

Safetyline 76

H & S UPDATE APRIL 2007

Over the past few months we have experienced several **break-ins** in our buildings, in which damage has been caused and items stolen. There have also been two arson attacks recently. If you see or hear anything suspicious while you are in any of our buildings or are followed into a building by people you suspect may not be University employees or students, contact the Control Room on ext 4444 or 0114 222 4444 on a mobile phone to report your concerns as soon as you are able. Tell them exactly where you have seen or heard the incident that causes you concern.

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*The Government has announced that it will introduce a **ban on smoking in enclosed public spaces to which the "public have access" or are "places of work" in England** on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007. Such a ban was introduced in Scotland in March 2006 and Wales will follow suit on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007. There are 3 main offences which will mainly be enforced by local authorities: 1. a person found to be smoking where it is not allowed can be fined (up to £50), 2. those responsible for premises and vehicles can be fined if the appropriate signage is not displayed (up to £200), and 3. those responsible for premises and vehicles can be fined if people are smoking on the premises or in the vehicles (up to £2,500). Smoking Rooms will no longer be allowed and smoking will not be allowed in enclosed rooms or vehicles which are available to other people even if there is only one person present.*

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For those members of staff and students for whom a Blick "**Deafalert**" pager is of benefit, operating instructions can be found at <http://safety.dept.shef.ac.uk/disability/pager.pdf>.

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*On 29 January the Government's **NHS Injury Costs Recovery Scheme** came into effect in England, Scotland and Wales. Under the scheme, the NHS can claim back the £150m a year it spends on treating employees injured in the workplace from their employers, where the injured party subsequently makes a successful claim for personal injury compensation. However, there are a few exceptions for which the costs of treatment will not be recoverable.*

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A recent court case highlights the need for care when **dealing with flammable substances**; the role of one production line worker in a car-parts manufacturer was to prepare window mouldings for adhesion by spraying surfaces with Xylene, which was stored in a 12 litre tank on a shelf. It is thought the worker pulled on the pipe connection to the tank causing it to topple off the shelf onto himself and an electric heater below the tank, which ignited the flammable Xylene engulfing the worker in flames and he subsequently died. Although the process had been assessed for risk, it had not considered the risk of flammability, or the proximity of the heater.

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The HSE have indicated that they are **not prepared to wait for an injury to occur before taking action** when it comes to breaches of the *Work at Height Regulations 2005*. A self-employed builder was fined £2,000 plus costs when HSE inspectors found that none of the safety measures required for working on a roof of a building had been put in place. In another case, a teenager on his second day of work experience fell almost 6 metres through an unguarded lift shaft under construction after he blacked out, suffering serious head and leg injuries. According to HSE a basic temporary guard around the lift well would have protected workers from falling and allowed work to continue unhindered.

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To view the HSE guidance "**Safe use of ladders and stepladders - an employer's guide**" see: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg402.pdf>.

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Two new British Standards have been produced recently. BS EN 14470 part 2 details the specifications for safety cabinets for pressurised gas cylinders. These can be used to reduce risk where the use of gas cylinders within buildings is unavoidable. BS 5499 part 10 is the code of practice for the use of safety signs. Departments who produce/use safety signs in support of their risk assessments should follow the guidance in this standard.

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