

Safetyline 81

H & S UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2007

The **Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007** became law on 26th July 2007. The bill was amended just before it was passed to include offences relating to deaths in prison and police custody. The Act makes it an offence if the way an organisation manages or organises its activities causes a persons' death where a gross breach of relevant duty of care owed to the deceased by the organisation is involved.

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*Some of you may have seen a "News Alert" we placed on our web site last month referring to an accident involving a can of **Evo-Stik expanding foam**, which according to one report, burst unexpectedly in use. Bostik informed the University that their product does not burst "for no reason" and the "News Alert" was withdrawn from the web page. Bostik state this product is safe to use if the user follows instructions on the pack and accompanying data sheets. Bostik's solicitors have written to us stating that the fatal accident is currently being investigated by the HSE who have not released a statement. I apologise for the misinformation in the article.*

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HSE's Myth of the month for July addresses the myth that all office equipment must be tested by a qualified electrician every year". In reality the law requires employers to assess risks and take appropriate action which in many cases may be visual checks for obvious signs of damage and perhaps simple tests by a competent member of staff are quite sufficient. However, this advice doesn't take into account office relocations and reorganisations which is a significant cause of damage to electrical equipment and cables and is why the University has opted for a 2-yearly cycle of electrical testing for office equipment by a competent electrician to ensure that we do check the electrical integrity of all such equipment regularly to take account of the potential for damage caused by the way we work. The PAT Service regularly finds extensions powering other extensions, inappropriate equipment and faulty plugs and sockets.

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*For all you parents with small children out there, this may be of interest. The **SafeKids Handbook** covers all the areas where little ones can encounter hazards and has helpful sections on child development, exercise, nutrition, sleeping, bedwetting, potty training, learning to read and socialising. The Handbook has 58 pages of common sense information and guidelines for parents to provide a handy, quick reference point for those "need to know" moments. <http://www.safekids.co.uk/SafekidsHandbook.html>*

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The **self-audit questionnaire** will be sent out this week electronically to HoDS and Departmental Managers which all departments are asked to complete as accurately as possible and return to Safety Services by the end of October. An additional page has again been added asking for your views on the qualitative aspects of our Service Level Agreements to enable us to report to the Health and Safety Committee on our performance against these standards in addition to the information on quantitative aspects we already collect and report to the Committee. I will e-mail all those who respond to answer any points or queries raised or for clarification where required.

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*Laboratories have informed HSE of difficulties in obtaining several commonly used **laboratory disinfectants** (e.g. Hycolin, Stericol and Clearsol). From 1st September 2006<sup>(1)</sup> certain disinfectants, that contain active substances, which are not supported as part of the Biocidal Products Directive review programme, cannot be placed on the EU market or subsequently stored for any purpose (except for export and disposal). The Directive is implemented in the UK as the Biocidal Products Regulations 2001 (BPR). 3 The phenolic-based Hycolin disinfectant, commonly used for inactivation of Mycobacterium tuberculosis and contaminated materials, contain active substances (including 2,4,6-trichlorophenol and xylenol), which have not been supported as part of the biocides review and as such this formulation of Hycolin is no longer available from suppliers and manufacturers or for use. Stericol and Clearsol have been similarly affected. See <http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/notices/biosn012007.htm>. A PDF copy of this is on our "What's New" web page. <http://safety.dept.shef.ac.uk/guidance/Phenol.pdf>*