

# Safetyline 107

## H & S UPDATE NOVEMBER 2009

From 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009 the ACOP to the **Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981** was amended to require employers to provide first aiders for the workplace who hold a certificate of competence in either "First Aid at Work" or "Emergency First Aid at Work" depending on the nature of the risks in the workplace. Doctors, nurses and paramedics are exempt provided that they have current knowledge and skills in first aid. This change to the ACOP recognises that the risks in some workplaces are fewer and less severe than in others, and introduces the role of the Emergency First Aider. The certificated First Aid at Work course is reduced to 3 days and the Emergency First Aid at Work certificate requires attendance on a 1-day course. A paper on suggested first aid cover for departments is to be submitted to the Health and Safety Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> November for discussion.

The **on-line Out of Hours training course** is now available for existing staff and postgraduates. An email has been sent to Heads of Departments to disseminate to staff. A web page has been created on our site with instructions and the link to the training course and assessment; this is assessable from the 'online training button' in the left hand column of Safety Services homepage.

Professor David Coggon has decided in his independent investigation that six **former employees at the University of Manchester did not contract fatal cancer due to radiation contamination**. Atomic experiments by Nobel Prize winner Ernest Rutherford only carried a "small" health risk to people who worked in the building where the work took place. Prof Coggon was asked to assess whether the deaths were linked to the Rutherford Building, which was used for experiments with radioactive materials including radon and polonium between 1907 and 1919. Concerns had been heightened after a 1999 investigation found radiation in four rooms in the Rutherford building, including one used by Rutherford himself.

The **Chemical Hazard Information and Packing Regulations (CHIP4)** came into force in April 2009 which places Safety Data Sheets under the REACH Regulations. This will eventually result in the adoption of the Global Harmonised System of chemical labelling beginning in December 2010. This will see the current black symbols on square, orange backgrounds becoming similar symbols on a white diamond with red border. A new symbol showing the head and torso of a man with a star "exploding" from the chest will highlight health hazards such as carcinogens, and "harmful" and "irritant" symbols will change to "exclamation marks" from the current black crosses. A REACH report indicates around 65,000 companies had pre-registered 2.7 million chemicals by the December 2008 deadline; around 15 times more than had been originally estimated, and may cause delays in the full registration and authorisation process.

Mercury vapours from **broken energy saving light bulbs** do not pose a significant risk to public health according to air pollution experts carrying out research for the Health Protection Agency. The HPA advise that in the event of an energy saving light bulb being broken, the room should be ventilated, hard surfaces wiped with a damp cloth and sticky tape used to pick up residual pieces or powders on soft furnishings. The broken bulb and all materials used for cleaning up should be bagged and disposed of as hazardous waste.

PowerPoint presentations on "**Lone Working**" and "**Legionella Awareness**" have been added to the Safety Services website in "What's New" and in the "Training" and Legionella Issues" sections respectively in the "Download" box on the right-hand side of the pages. The latter is now available for those who were unable to attend the four seminars held to date.

Safety Services thank you all for your cooperation during the 180+ **fire drills** carried out over the last month. We are busy compiling the report which will be posted on our website towards the end of November. A summary report will be going to the Health & Safety Committee.

*Safety Services - working to make your University safer*