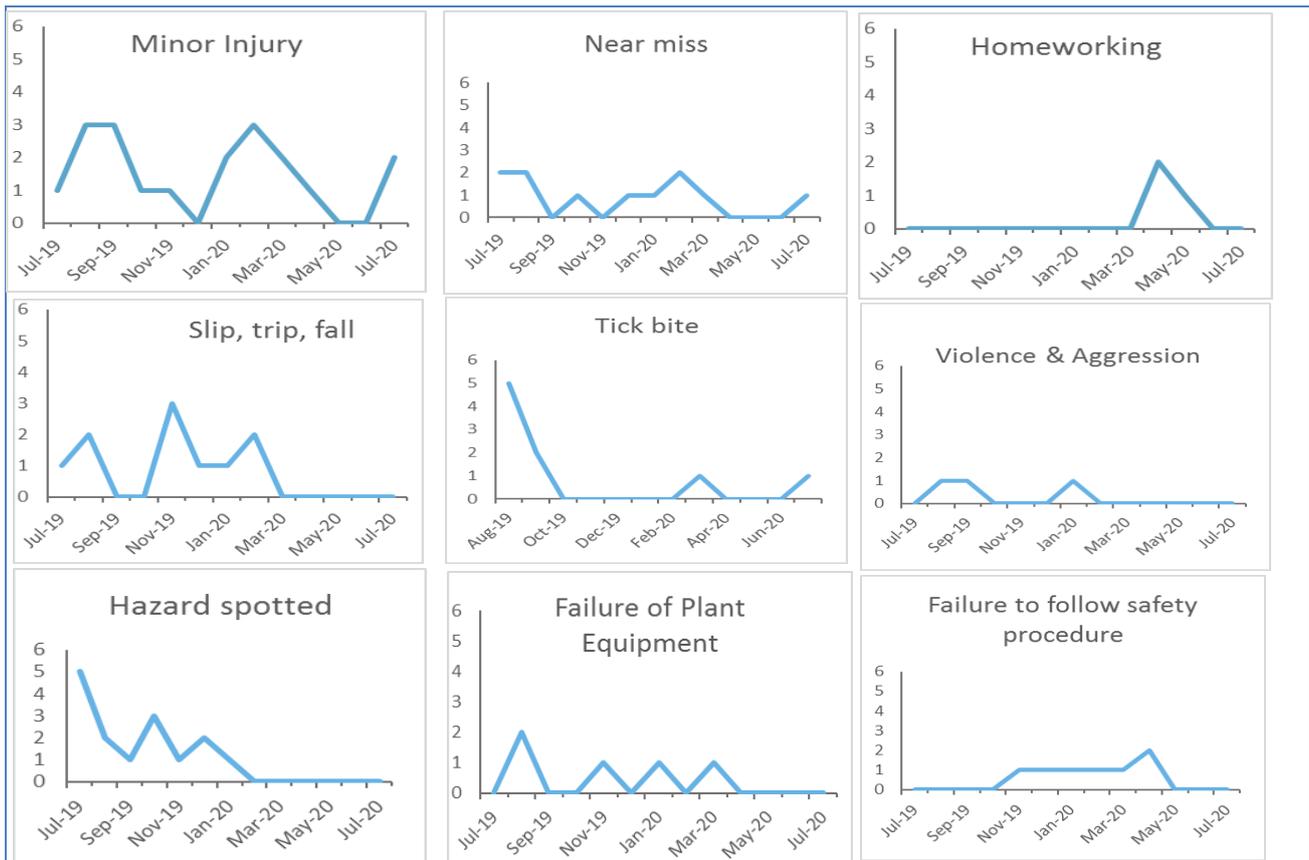
From May to July 2020, five incidents were reported. Incidents are low in this period due to office closures and restricted number of field activities being carried out.

There were no incidents under the category of slips, trips, and falls during this period. A number of the minor injury incidents occurred when staff were out in the field checking on various sites which resulted in tick bites, wasp stings and in one instance a back injury. This occurred when the staff member was investigating a fault at one of our rain gauge stations. As the rain gauge was at ground level the staff member's back went into spasm. They were checked by their local GP and have been on light duties for over seven days.

One incident under the category of "Homeworking" occurred during this period. The incident was caused by using unsuitable Display Screen Equipment. The manager has advised that suitable equipment is on now on order for the staff member and they should limit duties until the correct equipment is in place.

One incident under the category of "Near Miss" also occurred during this period. A staff member went to collect data from one of the gauging stations. When they opened the door there was a large wasp's nest inside. They closed the door and couldn't retrieve the data from the logger. This incident is still open waiting for manager feedback on suitable control measures.

The below graphs show the trend per category over the last 12 months.



Notes: Failure to follow safety procedures includes forgetting to call in and cancel safety cover.

A near miss is when an incident occurred but no-one was hurt.

