

Most of us drive for work, albeit on an occasional basis to go to a conference or meeting. Some staff drive more regularly, for example collecting or delivering samples for research, or driving students on fieldwork trips. In the eyes of the law, and the insurance companies, this is all classed as driving for work.

The University has agreed new procedures for managing the risk to staff, and the university, of a driving accident.

Occasional drivers

If you drive occasionally, and use your own car, you MUST have insurance for business use. This applies even if you do not

Laboratory access control

Following consultation with a number of building managers and Area Health & Safety Co-ordinators, and approval by the University Health and Safety Committee, a programme to control access to laboratories and workshops is to be introduced across the University.

A simple permit to work system for all non-routine cleaning, and maintenance and contract work in laboratories and workshops has been running successfully in the School of Biological Sciences for over a year. This will be extended to other Schools, with the objective of ensuring that FMD staff and contractors can work safely in areas where there are risks with which they are unfamiliar.

In parallel, a colour coding access system will be introduced for routine and emergency work by cleaning, security and maintenance staff. All laboratories and workshops will be colour coded [yellow (limited access), amber (restricted), red (highly restricted)].

The ability of cleaning, security and maintenance staff to enter these areas under routine and emergency conditions have been defined, so that they will be able to tell at a glance from a colour coded sign on the lab door that they are allowed to enter, or not. Designation of rooms as amber or red will be with the agreement of H

- School of Humanities May 2011
- Facilities Management Directorate Estates (including audit review of Maintenance and Business Services) July 2011
- Pressure/Gas December 2010
- Local Exhaust Ventilation Spring 2011
- Workshops Spring 2011
- Vice Chancellors office June 2011

For areas previously audited, Health and Safety Services have agreed to follow up actions on a 6 to 12 monthly basis and the results of these, along with any outstanding actions, will be reported to Deans via the University Health and Safety Committee.

Working with hazardous biological agents

The system for authorisation/registration of projects involving hazardous biological agents has been extended to include all such active work on campus.

All workers with hazardous biological agents will be required to register with Health and Safety Services and complete an Occupational Health medical questionnaire.

The restriction on undergraduate and taught postgraduate students working on hazardous biological agents has been lifted, subject to adequate supervision being provided.

A standard for Phlebotomy facilities has also been agreed; a key change is that blood taking is prohibited in laboratory settings.

Evacuation chairs

The University has allocated funds to enable an initial purchase of Stairway Emergency Evacuation Chairs. When these are allocated to buildings, volunteers will be needed to be trained to use the chairs to assist with the evacuation of disabled people. Health and Safety Services will be running

in action.

The chairs are one of a limited number of options to evacuate disabled people from buildings, where the disabled person is unable to negotiate stairs to get out the building. Disabled people who cannot self-evacuate will be advised to make their way to a fire refuge, where they can use the intercomm system to make their presence known to those

managing the evacuation. Fire Wardens are also asked to check refuges when sweeping the building. The disabled person will then need help to evacuate down the adjacent protected stairwell.

The chairs are simple to use, can be operated by a single person, and do not entail any manual handling. They slide down the stairs on friction runners, that stop the chair accelerating down the stairs.

All volunteers will be provided with proper training. Typically we are looking for Fire Wardens or First Aiders to volunteer but in practice anyone can use a chair, male or female. The only requirement is that you are able bodied.

If you think that you may be interested in becoming a volunteer, contact H&SS, or watch out for information about

provided in buildings that have been or having an immediate need for a chair. If your building is not equipped with a chair, no volunteers will be needed.

With your help, we can make sure that all persons can evacuate from a building in good time.

Snapshot

Current topics of interest include:

Fieldwork and overseas travel

Health & Safety Services are updating our existing Safety Guide on fieldwork, and expanding it to include overseas travel. If your department does a lot of fieldwork or undertakes international travel, and you think you have good systems in place to assist travellers, please get in touch so that we can include best practice in the revised guide.

Government review of health and safety

You may have heard that the government has just concluded a review of health and safety legislation, led by Lord Young. The Report addresses aspects of the current regime that the government perceives to be disproportionately burdensome on small or low-risk businesses and public bodies, and the perceived rise of the

Lord Young makes the following suggestions for the future of health and safety legislation: