

Safetyline 80

H & S UPDATE AUGUST 2007

Two recent fires at the University of Westminster in London have devastated a section of one of their campuses. The damage was exacerbated by the fact there were oxyacetylene cylinders inside the buildings so the Fire Service refused to enter the buildings fighting the fire from outside. The presence of the cylinders also resulted in a large exclusion zone being imposed which resulted in an evacuation of the adjacent hospital's maternity ward.

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*The list of **Workplace Exposure Limits** (EH40), for use with the COSHH Regulations has been updated and includes some new workplace exposure limits which are emphasised in bold in the list on this website. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/table1.pdf> . They come into force on 1/10/2007.*

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A few weeks ago, contractors working on a construction site adjacent to New Spring House (NSH) on Victoria Street, carried out some excavation work at the rear of NSH resulting in the fire exit being unusable, which was only discovered when the occupants of NSH were trying to evacuate the building as a result of a fire alarm. The contractors carried out this work without negotiating with Estates Services or the occupants of the building and clearly put the safety of the occupants at significant risk. In light of this, I ask all of you to be **vigilant when non-University contractors are working near your building**, and to raise any concerns you have with Estates Services or Safety Services.

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*Estates Services are currently arranging for "**No Smoking**" signs to be affixed at accesses into all University buildings. Entrance lobbies which fall under the legislation are having additional signs to indicate "No smoking is allowed in this area".*

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The University's Health and Safety Policy **prohibits taking bicycles inside buildings**. There are several designated bicycle parking areas around the University campus which should be used. Bicycles can cause significant obstruction and tripping risks to occupants.

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*Edinburgh University received the following **advice about the impact of REACH on Universities** from HSE: REACH places duties on manufacturers, importers and users of chemicals, at quantities above a tonne a year, for collating and assessing data on environmental and human health risks which should lead to improvements in the health and safety information communicated down chemical supply chains, and should improve local COSHH assessments generally. For substances at lower tonnages REACH doesn't apply and COSHH will remain in place to help protect those working with chemicals. It's unlikely that Universities will need to register any chemicals - unless there are significant imports from outside the EU, but in the event that a University needs to seek authorisation for the use of a substance eventually listed in Annex XIV of REACH, Article 56 (3) of REACH indicates that the authorisation provision shall not apply to the use of substances in scientific research and development. Check that your suppliers of CMRs, PBTs and vPvBs (check web site below) are aware of their importance to you, so that they can cover this should the substances concerned need to be registered by them. Guidance to assist manufacturers, importers and downstream users comply with COSHH should become available. HSE's helpdesk will soon provide guidance for manufacturers, importers and users.*

<http://www.cibasc.com/index/cmp-index/cmp-ehs/cmp-ehs-reach/cmp-ehs-rea-glossary>

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The new PDF version of the **Short Course H&S Code of Practice** (for TILL) can be found at:
<http://www.safety.dept.shef.ac.uk/cop/shortcoursecop.pdf>