A hazard spotted is the reporting of an unsafe act or condition and steps taken to eliminate it.

2.3 Next steps

2.3.1 Our People

We will continue to set our staff up to work safely from home. We will also gather more detailed feedback from staff about their experiences of, and preferences around, homeworking and identify any additional steps to better support staff wellbeing.

2.3.2 Our buildings and fleet

As part of our recovery planning, we will enable workspaces required for our authorised essential services. We will implement the agreed measure to make our Angus Smith Building COVID secure, enabling capacity for additional authorised essential services to operate.

We will continue to phase the recovery of our fleet to enable enhanced field and laboratory activities during our recovery.

2.3.3 Health and Safety Culture

We will be working with Board Buddies to help drive forward our approach to implementing a corporate Health and Safety culture. The focus will shift beyond training data, to leadership and management being accountable for ensuring staff are competent and equipped to carry out their duties safely.

3. We keep our resources secure

3.1 What have we done?

3.1.1 Our Buildings

All our buildings remain closed with the exception of our Angus Smith Building which is operational and being maintained to enable authorised essential services to carry out their work. Statutory maintenance is in place in our Stirling and Aberdeen buildings.

Initial statutory and visual checks have been undertaken at all of our other offices to ensure they are secure. Repairs to a leak in one of our buildings are being scheduled.

Full statutory maintenance is being re-started at key stores and garages to ensure hydrometry staff, in support of our flood warning service, can undertake activities safely in these buildings.

We have agreed procedures and risk assessments in place for exceptional access to buildings owned/leased by our sharing partners (for one-off access to collect kit and equipment).

Access to our offices is strictly controlled and only authorised when absolutely necessary to enable priority essential activities. This is organised through our Exceptional Office Access Procedure referenced above.

3.1.2 Our Fleet

As we move through our recovery, our corporate position on the use of our fleet vehicles is under review. Currently, with the exception of key fleet vehicles which have been allocated

to individuals, staff are still being encouraged to use their personal vehicle or hire cars with access to our fleet only being authorised in exceptional circumstances. We are working to prioritise and phase recovery of our fleet vehicles to enable increased field and laboratory work.

3.1.3 Privacy

We have continued to assess the privacy impacts of changes to our existing processes, as staff continue to work remotely. This has involved assuring the appropriate handling of both customer and staff contact details for processes that have had to be undertaken in different ways, including the outsourcing of the annual billing run for the Charging Scheme, and ensuring that the adaptations to our usual processing remains compliant.

A detailed risk assessment of the privacy implications of the roll out of Microsoft Teams and allied programs was also carried out. Controls were proposed and implemented to ensure staff and other users can use the software with confidence.

As planning begins for the recovery phase, we will be reassessing our ongoing processing of personal data to ensure that it can be carried out safely and legally in the hybrid environment where many staff will continue to work from home for the foreseeable future.

3.1.4 Information Security

We continue to provide guidance to staff to remind them about the need for good information security at this time.

3.2 Situational report



3.2.1 Security Incidents

We recorded 22 incidents in the reporting period. We recorded the same number in the last reporting period.

14 of the 22 incidents were data breaches, with nine of these breaches in

respect of the Access to Information Disclosure log. We respond to hundreds of requests for information each year under information rights legislation and publish our responses to these on the Disclosure Log on the website. When a data breach is discovered on the

Disclosure Log, the information is removed from the log as quickly as possible. To reduce the risk of data breaches, our Access to Information team recently implemented a two-stage scrutiny process prior to the release of the information to the requester and publication on the Disclosure Log.

In the remaining data breaches, individuals affected were contacted where applicable. We did not need to report any breach to the Information Commissioner's Office.

The spike in incidents classified as "Information Services/Cyber Security" continues with five recorded in this period (May – July) in addition to the five recorded in the last reporting period (February – April). Two of these were phishing emails:

- One of our employees received an email from a known and trusted individual and organisation. The recipient recognised the context as unusual and contacted the sender, whom admitted their contact lists may have been compromised. There was no further impact.
- Four of our employees received an email from an unknown source. All the recipients correctly identified it as unusual and took no action.

The remaining three "Information Services/Cyber Security" incidents were:

- A test email sent to the "all staff" distribution list when setting up the new MS Teams environment. A parameter in the test group automatically added members generating invitation emails. The group was immediately deleted.
- Two of our Information Services support staff were identified as having administrative rights to a group mailbox which they should not have had access to. This access was appropriate when setting up the mailbox but those rights should have been removed on completion. This has now been resolved.
- We host the aquaculture web environment on behalf of Scottish Government. A component of the web server was compromised and the perpetrator used the server resources as a "media streaming site". The web site was not defaced but did not respond to requests due to lack of resources. The web component was identified and the vulnerability closed.

