

Safetyline 63

H & S UPDATE MARCH 2006

The HSE/DEFRA/DH publication “**Biological Agents: Managing the risks in Laboratories and healthcare premises**” can be found on <http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/biologagents.pdf>. This is the current standard for safe working in laboratories.

We are receiving several calls about problems with the web **Fire Training** package. Don't forget to switch off “Pop-ups” before starting the seminar as you will be unable to complete the seminar and assessment if these aren't disabled. Don't forget the Login is “Sheffieldun” and the Password “Fire”. We still get several requests for this.

The Environment Agency has produced a **10-point checklist for those who store or handle hazardous substances** on site. Points to consider are: -

1. Are storage containers fit for purpose, regularly inspected and maintained?
2. Are all storage areas & containers away from watercourses, drains & unsurfaced areas?
3. Do storage containers have secondary containment, to contain leaks/spills, e.g., a bund?
4. Are there procedures and training for safe delivery & handling of materials?
5. Is storage & handling of waste done safely and comply with safety & environmental law?
6. Where does your waste go - is it disposed of correctly?
7. Is waste being reduced and recovered - this includes recycling?
8. Is there an up to date drainage plan of the site?
9. Is the site drained correctly? All contaminated water, sewage & trade effluent should go to foul sewer. Only clean water, i.e. roof drainage, should go to surface water drains.
10. Is there a plan, equipment and training to deal with pollution emergencies?

EA have free guidance to assist: - “Pollution prevention pays - getting your site right”

Dust extraction systems supplied by P&J Dust Extraction before late 1999 with “bursting membrane” explosion relief panels may contain a form of asbestos in the membrane and if so will be coloured red/orange. Intact panels are safe as fibres are bound in the material, but if the panel explodes as designed, asbestos fibres could be released. Please inform Stewart Marsden, the Asbestos Manager, if you have a dust extraction system supplied by P&J Dust Extraction before 1999, or if you have other makes which you feel should be checked in light of this information.

The **Denatured Alcohol Regulations** are now in force and Industrial methylated spirits (IMS) or ethanol is now known as Industrial Denatured Alcohol (IDA). You will need to obtain Notice 473 to register with HM Revenue & Customs. Registration should be a “one-off” exercise. On current information, there is no requirement to record usage of IDA for experimental purposes but it must be securely stored and stock quantities audited annually. For further information search on the HM Revenue & Customs website under “Notice 473” (with quote marks).

*I've received a report of a **Nitric Acid** incident when a plastic 5 litre container leaked, destroying the corrosives cabinet and a flammable cabinet below it. A type of cat litter was used to soak up the spillage which reacted with the acid producing choking clouds of Nitrogen Dioxide. The acid container was over 5 years old and had become brittle. Where acids are used ensure that spillage kits are compatible and do not react adversely with the acid. Also be aware that if there is no plastic protection for corrosive cabinets that leaks will corrode the metal. Store acids at low level where possible to avoid leaks damaging other equipment below the acid bottle.*

Derby College are still running the “**Certificate in Health and Safety in the Workplace Level 2**” on a no-fee basis. It's a modular course and requires those participating to apply the principles learned in their own workplace to aid understanding. If you are interested, e-mail d.g.thomas@sheffield by 16th March following which a meeting will be arranged between Derby College and those interested. (See flyer www.sheffield.ac.uk/safety/derbycollflyer.pdf)

Thank you to all of you who replied to our **Customer Survey**. I'm very grateful to you all for your comments.