

# Safetyline 51

H & S UPDATE MARCH 2005

CLEAPSS report that two schools have had **incidents involving naked flames**, one in which a pupil's long hair caught fire and another when a pupil was badly burned when his shirt caught fire as he was leaning over a candle. Both cases illustrate the need to assess the risks working with naked flames, including Bunsen Burners and that, where necessary, lab rules should state that long hair should be tied back, and baggy or loose clothes covered by a lab coat.

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*The HSE are advising businesses across the UK to report any approach by a bogus company called "**Health and Safety Registration Enforcement Division**" to their local HSE office or the police. This bogus organisation are contacting companies and requesting registration payments to ensure that firms are compliant with health and safety legislation. The HSE stresses that is not connected with the Company and would not approach employers in this way. A HSE spokesman said the HSE never seeks advance payment for any of its services, and added, "Many of our services are provided free of charge and much of our guidance is on our website."*

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New "**Work at Height Regulations**" are expected in April 2005, but it appears that for work carried out above two metres it will no longer be stipulated that specific fall protection measures must be provided. HSE will require employers to take sensible precautions for any work at height, including work at below two meters, which expose workers to risks. Trade Unions are concerned that the loss of prescriptive legislation may lead to a reduction in safety standards in the construction industry, but this does accord with risk management principles.

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*A Gateshead department store has been fined £15,000 with £21,000 costs after an **employee fractured her skull in a fall** in the dishwasher area of the store's kitchen. Four similar accidents had occurred in the same kitchen during the previous year but the company had done little to correct an obvious hazard. A full forensic examination of the floor and matting was carried out by the Health and Safety Laboratories who concluded that the risk of slipping presented under even relatively low levels of wet contamination was unacceptably high.*

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Researchers at the University of Texas, Southwestern Medical Center, claim people with mild to moderate depression who undertake 30-minute **aerobic exercise** sessions three to five times a week can reduce their **depressive symptoms** by almost 50 per cent, which are comparable to those from studies in which patients with mild to moderate depression were treated with antidepressants or cognitive therapy. The research involved 80 people aged 20-45 who were randomly split into five exercise groups. The results showed that the groups who participated in moderately intense aerobics, such as exercising on a treadmill or stationary bicycle, for three or five days a week experienced a decline in depressive symptoms by an average of 47 per cent after 12 weeks. A researcher commented, "Numerous effective treatments for depression are available, yet many people don't seek treatment because of the negative social stigma still associated with the disease. Exercise may offer a viable treatment alternative, particularly as it can be recommended for most individuals."

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*A recent **fire in Ranmoor Hall** started when a candle set paper alight, with the resulting smoke setting off the fire alarm. Fortunately, little damage was caused to the room, but the incident again reinforces the message, that candles are potentially dangerous and should not be used.*

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The 18-year study looked at 43,000 men and found that those who ate 40g of bran, oatmeal or **wholegrain products** every day were 20 per cent less likely to develop heart disease over a 14-year period than men who ate less than 3g of wholegrain products per day. (American Journal of Clinical Nutrition). Get chomping guys!

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**To contact the Control Room on a mobile phone, you must use the number 0114 222 4444**