

Safetyline 95

H & S UPDATE NOVEMBER 2008

Our web site is currently in the process of being overhauled to meet the University's image. This will mean that the site will be a bit untidy for a few weeks while we tidy it up, add more information and replace HTML versions of documents by PDF versions, but more importantly, you may find that hyperlinks in Safetylines prior to 2004 are very unlikely to work. We apologise if that is the case. If anyone needs a copy of a Safetyline prior to 2004 then contact Dionne on 26198 or e-mail her on d.m.edwards@sheffield and we'll try to help you.

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*In June a company producing pre-packed meals was prosecuted by the HSE following extensive injuries caused to an employee when an **industrial pressure cooker exploded** some months earlier. The steel door gave way under 23 tonnes of pressure hitting the man and propelling him over 8 metres. The conditions leading to the incident were: - the vessel had not been maintained; staff had replaced a seal the wrong way round and the door wouldn't close properly; locking pins which held the door clamps had been removed, and safety systems which should have stopped the cooker working had been bypassed. Autoclaves are also "pressure cookers" and could fail equally spectacularly if not maintained and operated correctly. Please ensure that your autoclaves are being inspected annually under the University's statutory examination system and that only fully trained personnel use or maintain them.*

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The HSE is urging employers to **ensure that where electrical equipment is used in a damp environment, that suitable protective devices are used**, after a hospital employee suffered severe injuries whilst operating a steam cleaner at work. The injuries required surgery and the employee lost the use of his right hand. He also suffers severe headaches, deterioration in his eyesight and numbness to his face. Despite the manufacturer's instruction clearly recommending the use of a Residual Current Device (RCD) with the steam cleaner, the Trust failed to supply an RCD. The NHS Trust was fined £8,000 for breaching the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

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*The HSE is warning employers that **machinery must be properly guarded**, following the conviction of a company and an employee after a worker lost his hand in a workplace injury. A Supervisor had been told, before the incident, of the absence of a guard on the mixer causing the injury and was asked to ensure that this absence was rectified, but he failed to do so, resulting in an horrific injury to one of the staff.*

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Recent research by Southampton University indicates that **mistakes can be predicted** up to 30 seconds before we make them. The research claims that monotonous tasks switch our brains to "rest mode" leading us to mess up simple jobs. Brain scans on people repeatedly responding to visual clues revealed a telltale pattern of brain activity that occurs prior to a mistake. They believe an "early warning system" might be able to be developed to alert people to be more careful.

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**15 Common Myths about Weight Loss, Nutrition, and Diet.** Everyone has a diet, be it a strict calorie controlled one, or an eat-anything-you-want one. But it's important to know the myths and facts about nutrition. A free guide details the top 15 common myths about weight loss, nutrition and diets, including myths about high protein diets, foods that apparently 'burn fat' and fast food truths and can be found at <http://arthritis.about.com/od/weight/a/weightlossmyths.htm>.

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The Rospa magazine recently had an article on the "**Safety of Young Workers**" (useful for those involved with Work Placements or other work with Children and Young Persons). We have scanned it and it can be found at: <http://safety.dept.shef.ac.uk/guidance/youngworkers.pdf>.

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**All new students** have been sent an e-mail containing the University URL to access the relevant Health and Safety Code of Practice for their student status.