

Safetyline 77

H & S UPDATE MAY 2007

Safety Services will be running a “**Heartstart**” week in June. This is a scheme supported by the British Heart Foundation and is aimed at giving people the skills to try to help someone having a heart attack, as well as other common problems. More information will be forthcoming soon.

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*A review is underway of the **coach parking arrangements for Open Days** on the main campus area following the creation of a bus lane on Brookhill which prevents coaches collecting and dropping off students on the Dainton Building side of Brookhill.*

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We recently received the following report from Cleapps, a health and safety bulletin for schools and colleges, that when **mixing Plaster of Paris with water**, the mixture can get very hot, and recently in one school where a student was mixing Plaster of Paris with water by hand intending to make a plaster cast of her hands, the mixture became so hot the girl suffered serious burns and her hands had to be amputated. A similar incident occurred a few years ago when a pupil lost two fingers. The MSDS supplied did warn against making casts of the hand but such warnings are unlikely to appear on samples intended for laboratory use. When used for setting bones it is never put in direct contact with skin and is used in relatively thin layers so the heat can dissipate.

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*The **Gardening and DIY** season is now upon us as people repair their homes and tend their gardens after the ravages of winter and renovate rooms for spring and summer. More than 200,000 DIY and gardening enthusiasts turn up at hospital each year. To avoid becoming an accident statistic, follow these simple guidelines:*

- *Be realistic and don't tackle a job unless you really have the ability*
- *Keep any tools clean and in good repair and take extra care with sharp cutting tools.*
- *Always plan ahead to avoid accidents when rushed*
- *Stop or unplug all powered appliances and tools before working on them.*
- *Ensure that all tools, paint, chemicals and weed killers are kept safely out of the reach of children and follow manufacturer's instructions when using them.*
- *Keep children and pets away when carrying out DIY or using powered equipment*
- *Keep all products such as paint strippers or weed killers in their original containers.*
- *Use a Residual Current Device (RCD) when operating electrically powered tools or equipment to protect your self from electrocution.*
- *Avoid injury from falls by always checking a ladder's condition before use.*
- *Avoid uncontrollable fires by always positioning bonfires and barbecues well away from fences, sheds and trees.*

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The University's **Pandemic Flu Contingency Plan** can now be found on the “Staff” section on the University's Home page under “General information”. This is a “Sheff only” document. And can be found at: - <http://www.shef.ac.uk/staff/imp/UoSPandemicFluCPJan07.pdf>

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*The **History Annexe** has been subjected to three break-ins, two of which resulted in arson attempts on a ground level storage room, which fortunately failed. The University was lucky but the episode highlights the care we all need to take to protect our buildings and work.*

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South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue are to carry out an **exercise at the Arts Tower** on 24th June to simulate a fire in a high rise building. Departments in the building have been consulted.

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*HSE appear to have set up a new web page to address “**health and safety myths**” which some organisations act on in the mistaken belief that HSE have adopted a particular stance on a h&s issues. This month's “myth” relates to the use of ladders and can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/myth/index.htm>.*