The remaining three recorded incidents were:

- A staff member raised security incident relating to mail piling up behind the door of the closed Dingwall office. This is the situation is all our offices as no one is currently entering them to move the mail. We have therefore accepted the risk of mail piling up. We explored alternatives but the security risk was lower than the risk to staff of entering the building.
- A lost company iPad was returned. This was lost on 14 December 2019 and reported to Police Scotland. We were contacted on 2 July 2020 by a member of the public who had found the iPad. It was safely recovered and is being held securely at the moment.
- An incident categorised as “miscellaneous” where an external partner breach resulted in phishing emails being sent to some of our staff. No Personal data breaches occurred.

The below graph’s show the trend per category over the last 12 months.



3.2.2 Whistleblowing

We are committed to the highest standards of openness, probity, accountability, conduct and integrity in all aspects of our operations. Our Whistleblowing Policy is to encourage employees/workers and others we deal with to come forward and voice concerns they may have about what is happening in SEPA without any fear of retribution.

Whistleblowing incidents	May-Jul 18	Aug-Oct 18	Nov 18-Jan 19	Feb-Apr 19	May-Jul 19	Aug - Oct 19	Nov 19 - Jan 20	Feb – Apr 20	May – Jul 20
Number of internal incidents	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
Details: We have had one internal whistleblowing incident reported regarding security concerns around IT access processes and procedures. This has been passed to the Security Incident Response Group and an investigator appointed. The preliminary investigation report is being finalised.									

3.2.3 Fraud, bribery and corruption

Fraud, bribery and corruption allegations	May-Jul 18	Aug-Oct 18	Nov 18-Jan 19	Feb-Apr 19	May-Jul 19	Aug-Oct 19	Nov 19 - Jan 20	Feb – Apr 20	May – Jul 20
Number	3	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	0
Details: We have had no incidents in this reporting period.									

3.3 Next steps

3.3.1 Our buildings

To enable recovery and ensure our buildings are secure, we continue to work closely with our Facilities Management contractors to implement, and where necessary vary our existing contracts and agreed maintenance regimes.

We expect that for the rest of the financial year, a large proportion of our work will continue to be done from home.

We are taking the opportunity to fully review our estate in the context of the Annual Operating Plan target on ‘The New Workspace’. A Staff Interest Group is being established

to kick start this work. Opportunities for the 'Net Zero Organisation' and 'The New Workspace' Annual Operating Plan projects will be integral to the recovery of our buildings.

4. We keep our services operating

4.1 What have we done?

Throughout the reporting period we have continued to actively participate in the national Strategic Coordinating Group for COVID-19, and its various sub-groups including Concurrent Risk, Lessons Learned, Impact Assessment, and Data Group. In addition we have supported the ten local Resilience Partnerships addressing issues in their own geographic areas.

The previous response cells have now been rationalised into a Response and Recovery Coordinating Group which will support the Agency Management Team to address our ongoing response and recovery from COVID-19 and preparations for EU Exit.

National, multi-agency work has recommenced on preparations for a No Deal EU Exit. In addition, we are actively engaging with the Cabinet Office and partners in preparing for the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in November 2021.

4.2 Situational Report

4.2.1 Business Continuity Messaging service

	May-Jul 18	Aug-Oct 18	Nov 18-Jan 19	Feb-Apr 19	May-Jul 19	Aug-Oct 19	Nov 19 - Jan 20	Feb – Apr 20	May-Jul 20
No. messages issued to staff:	3	4	2	1	1	8	1	16	3

Details: The three messages issued in this period related to information and advice on COVID-19 developments.

The percentage of staff signed up to the business continuity messaging service remains high at 93%. We continue to take opportunities to promote sign up.

4.2.2 Emergency Management Team meetings

Emergency Management Team meetings were held in this period on the following topics:

- Planning for protest activity at our offices by environmental protesters campaigning for the closure of Mossmorran.
- Coronavirus outbreak in an office close to ours at Eurocentral.
- Aberdeen Coronavirus outbreak.

These were to discuss any mitigations or activities we should carry out.

4.2.3 Safe SEPA debriefs

	May-Jul 18	Aug-Oct 18	Nov 18-Jan 19	Feb-Apr 19	May-Jul 19	Aug-Oct 19	Nov 19 - Jan 20	Feb – Apr 20	May-Jul 20
Number held:	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	0	11

Details: Debriefs were for our response to COVID-19 and included Agency Management Team, Regulation and Incident cell, Organisational Resilience cell, Unison, Performance & Innovation, People & Property, Finance, Elgin office staff, Governance Management Team, Resilience Team and the Board. Each of these (with the exception of the Elgin office staff) received a debrief report with recommendations for their area of business. A corporate report with key themes has been prepared for the Agency Management Team.

We also carried out a number of external debriefs.

4.3 Next steps

The Strategic Co-ordinating Group for COVID-19 will stand down in September and move fully to managing outbreaks locally. Focus will then be on EU Exit and COP26, as well as implementing lessons learned from the last six months.