

# Safetyline 61

H & S UPDATE JANUARY 2006

Over the past few months, we have been approached by departments expressing concerns about the **management of crowds during fire evacuations**. This has been a particular problem in the Arts Tower, and departments there have been proactive in identifying suitable persons to help control crowds and usher them away from the building and fire exits which serves to speed up movement down the stairs and hence the safety of occupants. Discussions are now taking place with departments in other multi-department buildings to instigate similar procedures by which Fire Marshals will be clearly identified, as they will be issued with Hi-Visibility vests, and their roles will be to help control evacuated persons by ushering them to Assembly Points and away from affected buildings. Providing sufficient numbers of Fire Marshals are available, we should be able to reduce the obstruction of highways and pavements for other road users.

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*At the end of November, the UK Resuscitation Council made significant changes to their recommendations for CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation). Update sessions are planned in January for all **First Aiders and Appointed Persons** - full details on Safety Services web site. The sessions are very short (1.5 hours) but important. Please ensure that everyone involved is aware of them and books in. It is also expected that there will be several significant national changes announced during 2006 regarding the structure of first aid training. The First Aid at Work certificate course will become a 3 or 4-day course with annual 1-day refreshers, in addition to a 2 day refresher every 3 years. We will keep you informed when details are announced.*

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The **Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005** will come into force on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006. Under these new regulations, noise exposures and level limits will be lowered. The threshold for providing hearing protection and training on noise and hearing is lowered from 85dB(A) to 80 dB(A). The threshold for introducing noise control is reduced from 90 dB(A) to 85 dB(A) and an exposure limit for daily noise exposure is introduced, which can be averaged over a week when noise exposure varies from day to day. There is a specific requirement for health surveillance and hearing tests where a risk is identified. If you have equipment or machinery in your work areas which do create reasonably high levels of noise, it would be prudent to let us know as soon as possible so that we can measure the level of noise generated and advise accordingly. The new Regulations will put more emphasis on controlling the level of noise generated rather than protecting hearing.

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*HSE have produced a short guidance document titled "**Pandemic Flu - Workplace Guidance**" for those of you who want to have some idea of the possible actions that can be taken by businesses in the event of pandemic flu. The document can be found at the following address: - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/diseases/pandemic.pdf>*

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The Health & Safety Commission (HSC) has today published the **latest statistics on workplace injury and work-related ill-health**. Fatal injuries to workers decreased by 7% to 220 in 2004/05 from 236 in 2003/04. Around half of these occurred in 2 industries, construction (71) and agriculture(42). There were 30,312 major injuries to employees in 2004/05 which was down 2% from the previous year. Over 30% were caused by slipping and tripping. There were another 120,346 other injuries to employees causing them to be off work for over 3 days, 8% down on 2003/04. 40% were caused by lifting, handling or carrying. On ill-health aspects, in 2004/05 an estimated 2.0 million people suffered from ill health which they thought was work-related, lower than the level in 2003/04 (2.2 million), of which around 75% of the cases were musculoskeletal disorders (eg upper limb or back problems) or stress, depression or anxiety.

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*Thank you to those of you who have completed and returned the **health and safety self-audit questionnaire**. The results will be collated and presented at the next University Health and Safety Committee at the end of January.*