

# Safetyline 94

H & S UPDATE OCTOBER 2008

## Fire drills for all buildings start next week and continue for 2 weeks.

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If you have new **students in your department who would need help to evacuate safely** from the buildings in which they work or study in the event of a fire alarm, then please contact Safety Services as soon as possible so that we can meet with you and your students to work out how we can best help them to get out safely. We do have guidance on our web site under "Disability Issues" but it is far easier to discuss this in person so that decisions made are agreed with everyone concerned. Please contact Safety Services on 26198.

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HSE has a website devoted to **safe use of ladders**, both leaning ladders and step ladders. There are also illustrations of what is good practice and a list of common causes of failure. See <http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls/ladders.htm?ebul=hsegen/18-aug-2008&cr=3>

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STEP is an e-learning package developed by the HSE, providing **slips and trips guidance** through interactive learning. It explains about slips and trips, how they are caused, why preventing them is important and how to tackle them. STEP includes quizzes, videos, animations, case studies and interactive sequences to enhance the learning experience. The general course is suitable for many different industries. Four other courses have been specifically designed for Food Manufacturing, Hospitality & Catering, Education and the Health Services. For more info <http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips/step/index.htm>

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One University recently had a power outage to a laboratory wing causing some fume cupboards to fail. One, equipped with a wet scrubber, was being used to contain and capture the volatile products from a **hydrofluoric acid digestion**. Their emergency procedures required them to evacuate the laboratory and isolate the corridor until power had been restored and the ventilation fans operational for several hours. This incident highlights the need for departments undertaking this type of activity to consider how they will mitigate the impact of a power loss during such an activity to prevent a forced evacuation from the work area.

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The Government has started a "**Know Your Limits**" campaign which aims to tell drinkers how many units are in their drinks to help them stick to their limits. A YouGov poll shows that most drinkers are not aware of the average units in typical drinks: a large glass of wine (250ml) contains 3 units; a pint of beer or lager 2 units, a gin and tonic contains 1 unit. Recommended daily guidelines are 2-3 units for women and 3-4 units for men. Also the NHS have a "drinks calculator" which converts bottles and glasses of drinks into alcohol units at <http://nhs.uk/units>.

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Recently the Hadfield Buildings had a **fire alarm out of hours** when most Technical staff who normally manage such incidents had finished work for the day. Security has indicated they will always deploy one operative to attend as soon as possible, but those evacuated will need to try to manage the incident themselves. We have drafted some guidance for departments for these situations which can be found at: - <http://safety.dept.shef.ac.uk/guidance/FireAlarmAction.pdf>

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Departmental Safety Officers please ensure that you circulate **safety training details** around your respective departments when you receive them; we have noticed a distinct reduction in applications for various miscellaneous safety courses so far this year. Thanks.

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A recent fire alarm in the Octagon did not automatically send a signal to the Control as it should have done but this illustrates why we emphasise that in the event of a fire alarm someone in the department should be tasked with ringing Control Room on 4444 to alert them even if an automatic link exists, because they don't always work. **ALWAYS RING 4444 to tell Control.**