

Safetyline 85

H & S UPDATE JANUARY 2008

Please remember, if you receive a Solicitor's letter informing you about a claim or potential claim against the University for injury or any other reason, send the letter directly to the University Insurance Officer (with a copy to Bev Gouldsbrough in Safety Services) but DO NOT reply to the letter in any way, as any correspondence from the University in response to such a letter is deemed to be a substantive response and will trigger the 21 day time limit the University has to investigate the circumstances of such a claim and to reply meaningfully to the Solicitors.

The controversial EU **Physical Agents (Electromagnetic Fields) Directive**, which was due to come into effect in the UK in April 2008, now looks likely to be delayed to allow further research to be carried out. Various stakeholders had expressed serious concern over some of the proposed controls to exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF) arguing that they are unnecessary as no long term health effects caused by EMF have been scientifically proved. The medical community raised serious concerns that the legislation could restrict, or in some cases prevent the use of MRI scanning.

All 240volt **portable electrical equipment** must be regularly checked to ensure that they are electrically safe to use. The frequency of checks is based on the likelihood of damage occurring based on the environment in which they are used and the frequency they are moved. Generally 2-yearly checks is seen as a reasonable compromise, see HSE's recommended testing frequency guidance at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/safety/guidance/pattesting.html>.

*We have received a report of a fault on a **Hettich Micro 20 centrifuge** - during a run it appears the rotor wind shield lid came off and burst through the outer lid spraying sharp plastic fragments around the lab. The outer lid has a clasp which was not strong enough to contain the fragments. Fortunately no one was injured. The manufacturers, Thermo Electron Corporation have issued the following advice for Heraeus Rotor Lid failures on 3324/3325/3328 microfuge rotors: -*

- *Plastic lids should be inspected for ANY chips or cracks before EVERY run – no damaged lid should be used again.*
- *Snap-on lids must not be used with unsnapped or unreliable snapping tube caps – use only a screw-on lid in this case*
- *Snap-on lids must NOT be used with the screw-on lid rim seal present in the rotor (seal will force lid, may be thrown, may shear motor shaft)*
- *Original multi-turn screw-on lids must NOT be interchanged with 1-turn 'fast-on' screw versions – they intentionally do not attach*
- *Plastic lids should not be used > 5 years - less if exposed to solvents, any clouding should result in immediate withdrawal*
- *Plastic lids may only be autoclaved for a maximum of 50 times to 120°C in their lifetime*
- *After any failure, remove rotor & ensure removal of ALL particles from the spin chamber before any further use of instrument, otherwise a grey/black dust will ensue as the parts are fragmented to powder*

[Quote the number stamped on the rotor body if more specific information is needed from the Supplier]

Central Workshops offer a free **gas system inspection service** to departments using compressed gas cylinders, including checking of regulators for correct fitting, compliance with the British Compressed Gas Association (BCGA) Codes of Practice and what action is required in the event of non-compliance. Contact John Lane on Extension 22130 for more information.

If you need access to the University's **Asbestos Register** it can be accessed from the following web page <http://www.shef.ac.uk/departments-of-estates/maintainingestate/asbestos>, from the grey box on the right hand side of the page. The "Asbestos Awareness" heading shows you how to navigate through the Register to find information in your work area.

Safety Services wish you all a Happy New Year