

Safetyline 126

H & S UPDATE JUNE 2011

The Department of Estates and Facilities Management have produced a Policy on “**Managing Contractors**” for work involving construction activities which can be found on Safety Services website in the “General Guidance” section. They are shortly to produce an Appendix to this Policy for non-construction activities which will be more applicable for Departments and is intended to cover the issues Departments will be required to consider and address for service engineers and others undertaking non-construction work for departments. The Appendix will be submitted to the next Health and Safety Committee for approval prior to implementation.

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*The seminars titled “**Fire Safety for Visitors with Disabilities**” which Safety Services is running weekly are equally applicable for staff and students with disabilities if arrangements haven’t yet been made for those members of staff or students who require help to evacuate a building in an emergency, or in the event of a power loss or lift failure. Details on when seminars are being run can be found on Safety Services Homepage at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/safety>.*

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Two papers have recently been published which highlight the dangers from ‘**laser pointers**’; not those for use in lectures (these should now be restricted to 1mW Class 2 devices) but similar looking devices that can be obtained over the internet with outputs of up to 1000mW. See details of how a 15 year old boy damaged his eyesight - <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc1005818> Another paper appeared in the US National Institute of Standards and Technology last July - NIST Technical Note 1668, see - http://www.nist.gov/pml/div699/laser_080310.cfm. This drew peoples’ attention to another green laser pointer hazard – beware the dim laser pointer! One pointer appeared much dimmer than the others but was found to be emitting 10 x more invisible IR (10mW) than green laser light. If you have a laser pointer and are unsure of its output contact t.j.moseley@shef.ac.uk and get it checked.

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*Those of you who work in the buildings around the academic campus may have noticed that **Evac Chairs are being installed near to Porter’s Lodges** in those buildings with Lodges. These are being installed in response to concerns for the safe evacuation of visitors who require help to evacuate buildings in the event of a lift failure, power loss or fire alarm, although we do not expect anyone to put their own lives at risk when helping others in the event of a fire. We are also training Service Delivery Coordinators (SDC) and Porters how to use the Evac Chairs, but it is important to emphasise that Departments are expected to make the necessary arrangements for the safe evacuation of their visitors and should not rely on SDCs and Porters for this.*

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*If you have to **work outside in the sun this summer**, take appropriate precautions such as wearing a hat to protect the head, ears and neck, wear long-sleeved, loose fitting woven shirts to protect the arms back and torso, wear sunglasses and apply sunscreen of at least SPF 15 on all exposed skin. Spend as much time as possible out of the sun especially between 11am and 3pm when the UV will be at its strongest.*

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HSE have recently produced risk management guidance for workers using **Carbon Nanotubes**. This guidance is now available from the Safety Services website under “Chemical Hazards”.

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*The **new labelling system for chemical substances** is now in place and you should be seeing the new symbols agreed under the “Global Harmonisation System” appearing on containers you now purchase. See <http://live.unece.org/trans/danger/publi/ghs/pictograms.html> for a full list of the symbols now to be used. From the end of 2010 all pure substances are required to display the new symbols although suppliers may also choose to have the old symbols as well. The new symbols become mandatory for mixtures e.g. universal indicator, biological stains, until 2015. The new symbols will be printed in black on a white background within a red diamond frame. There are a couple of new symbols, an “exploding torso” indicating damage to genetic material, and an exclamation mark indicating an “irritant”.*