

Safetyline 90

H & S UPDATE JUNE 2008

The **Safety Management Tips for Departmental Management** has been updated and can be found on the Safety Services web site at <http://safety.dept.shef.ac.uk/guidance/SafMgtTips.pdf>. This information is intended to indicate to Departmental management those issues that they must consider (where relevant) for the safe management of their respective departments.

~~~~~  
*An incident occurred at the Kroto Institute in May when a researcher wheeling a **gas cylinder** to the building from the gas cylinder store had problems negotiating a low kerb and during the attempt to pull the trolley and cylinder up the kerb, the trolley and cylinder overbalanced and fell on the researcher's foot. Fortunately the injury was not serious but this incident emphasises the potential instability of gas cylinders which can weigh up to 100kg and could cause serious injuries. The resulting investigation identified that a 3-wheeled trolley would probably have prevented the incident occurring due to its greater stability. Departments who move cylinders around buildings should review relevant risk assessments to ensure that all those required to move cylinders are appropriately trained and to determine whether a 3-wheeled trolley would reduce risks of cylinder instability. Central Workshops can assist with both these aspects.*

~~~~~  
A "catastrophic" fire has caused serious damage to the Architecture faculty at Delft University in the Netherlands on 13th May, endangering valuable books and furniture. Although no-one was injured, much of the 14-storey building was completely destroyed. The fire broke out on a mid-level floor around 9am and rapidly spread upwards and is believed to have been started by a short circuit in a coffee machine caused by a faulty water pipe. The faculty building caught alight then spread to the library and the historic chair collection. The Fire Service was unable to get close to it and decided to stand back and let the fire burn itself out. Around 3,000 students are affected and alternative arrangements are being made for students to be taught.

~~~~~  
*Please remind all staff and postgraduate student that they should attend or undertake **Fire Training** annually. We recommend that all new starters attend a Fire Lecture, which are held monthly and details can be found at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/firetraining/displayTimetable.do>. Subsequent Fire Training can be undertaken by logging onto the University's electronic web training programme which can be found at <http://www.koocow.com/firetraining/sheff/>. You cannot use your normal login and password for this training however and we suggest you contact your Departmental Safety Officer to ask for these if you have forgotten them.*

~~~~~  
A major study published in Nature Nanotechnology suggests some forms of **carbon nanotubes** could be as harmful as asbestos if inhaled in sufficient quantities. The study used established methods to see if specific types of nanotubes have the potential to cause mesothelioma -- a cancer of the lung lining that can take 30-40 years to appear following exposure. The results show that long, thin multi-walled carbon nanotubes that look like asbestos fibers, behave like asbestos fibers. See articles at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/05/080520144004.htm> and at <http://www.nature.com/nano/journal/vaop/ncurrent/abs/nano.2008.111.html>

~~~~~  
*Now that the **hot weather** seems to be making an intermittent appearance, it is timely to remind you that it is easy to catch sunburn when the sun is shining, and that when working in your gardens, on holiday or just enjoying the weather, you should either wear clothes (and a hat) that minimise skin exposure or ensure that you use a high factor sun cream on all exposed skin.*

~~~~~  
While we're on the subject of Ultraviolet radiation (UV) Make sure UV sources used in the lab display hazard warning signs, that users are trained and wear suitable PPE - see <http://www.shef.ac.uk/safety/ir/index.html> for guidance.

Safety Services working to make your University safer