



**Canal &
River Trust**

Making life better by water

Health & Safety

Annual Report 2020/21

Facing New Challenges



canalrivertrust.org.uk

Introduction

At the Trust we are committed to the highest standards of health and safety for all our colleagues, volunteers, contractors, and visitors.

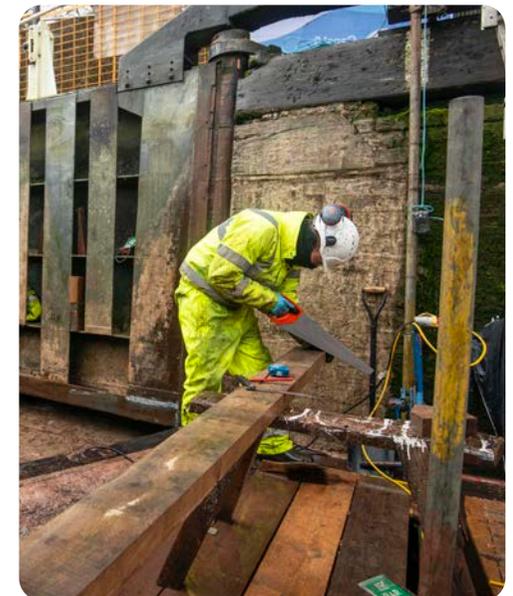
In 2020/21, a difficult year with the pandemic, our safety performance has not seen an improvement despite our continued commitment to developing our safety culture.

We have seen a continued rise in public and colleague safety incidents and although there is a strong internal recognition that the Trust takes safety seriously this has not translated into improved performance.

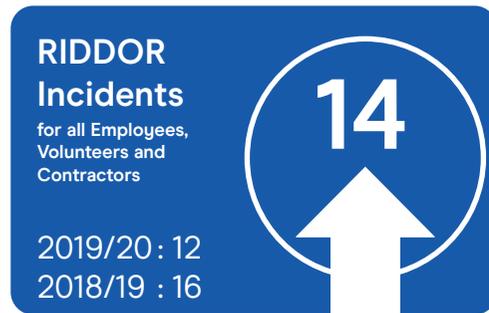
As health and safety is a priority, we will deliver a targeted safety improvement plan to ensure we achieve a more proactive safety culture by the end of March 2022.

We will also continue to encourage and support all our people to step up to their responsibilities, to speak out about safety and share their ideas on how we can continue this shared journey to a safer workspace.

**Work
Together
Work
Safely**



Vital statistics



Our response to COVID19

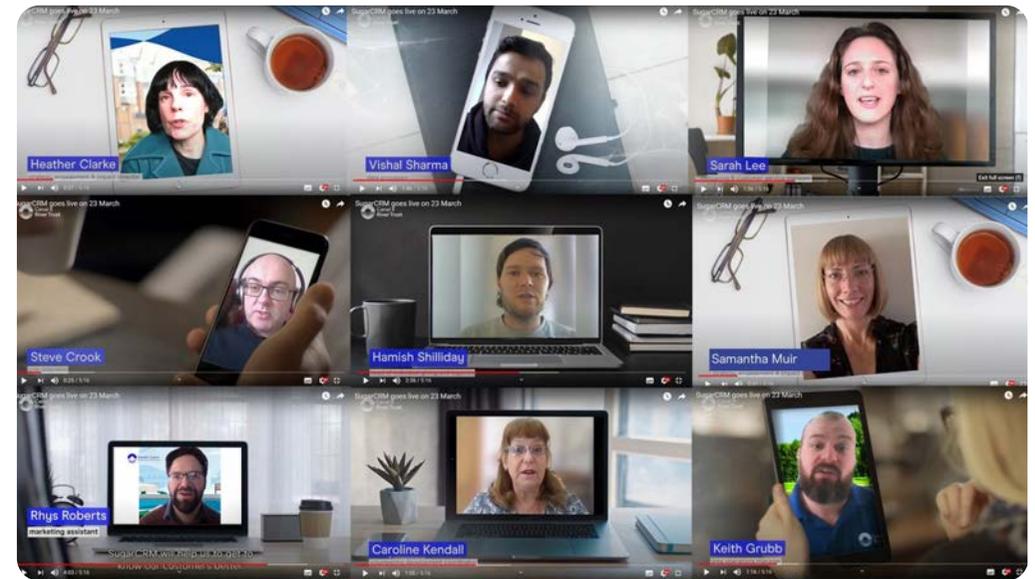
Throughout the pandemic the Trust has followed government guidance, responding and changing as circumstances have evolved. By the end of the financial year March 21 we recorded 59 colleagues had contracted the virus but no transmissions were work-related.

