

Safetyline 86

H & S UPDATE FEBRUARY 2008

Mercury in energy-saving light bulbs. Tungsten light bulbs are to be phased out in Australia, the UK, and the US over the next 5 years, but their low-energy replacements contain mercury, which has triggered a rash of concerned media stories. The following RSC article puts the issue into perspective <http://www.rsc.org/chemistryworld/News/2008/January/07010803.asp>

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*Following the article in November's Safetyline about the need to consider **evacuation for new students or staff with disabilities** who may have difficulties evacuating without help, we've had no response to date. Do let us know if you need help to develop a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) for anyone in your department who requires a plan under disability legislation. There is guidance on the University's web site to help you to develop a plan with someone who needs one, see: - <http://safety.dept.shef.ac.uk/disability/escapeman.pdf>.*

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Table 1 of the COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) **workplace exposure limits** information has been updated to consolidate amendments to the list made in October 2007. See the following website for details: - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/table1.pdf>

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*In view of the recent implementation of the draft policy on vehicle movements on the concourse, it seems relevant to illustrate why this initiative was introduced. There are 50-60 fatalities each year to workers and around 15 other deaths as a result of workplace transport incidents. The **Workplace Transport Injury Statistics** give more details for each year since 2001. Five types of accidents are identified, they are: - struck by a moving vehicle, people falling from a vehicle, materials falling from a vehicle, collapse / overturn of a vehicle and hit against a vehicle. See <http://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/pdf/rhstran.pdf>*

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HSE will be running new **slips, trips and falls** campaign in February and March 2008. The campaign is aimed primarily at those most at risk of a slip, trip or fall at work and those best placed to take action. See <http://www.hse.gov.uk/shatteredlives/index.htm> for more information.

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Sartorius Mechatronics UK Ltd have investigated the incident involving a **Hettich Micro 20 centrifuge** which disintegrated in use in Birmingham University and conclude that user error or a damaged rotor lid probably caused the initial problem, but the cause of the failure of the centrifuge lid to contain the plastic parts is unknown. It's clear the catch broke off under the force but the centrifuge was manufactured to comply with safety standards in place at the time. Hettich have re-engineered the lid catch in metal which is much stronger. The new lid and lock can be fitted to any existing Mikro 20 centrifuges where a plastic catch is present, however Hettich state they don't believe existing lids pose a major safety hazard. Parts can be obtained from Sartorius: complete lid with metal catch for Mikro 20 (Part No. GB-E1674) is £60.70+VAT; rotor lid (Part No. GB-E2040) is £38.30+VAT. Sartorius can send an engineer or you can send the centrifuges to Epsom for repairs. Call Adrian Hack on 01372 737102 for pricing on both options.

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A **car accident** is one of the most dangerous things the average person will experience during their life. The guide below has been developed to try to help you avoid injury or death. Not all cars are the same, so much of the information (such as airbags) will not apply to those who drive vehicles pre 1990. Ways of avoiding an accident, and the position one should adopt during a crash, however, are effectively universal. <http://www.wikihow.com/Survive-a-Car-Accident>

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The PAT testing team is coming across more and more instances of **electrical plugs from the EU and other countries** being used with adapters in the University. Plugs, adapters or appliances without CE marking are illegal, potentially unsafe and must not be used in the UK. Continental plugs should be replaced with British 3-pin plugs or used with appropriately fused adapters (with shuttering) and preferably RCD protection. Also please do not plug extension leads into extension leads - get more sockets installed!

*Safety Services - working to make your University safer*