

Safetyline 55

H & S UPDATE JULY 2005

The Fire Service were called to a **fire incident in Firth Court** on 15th June which was caused by plastic materials being left in a heated oven overnight, and which eventually caught fire causing damage to the oven and some minor smoke damage. We were very fortunate that the incident did not escalate causing significant damage to the building. We recognise that heating equipment is used extensively and often overnight, but we do expect those using the equipment in this way to consider the consequences of their actions and to ensure so far as is practicable, that fires cannot be caused by their actions, i.e. you don't leave combustible or flammable materials in, or next to, heating equipment or ignition sources unsupervised.

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*The **Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) Regulations** come into force in September 2005 and will require companies to make oil storage more secure and to ensure a high level of pollution prevention. These rules cover external storage of at least 200 litres in drums or other containers. The Regulations can be found on the HMSO website and further information is available from the Environment Agency at [www.environment-agency.co.uk](http://www.environment-agency.co.uk)*

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On 1st April 2005, the **National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB)** was incorporated into the Health Protection Agency, but will continue its main functions under the new umbrella organisation. For more information go to www.hpa.org.uk/radiation/

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***Glass fronted noticeboards.** On sliding glass types, if the two sliding glass sections are moved away from the sides to the middle, the bottom guide and wooden support can bend under the weight causing the glass sections to drop out of the top guide and fall outwards. Consider additional support under the mid point of the bottom frame or other suitable means of support.*

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OPDM has issued the **latest fire statistics** which indicate that 940,000 fires and false alarms were attended by the Fire Service in the 12 months up to 30th September 2004 (13% down on previous 12 months), and that there had been a 6% fall in the number of building fires to 99,500 - a 20 year low. The number of deaths over the same period fell to 566 (from 598 in the previous year) but this figure is still around twice the number killed in workplace accidents every year.

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*The HSE have produced a brief but helpful **guide to the new Work at Height Regulations (INDG 410)** and which can be found on [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.pdf). Also available is "Question and Answer Brief for the Construction industry on the Work at Height Regulations 2005" at [www.hse.gov.uk/construction/pdf/fallsqa.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/pdf/fallsqa.pdf).*

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The Government is delaying its expansion of the **injury cost recovery scheme** (passing the cost of NHS treatment for victims of workplace accidents to employers) until October 2006.

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*The "**Workplace Exposure Limits 2005**" list on our web pages has been revised to reflect the recently produced EH40/2005. Around 100 substances have been removed from the previous combination of MEL and OES so a second table has been included at the bottom of the new WEL list containing the previously held information for the 100 missing substances.*

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Noise at Work Regulations will change in 2006, and personal "noise exposure action levels" reduced, the "lower exposure action value" will be 80dB, the "upper exposure action value" 85dB and the "exposure limit value" 87dB, all based on daily exposure levels. The new legislation will require employers to reduce noise levels, with PPE issued as a last resort, whereas at present the employer is obliged to ensure workers wear appropriate protection where noise levels exceed 90dB. This change means that noise levels currently deemed acceptable may contravene the lower limits and require work to reduce the level of noise generated. Identify equipment generating noise which should be reassessed to determine whether they are likely to require remedial action under the new regulations.