Main challenges

- Maintaining facilities for our boaters and keeping our towpaths open and Covid safe to use
- Maintaining the network in a safe condition
- Keeping our site bases operational and Covid secure
- The sudden transition to home working for over 1,000 colleagues



- The huge increase in use of our towpaths with some areas seeing 6 times normal use and many areas with twice the daily visitors as the public turned to their local waterways for exercise



Key actions

- Operational activities limited and vulnerable and other operational colleagues furloughed in the initial lockdown
- Covid Secure Protocols and work processes developed and published
- Specialist navigation advice published
- Service facilities cleaning standardised and regularly checked
- Covid Secure risk assessments created for 193 sites
- Busy visitor locations reviewed – signage installed across the network including nearly 200 pinch point signs
- Home working established for all colleagues who were able to, with all main offices closed
- Updated homeworking assessments implemented for over 1,000 colleagues



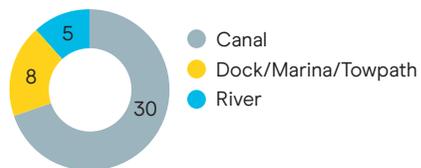
- Protocols and processes communicated to all colleagues through tool box talks/video presentation to 1,469 employees and 1,409 volunteers
- Covid Dynamic risk assessments for all tasks > 50,000 in 20/21

Public safety

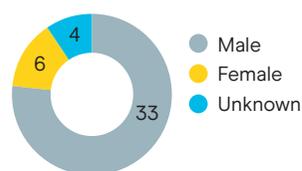


Throughout the pandemic our towpaths have been a lifeline for local communities, places for local people to exercise and enjoy. A key priority for the Trust is our stewardship of the network, we continue to prioritise public safety and we have expanded our visitor risk assessment programme to make our waterways safe places to visit and enjoy.

Fatalities by site



Fatalities by gender



Fatalities by cause



Fatalities by region



Potential infrastructure related injuries

Total number reported (17 in 2019/20)	53
Caused by slips, trips and falls (12 in 2019/20)	36
Injured by vegetation/plants (1 in 2019/20)	4
Went straight to hospital (Riddor) (2 in 2019/20)	2

By user

9 boaters
33 pedestrians
11 cyclists

Fatalities

- 43 fatalities compared to 50 in 2019/20 and 40 in 2018/19
- Male deaths (77%) continue to dominate (72% in 2019/20)

Learning from tragedies

- In March 2021, a 3 year old boy tragically drowned after falling into the river navigation at Newbury. Following this awful incident we worked with West Berkshire Council, Thames Valley Police, the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, South Central Ambulance Service and colleagues from the NHS to launch a Water Safety Partnership to ensure local communities can access their local waterways safely.
- Following the death of a youth who walked across our weir to access the adjacent hydroplant, we worked with the HSE, Wakefield Council and the owner of the plant to jointly review and update the control measures in the area. The lessons learnt were incorporated into our weir visitor risk assessment process.

Visitor safety

- 270 weir and waterside destination visitor risk assessments completed
- 15 Water Safety Partnerships active across England and Wales
- Membership of the Visitor Safety Group and the National Water Safety Forum
- Support to external campaigns such as #DontDrinkandDrown and #respectthewater
- Our campaigns include Stay Kind Slow Down and summer water safety events

Key numbers – 1,116 reports to the Trust in 2020/21 including:

- 256 involved towpath usage
- 176 were slips, trips and falls
- 101 reports of boat sinkings / hang ups / other incidents
- 144 incidents involved cyclists

Education

Virtual Water Safety Education

Despite COVID's impact on our ability to reach school children, the Trust used digital technology to deliver virtual water safety learning sessions to 12,876 children through its volunteers and partners. We promoted a new on-line water safety learning bundle to all primary schools in England & Wales and offered primary schools within 1km of our waterways the opportunity to book interactive virtual workshops delivering information, advice and engaging activities to develop children's knowledge of water safety.

