

Fire safety and evacuation procedures

Revised Safety Guides 5 and 6 on the management of fire drills and evacuation procedures have been published on the H&SS web site. The revised guides have new information on the use of refuges for the evacuation of people with disabilities; management of classes or meetings in centrally-booked rooms; and response to other emergencies such as suspect packages.

New fire legislation, which emphasises the duties of the employer to manage emergency evacuations, has prompted this review. The most significant are enhancements to:

- € Require the appointment of a Fire Safety Co-ordinator in each building i.e. a lead person to coordinate and monitor fire safety arrangements. This is particularly important in shared buildings.
- € Explain how our existing refuges for people with disabilities are intended to be used.
- € Encourage the use of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for staff and students with a disability, and for anyone who needs assistance or special consideration when evacuations take place.
- € Ask anyone who takes classes or is in charge of meetings in centrally booked rooms to make the evacuation arrangements for the building known to those attending (for classes that use the same lecture room for a term or a year, this need only happen at the start of the term/year). Information for each room is already posted within rooms.

- € Ask anyone who takes classes/meetings in centrally booked rooms to make sure everyone evacuates the room, and then report that the room is clear to the Evacuation Officer at the assembly point.
- € Ensure that every building has arrangements in place to check the building is clear, if practical and safe to do so. As a minimum each building must have a system by which it is known which areas have and have not been checked.

What this means

For the many buildings with well developed evacuation procedures and trained staff, there is very little change. Other buildings, especially those with shared occupancy, may need to review their procedures and make some adjustments. Procedures should be based on a fire risk assessment. Health and Safety Services will be happy to help you with this.

Where staff in academic buildings are aware of the regular presence of a person with a disability in the building, Health and Safety Services will help with the development of a PEEP. The Disability Office will make new students aware of PEEP's and encourage them to liaise with staff

in the building to agree a PEEP for the buildings where they live, study or work in regularly.

January storm

The storm on 18 January 2007 caused considerable damage to buildings and trees on campus, with gusts of over 70m.p.h. recorded in Berkshire. On the day Facilities Management Directorate staff worked very hard to make areas safe and to prevent access to locations where there was obvious danger.

Despite this, people on campus continued to walk past and under hazard warning tape, thus placing themselves in danger.

Everyone on campus is reminded that hazard signs, hazard warning tape, cones etc are used to inform you of a risk to your health and safety and to prevent you from going into possible danger. Other examples of times when areas may be barriered or marked off include chemical spills (e.g. mercury), construction works and large vehicle movements.

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injecting drug users. Although it is not believed that this is a significant problem on campus, staff who deal with the cleaning and maintenance of campus facilities need to be aware of the possibility of finding discarded needles. Health and Safety Services can help managers to develop local procedures for dealing with discarded needles.

All accidental needlestick or other sharps injuries must be reported to Health and Safety Services on an Incident Report Form. Depending on the circumstances, you may be advised to visit Occupational Health for further advice, and you may be offered prophylaxis (where this is available.)

This information will be incorporated into a Safety Note to be published in the near future.

Smoking on campus

New legislation comes into force on 1 July 2007, which will ban smoking in virtually all workplaces. This will reinforce the University's existing 'smoke-free' policy in its academic and support buildings.

However the University's existing policy may need to be extended to areas that are "substantially enclosed". The regulations define what is meant by "substantially enclosed" – in practice this is likely to include building porches and canopies that have a roof and walls. Further guidance will be given when the draft Regulations are approved by Parliament.

All University vehicles used by more than one person will have to be designated 'smoke-free'. Buildings and vehicles will need to have appropriate

These are differentiated by colour:

Blue for paper and cardboard.

Clean paper and card, i.e. free of plastic, non-laminated or coated – goes into the **b e b** .

Green for mixed recyclables

Recyclable empty plastic drinks bottles, drinks cans, plastic wrapping (no food containers) and mixed cardboard and paper go into the **green bin**. If the waste is bagged, it must be in clear sacks. Black waste sacks must not be put in the blue or green bins. There is a bottle bank for glass near Central Catering.

Grey/black for waste that cannot be recycled.

Everything else that is not classed as “hazardous waste” goes into the

e /b ac b . This waste is landfilled and attracts a heavy tax burden. Not sure whether the item is recyclable or not? Put it in the grey/black bin - contamination of recyclable waste could mean a whole load being rejected by the reprocessors and being sent to landfill. This is worse than putting something recyclable in the grey/black general waste. Not sure whether the waste is classified as “hazardous”? Consult the “Waste” pages on the FMD website, <http://www.fmd.rdg.ac.uk/waste/>

The new scheme is settling down and thanks are due to everyone for their efforts in making it work. Ian Cruickshank, from Campus Services, is overseeing the new contract. Any comments or suggestions for improvement should be sent to him (Tel. 6927, e:mail i.j.t.cruickshank@reading.ac.uk)

Gas cylinder safety

During a recent building visit we discovered an oxygen cylinder in an external gas store, with a regulator fitted. The regulator was marked “ARGON”, and was indicating a nearly full cylinder – i.e. cylinder pressure was being applied to the main inlet gauge on the regulator because cylinder valve had been

left open. This raises a number of concerns.

Firstly, if the outlet valve had been knocked or damaged, oxygen could have leaked out of the system into the store – a highly dangerous situation.

Secondly, the **Sec d , e a a ed** **O e a be ed** **e c de** . The ‘wrong’ type of regulator might be contaminated with oil or grease or it might be designed using incompatible materials, causing a fire or explosion hazard.

And finally, when a cylinder is returned to a store, **e a c de a e be c ed, a d e e a e ed**, whether the cylinder is full, part-used or empty. If returned in a part-full state, the cylinder should be marked to indicate this. Empty cylinders awaiting collection should be kept in a clearly marked, separate area of the store if not in a separate store. Flammable gases such as hydrogen should be separated by at least 3 metres or (preferably) be kept in a separate store from oxidising gases such as oxygen.

When a cylinder is in use, the set-up must comply with the requirements of the Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000. As a minimum, this requires that the system is subject to regular inspections according “*to a written scheme of periodic examination, by a competent person*”. (T