

# Safetyline 59

## H & S UPDATE NOVEMBER 2005

A family were lucky to escape from their **burning house** on Sandygate Road, Sheffield on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October, when their house went up in flames after a candle was left unattended at the bottom of a bed in the attic. The occupant was only awoken from sleep and alerted to the blaze when his feet began burning. He tried in vain to tackle the fire before getting his parents and grandmother out of the house. Within minutes the fire engulfed the bedroom and spread to the roof. Around 30 firefighters and 6 appliances were needed to get the blaze under control and stop it destroying the house and property next door. No smoke alarm had been fitted in the attic. This happened only days after a Sheffield student died in a house fire in Broomhill, he too had been sleeping in the attic. For your own safety and that of others, avoid using candles or make sure they are never unattended, install smoke detectors and have means of extinguishing fires nearby. Also, make sure you know how to get out of your property should the stairs be unavailable due to a fire.

Over the past month we have run 21 **Out of Hours courses** and have been able to accommodate around 98% of those who applied by the closing date. Unfortunately attendance has not been good at around 74%, which means places would have been available for others had we been given adequate notice of non-attendance, and that these people will now be vying with others for future places. Also, in view of the very short nature of this course, at only 90 minutes, we do ask that people turn up on time as latecomers would miss too much and prove disruptive to the course, and as such we will refuse entry.

Thanks to all of you who returned the **Health and Safety self-audit**. I have replied by e-mail to most of the queries raised in the returns that required replies. Generally the standard of your responses is good and improving, and the audits we carry out will serve to improve them further. I will be reporting the full results to the Health and Safety Committee in February. If any of you feel I have not responded satisfactorily to your return please let me know and I will respond formally. For those of you, who have not yet returned the questionnaire; please do so as soon as possible as the "return by" date was yesterday (31<sup>st</sup> October). Thank you.

Over the last month a message has been circulating on e-mail reporting an incident involving a **needle in a cinema seat**, and suggesting similar incidents in other public locations. I have not been able to validate the stories but suggest that readers exercise caution in public venues.

It's almost Bonfire Night again and **Fireworks** will be lighting the night sky to impress and delight. However every year several adults and children get seriously injured by fireworks and unwanted fires are an additional risk. Do take care when handling fireworks, follow instructions carefully, keep as far away as practicable from buildings and make sure children, in particular, are kept far enough back to avoid injury, and that animals are kept inside. Have a bucket of water handy to douse dud fireworks or extinguish sparks. If possible go to an organised event, the fireworks tend to be better, the display usually lasts longer and the crowd is better managed. Anyway, have a great time and let's hope the weather stays dry.

For those of you, who like me, really do not care for **gardening** but haven't worked out a good excuse to avoid it, it is a little known fact that in the UK, more than 69,000 people every year are injured while working in the garden, including an estimated 4000 flowerpot injuries alone. Most injuries are to the hands and feet from hedge clippers or poorly placed spades. Gardening also causes muscle injuries and strains as people emerge from their homes after a long winter and go straight from sitting to shovelling.