Water Safety Evaluation

In early 2021 we evaluated the benefits of our Explorers virtual water safety workshops. We wanted to test children's understanding of water safety. The evaluation confirmed that children who had received a workshop had a 14% increased level of water safety understanding compared to those children who had not. The results are statistically significant, and prove a direct link from the workshop delivered and the level of understanding demonstrated by the children.

Safeguarding



The Trust's Safeguarding Steering Group includes Sue Wilkinson, our Safeguarding Trustee, in addition to our CEO and two other members of the Executive Team. They ensure oversight of safeguarding strategies and procedures, and input at the highest level.

Safeguarding reports

- Reports average around 2-3 per week
- Vast majority relating to safeguarding issues in boaters' personal lives (i.e. not involving risks of harm or abuse from Trust staff)



Safeguarding training

- In 2020 we rolled out an updated safeguarding e-learning training module, which is mandatory as induction training for new colleagues and as refresher training for existing colleagues
- Our Trustees also undertake this training
- Additional training is being provided to teams whose activities may bring them into regular contact with children and/or adults at risk (vulnerable adults in Wales)



Safeguarding regime

- Safeguarding responsibilities are incorporated into all new role descriptions
- Safeguarding questions at interviews highlight the importance of safeguarding at the Trust
- We have recently reviewed and updated our safeguarding policies and procedures
- Training is supplemented by guidance to assist colleagues to recognise safeguarding concerns
- We continue to raise the profile of safeguarding, with engagement survey scores showing a good level of understanding across the organisation about how to raise concerns
- Further profile-raising to volunteers is taking place through newsletter entries

- A full review of roles is in progress to identify whether any additional Disclosure and Barring Checks should be implemented

Partner groups

- We are auditing commitment to our minimum safeguarding standards for organisations working in connection with the Trust, with a view to increasing sign up levels



Colleague safety

The Trust is committed to providing a safe workplace for all colleagues. Given the nature of the work we do, we do our utmost to reduce and mitigate any risk.

Reportable injuries – RIDDOR

- Second year of a decrease in colleague RIDDORs: 7, down from 8 in 2019/20 and 12 in 2018/19
- Volunteer injuries remain static: 2, same as 2019/20
- Contractor injuries: 5, up from 2 in 2019/20
- 5 RIDDORs occurred in January to March, down from 6 in the same period last year, corresponding to our winter works period
- The most common contributing factor continues to be behavioural choices made by the injured party

Colleague RIDDORs



Colleague AFR



Injury

- Of the 419 incidents involving a colleague or volunteer, 117 (28%) included an injury

What happened

- Of the 1,505 colleague reports, slips, trips and falls continue to be the most

significant cause (250: 17%) with Safe Systems of Work and COVID 19 jointly second highest (each having 167: 15%)

