

Safetyline 97

H & S UPDATE JANUARY 2009

The Government have confirmed they are intending to **replace sicknotes with electronic 'fit notes'** that aim to get people back into work quicker after sickness absence. Health secretary Alan Johnson announced his official response to Dame Carol Black's report into the health of Britain's working age population, published in March. About 172 million working days were lost in 2007 due to sickness absence, according to the CBI. Absences that last more than four weeks make up about 40% of days lost its research has shown. Other measures designed to tackle the UK's estimated £100bn sickness absence bill include pilots of 'Fit for Work' services, designed to support people on a period of sickness absence to return to work.

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*For those of you who missed the recent Channel 4 documentary about the HSE titled "The Fun Police", or for reason wish to watch it a second time, you can find it at the following web address: [-www.channel4.com/video/brandless-catchup.jsp?vodBrand=the-fun-police](http://www.channel4.com/video/brandless-catchup.jsp?vodBrand=the-fun-police). It will be available to watch until 4<sup>th</sup> January. Nuff said!*

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Recognising A Stroke – an e-mail currently doing the rounds gives the following advice: "Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify but the lack of awareness spells possible disaster as a stroke victim may suffer severe brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke. Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions: 1) Ask the individual to **Smile**. 2) Ask the person to **Talk** and speak a simple sentence coherently, and 3) Ask the person to **Raise** both arms. If he or she has trouble with any one of these tasks, call 999 immediately and describe the symptoms to the call handler. Another suggested indicator is asking the person to 'stick' out their tongue. If the tongue is 'crooked', i.e. if it goes to one side or the other, that is also an indication of a stroke." Stroke victims can be treated, usually successfully, if the victim can be treated within 3 hours, so being able to recognise the symptoms quickly could be vital.

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*For those departments who are relocating to new premises in January, please review your **Emergency Contact details** and e-mail [safety@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:safety@sheffield.ac.uk) with any changes you wish to make. This will ensure that the Emergency Control Room has the most up-to-date information for your department. Several departments have not updated their emergency contact information over the past 12 months; if you think this may apply to your department, please check to see who is on your list of contacts, and if you find that it is out of date, please let Safety Services have the up-to-date information you need on the system.*

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If there have been any **changes to the nominated Safety Officers** in your department, e.g. risk assessors, DSE assessors, Laser Safety or Radiation Protection Officers, manual handling assessors etc, please let Debbie (d.i.fisher@sheffield.ac.uk) know in Safety Services so we can update our records. Thanks.

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*The **new Safety Services website** will be live for the New Year, with a totally new look and sections on Biological Safety, Fire Safety and Chemical Safety which will have all the relevant guidance documents and links to relevant HSE pages and other sites. We're still putting the final touches to the site so it won't have all the information immediately, but we will get the rest of the information on as quickly as possible. Getting to the new site will be unchanged; you can either search for "Safety Services" in the "Search" box, or via the "Professional Services" list from the "Departments and Services" section on the Home Page, or from clicking on "Health and safety" in "General Information" in the "Staff" section on the Homepage. PDF version of two UCEA documents which can be found on the UCEA website have also been added, "Guidance for the Placement of HE Students" and "Guidance when Working Overseas" can be found in the "Guidance" section on our website.*

We wish you all a very merry Christmas and our best wishes for 2009