

Safetyline 74

H & S UPDATE FEBRUARY 2007

A new “**What’s New**” button on our web site contains links to all the information put on the site during the month. This month, in addition to this Safetyline, office and laboratory safety inspection forms and links to the information below are listed. The button can also be found at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/safety/new/index.html>. A new “**CoSHH Forms**” button has examples of the CoSHH assessment forms used by various departments; a “**Legionella Issues**” button contains the University’s Legionella Policy, Operational Procedures Manual and a short note on Legionella and its associated risks with a summary of the actions taken by the University to control Legionella bacteria in water systems, and a “**Disability Issues**” button where the “Means of Escape for Disabled People Manual” can be found.

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*In the 12 months to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2006 the University saw a 14% **reduction in the number of accidents** reported compared to the previous 12 month period, down from 584 to 503. An even bigger reduction was seen in the number of unwanted fire alarms in 2006, down to 153 from 284 in 2005. We are grateful to you all for your efforts to work safer to reduce accidents and for your help to realise such a significant reduction in false alarms, far greater than the 5% reduction target agreed with South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue. Keep up the good work, it reduces the disruption to our normal operations and helps keep good relations with the Fire Service.*

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IOSH has created a “**Workplace hazards awareness programme**” for schoolchildren and teachers to make them aware of hazards that can be found in the workplace. This is prompted partly by the fact that work experience children are at higher risk of injury during their work experience than employees due to their youth and lack of experience of risks and lack of training. The package can be accessed at <http://www.wiseup2work.co.uk>.

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***Laboratory equipment** in which water is stored or circulated at temperatures between 25°C and 45°C will encourage the growth of Legionella bacteria if specific precautions are not taken to inhibit its growth. In order to reduce the risks in untreated water it is strongly recommended that water baths and other relevant equipment are emptied of water on a monthly basis and scrubbed clean to remove traces of the bacteria before refilling. See Procedure 4 in the Operational Procedures Manual on <http://safety.dept.shef.ac.uk/legionella/manual.pdf> for more information.*

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If you have not yet provided up-to-date details on your **emergency contact numbers** for the University Control Room, please do send them through to safety@sheffield.ac.uk and we will arrange for the data to be revised.

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*Following the recent **rough weather**, if you spot any external damage to any of the University’s buildings, do report defects found the Estates Helpdesk by phone on extension 29000 or e-mail on [estates-help@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:estates-help@sheffield.ac.uk) . Similarly, if you find any defects inside your building, again do report them to helpdesk.*

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As the **Safety Services web site** has not been updated to the new Corporate Image yet, links to the site from other Departments’ sites may not be working properly and you may have to enter the Safety Services site directly to access information.

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*Although deaths from **Helium inhalation** are rare, last June two 21 year old American college students were found dead inside a deflated, helium advertising balloon. The pair pulled down the 8’ balloon, and climbed inside. Their last words consisted of high-pitched, incoherent giggling as they slowly passed out from lack of oxygen. The medical examiner reported that helium inhalation was a significant factor in their deaths.*