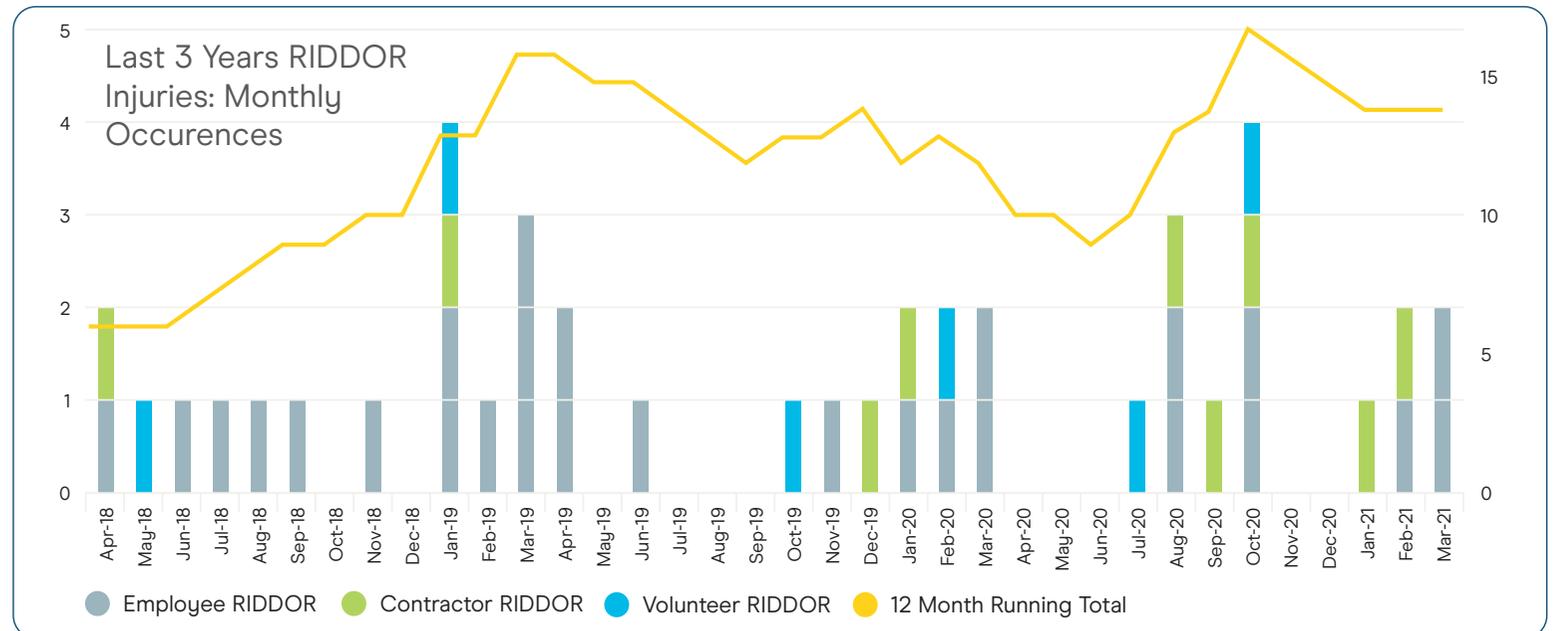
- Of the 105 volunteer reports slips, trips and falls continue to be the most significant cause (22: 21%) with Safe Systems of Work following (13: 12%)
- Of the 570 near misses involving a colleague or volunteer exposure to harmful substance (COVID19) was the most significant cause (111: 20%) with slips, trips and falls following (84: 15%)

Lone working

- Following a Trust wide review, an internal steering group reviewed the current lone working process. As a result the procedures for lone working

were updated and, following a trial, the Trust procured the PeopleSafe Lone Working System, which offers users the option to self serve their lone working needs

- In its first full month of use (March) it was used by 72 people and 141 activities were logged
- In 2021/22 the system will be available to all Trust colleagues



Speak out, step up, share ideas

The Trust continues to build on the safety culture foundations it laid in 2019/20 and made progress along its road map towards greater safety culture maturity. The pandemic meant that the Trust had to adapt and change the way it worked, embracing technology and new ways of training, communication and engagement.

Our recent colleague survey showed that 88% of employees, and 92% of volunteers, agreed that health and safety is taken seriously at the Trust.

The 2020 safety award winner was the 'To the Left' campaign created in our East Midlands region. Its aim is to bring good safety culture into everyday working life using the phrase 'To the Left' is a basic instruction to stop what you are doing and check that the person to your left is operating safely, in a safe environment and with the correct PPE.



Valuing safety – line manager behaviour training

- Working with external experts Tribe we created a unique immersive training programme that involved virtual reality videos starring our own colleagues
- 260 line managers attended a course that aimed to influence their behaviour, giving them the skills to tackle safety conversations more effectively and having a greater impact with individuals. 195 colleagues will attend the training in 2021/22

Knowledge and skills

To ensure that line managers were fully aware of their health and safety responsibilities 40 attended a 5-day IOSH Managing Safely course and 66 attended a 1-day Managing Safely Awareness course. One area explored was the competence of teams and the promotion of the new Training Needs Analysis tool on our learning management system TrustED.

Behaviour safety code

The behaviours Speak Out, Step Up and Share Ideas were promoted in a series of tool box talks and continue to be used in all our safety communications.

