

Safetyline 93

H & S UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2008

The fire in the Rotunda on 2nd August highlights the potential for incidents of **arson at the University**. Evidence suggests that burning paper was pushed through an extraction fan in a rear window of the lower basement area of the Rotunda which fortunately did not cause significant damage but there was some smoke damage to the affected room. Greater damage was caused by the water used to extinguish the fire and that the windows were broken to vent smoke. CCTV cameras captured a male hiding in bushes at the rear of Firth Court Lower basement in the area of where the fire started. The Porters in Firth Court were alerted by an intruder alarm in the affected area and a report of smoke coming from the rear of the building by the arsonist.

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***Fire drills** are scheduled to take place in the first 2 weeks of October, i.e. weeks commencing 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. All residential and academic buildings will be affected.*  
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Cardiff University have reported an **electric shock accident involving a -70oC SANYO freezer**. The freezer was supplied by the manufacturer with a Schuko CEE7/7 2-pin plug and a BS5733 Power Connections adaptor to allow for connection to a UK standard 3-pin socket outlet. Schuko plugs are unpolarized (by design) and the plug was fitted into the adaptor the wrong way around which resulted in the polarity being reversed. At the same time the earth connection through the adaptor was incomplete resulting in a Class I item of electrical equipment operating without an earth bond connection and with the live and neutral polarities reversed. This combination of circumstances led to the freezer case becoming live (131Volts AC). One of their contract electricians touched the metal case of the freezer whilst in contact with another item of earthed metalwork and suffered an electric shock which resulted in him falling from a step ladder and suffering injury. Apparently, Schuko plugs and sockets have been the subject of criticism due to their design and some Countries have stopped using Schuko plugs and sockets, and it is planned that the IEC 60906-1 Standard will result in Schuko plugs and sockets being phased out in the near future. Cardiff University have been advised by SANYO to remove the Schuko plugs and replace them with standard BS1363 re-wireable 3-pin plugs which will not invalidate the manufacturers warranty.

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*During July there were two instances outside the Arts Tower when **general waste containers were set alight** presumably by discarded cigarettes which hadn't been properly extinguished prior to be thrown away. In both cases the fire was put out before any damage was caused. Smokers, please ensure that your cigarette is properly extinguished before you throw away the butt. The bin has been moved to the bottom of the steps at the Arts Tower away from the doorway; please keep it in this location.*  
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RoSPA has a few pages in its website dedicated to the risks young persons are exposed to at work, in particular **Work Experience**. This advice and that on HR and Safety Services websites can be used to help your risk assessments <http://www.rospace.co.uk/youngworkers/index.htm>

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*Newcastle University has recently had **a fire caused by a faulty Rotary Vane Pump**. Back in 2005 BOC sent out a product alert relating to safety concerns on their E2M0.7, E2M1 and E2M1.5 Series Rotary Vane Pump Motor Capacitors. This capacitor upgrade is needed for any of these pumps fitted with either a plastic-cased motor capacitor or a metal-cased capacitor fitted with a plastic electrical connector. To minimize risk of fire you must replace the capacitor or pump as soon as possible. You should also ensure there is no combustible material in the vicinity of the pump and only continue to operate the pump when attended until the pump is upgraded. Check the BOC website to determine whether any pumps you have require upgrades at [www.bocedwards.com/service/em](http://www.bocedwards.com/service/em).*