

# Safetyline 100

H & S UPDATE APRIL 2009

All Departments are aware that there is a legal requirement that all items of portable electrical equipment must be tested regularly to ensure that they are safe to use. Over the past few months it has become apparent that there are inconsistencies in the way departments interpret this requirement and some departments are failing in their duty to undertake testing at all. A **new Portable Appliance Testing Policy** has been ratified by the Health and Safety Committee to overcome these inconsistencies and provide direction on what is required and how often equipment should be tested. The review undertaken also highlighted that many departments have no definitive list of the electrical equipment they hold at any point in time. The new Policy will come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 and all Departments are required to comply with its requirements. "Visual Inspection" training courses are being arranged by Central Mechanical Workshops in order that Faculties and Departments train one or more to undertake this activity until such time the appliances can be formally tested. Contact John Lane for details ([j.lane@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:j.lane@sheffield.ac.uk)). Visually inspected appliances will be identified by a unique sticker, a few will be given to attendees on each course, and subsequently available from the Print Unit. See the Policy at <http://safety.dept.shef.ac.uk/guidance/PAT%20Policy%20March%202009.pdf>.

*The **fire alarm testing regime** in place across the University is intended to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, that the alarm system is functioning correctly in each building. Many of our buildings however are far too large to enable testers to check that every sounder is working as it should within a 30 second test period, and is why we ask that building occupants help by monitoring whether the alarm is sounding throughout your area of the building and to let Estates Helpdesk know if it isn't. All building occupants are informed of the time of the alarm test in their building and in some cases boards are put out to remind staff on the day. Please make a mental note of this test time and if you realise that you haven't heard the alarm at the designated time, ask others in the building or Porter where applicable, whether the test took place. If the alarm was tested and you didn't hear it, please contact Estates Helpdesk (Ext. 29000) immediately to report the failure in your area.*

Recently advice has been issued on TV and radio in the UK on **recognising the symptoms of a "Stroke"**, similar to that issued in Safetyline 97. In the UK the acronym **FAST** is being used, meaning **F**ace, **A**rms, **S**peech and **T**elephone. If someone is suspected of having suffered a Stroke ask them to smile, or raise their arms or speak. If the face appears "lopsided", or the person fails to raise both arms to the same height or the person is unable to speak coherently, then telephone for an Ambulance immediately. Stroke victims usually recover fully if they can be treated within 3 hours, so being able to recognise the symptoms quickly could be vital.

HSE have issued a safety alert concerning the risk of **carbon monoxide poisoning** from gas central heating boilers sited on internal walls of domestic properties, particularly in multi-storey flats and apartments built since 2000. The alert is aimed at builders and developers, landlords and occupiers of residential properties with gas central heating boilers sited on internal walls. The alert describes potential warning signs and what individuals should do. The alert can be found at: - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic/alert021008.htm>

The Guidance section of our web site has been "tidied up" to categorise the various documents to make them easier to find. On the right hand side of the page, you can access the HSE's "**Toolbox Talk on Ladder Safety**" which should be used as a training aid for all ladder users. The Guidance pages can be found at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/safety/guidance/guide.html>

**Safety Services Annual Report for 2008** is now available on Safety Services web site in the Health and Safety Committee information section.