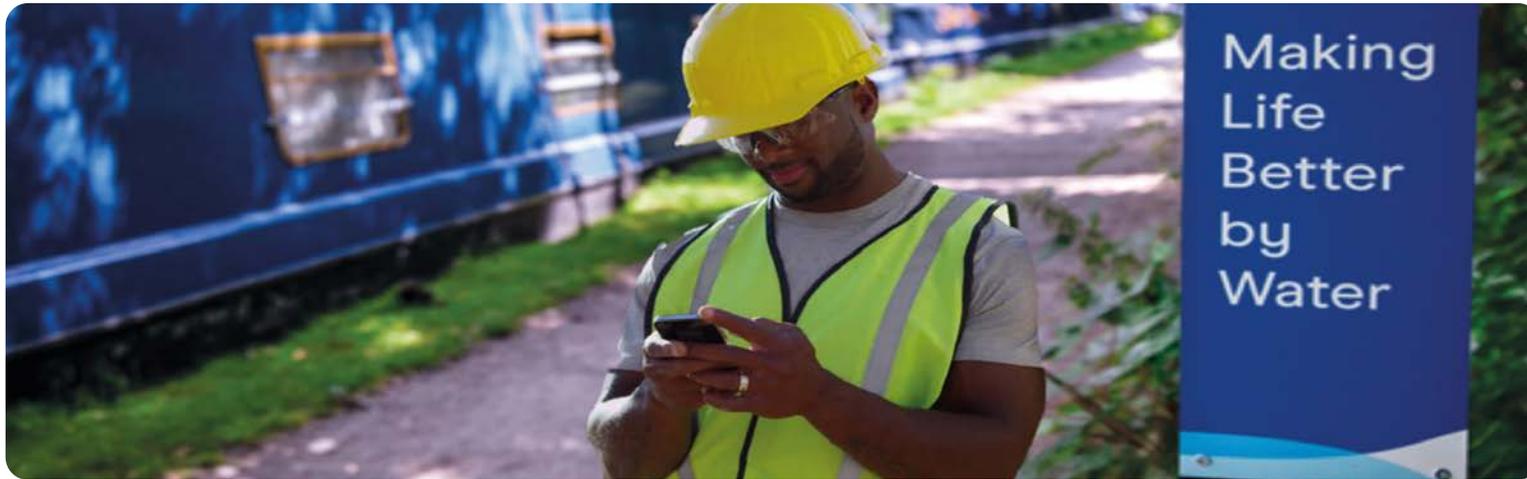
Communications

Video messaging continues along with weekly safety messages in the Trust-wide To Do Lists and in each *Source* publication. Messages are also directly shared with Health and Safety Representatives through a monthly



Virtual Forum, Teams channel and direct email. 10 safety alerts were issued and monthly toolbox talks and safety discussion campaigns included topics such as sharing incident root causes, how to stay safe when lone working and how to stay safe during winter working. We also hosted our first virtual safety conference with 250 attendees joining the live stream with the recorded sessions available to all colleagues who could not attend on the day.

We continue to manage our key risks and implement improvements where needed through our targeted safety audit program including external audits of our four docks and ports, an internal welfare provision compliance survey and a Trust-wide online safety management self-audit ProEvaluatE.



Overall incident reporting performance

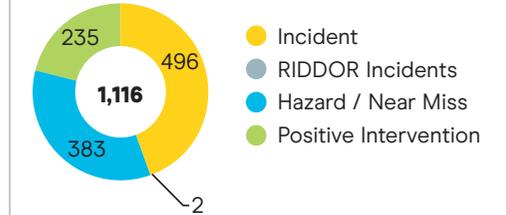


813 individuals have reported at least one safety report in the last 12 months (disregarding anonymous reports).

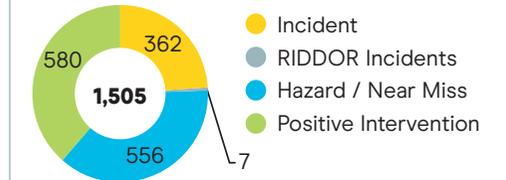


Incident reporting statistics

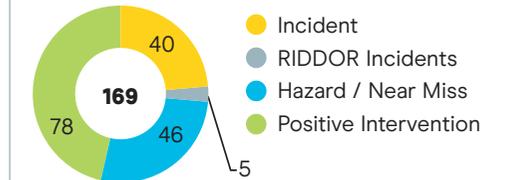
Member of public



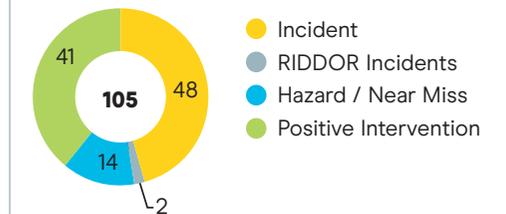
Colleague



Contractor



Volunteer



Statistics above exclude 101 reports relating to third party activities, eg arson, which are considered outside the Trust's control. These 101 reports are included in the statistics to the left.



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**Canal &
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June 2021 ICM 13804