

SCHOOL of CHEMISTRY HEALTH and SAFETY COMMITTEE

Monday 10th August at 14:30 in Room 1.076

In Attendance:

Prof. C. Whitehead (Chair), Dr. E.M. Armstrong, Dr. M. Attfield, Dr. N. Bryan, Mr. M. Bromfield, Dr P. Quayle, Dr D. Crouch, Mr. A. Sutherland, Mr A E Griffiths, Dr. C. Raynor, Miss C. Davidge and Mr. S. Holden (minutes).

1. Apologies

Mr. T. Graham, Mr. J.R. Robinson, Dr. T. Aspinall and Mr G. Smith

2. Minutes of the meeting on Monday 29th June 2009.

Agreed as a true and correct record.

3. Matters Arising

A further X-ray crystallography machine supplied by two pin plugs is now in use in laboratory 5.62. A member of Electronic Support Services will check this appliance's power supply.

CD reported that action on improving health and safety practice in the PSI is ongoing and slowly improving. EMA is checking safety procedure adherence for School of Chemistry staff in this location, and no issues were apparent at the moment.

VWR are to make two presentations on the correct use of gloves at 10.00 a.m. and 11.15 a.m on Thursday 17th September in G.07/08.

There is some concern that the current stores batch of gloves are not of a high "chemical" standard. They will be offered to the School of Medicine at cost.

The University Fire Safety Advisory Group has not yet met to consider the findings of the recent Fire Safety Management Audit.

EMA is preparing a presentation regarding the global harmonisation of chemical labelling.

4. Correspondence

Melanie Taylor has written regarding biological safety issues. The University Biological Safety Officer is dealing with this, and it is not expected to have much effect in the School of Chemistry, but might impact on School staff who work in the MIB.

The HSE are reviewing the legislation regarding Hydroxybenzol triazole, widely used and currently requiring an explosives licence.

5. Chairman's business

No chairman's business

6. Latest accident/incidents/near-misses

- A contractor knelt in broken glass after moving a cupboard and kneeling on the revealed floor, receiving a minor cut.
- A researcher has suffered from dermatitis – suspected to have been caused by contact with tributyl tin.
- A post graduate has suffered a cold burn after carrying dry ice. A change of supplier has resulted in dry ice being supplied in plastic bags with no handles.
- The building's electronic doors have recently been spontaneously locking and it has been reported that they cannot be opened from the inside.

7. Latest Inspection/ Arrangements for inspection

Latest Inspections

Second floor (Upper Brook Street wing): generally good although problems became apparent when cupboards started to be opened.

Second floor (Nanoporous Materials Centre): generally good, some housekeeping issues (chemical storage).

Future inspections.

First floor OMIC (Upper Brook Street): CD, EMA and PQ

First floor OMIC (Dover Street wing): EMA, NDB and AMA

Mechanical Workshop re-inspection: JR, GS and EMA

Ground floor (New extension): NB, MB.

Ground floor (Upper Brook Street): CD, SH.

Some discussion followed regarding storing solvents in excessive amounts in the laboratories. EMA will issue an e-mail reminding people of proper use and storage arrangements.

There was also discussion regarding the situation regarding the laboratory "safety champions". EMA will request names of the people to be responsible for specific areas, and the results will be brought to the Health and Safety Committee.

8. Building security

A presentation was circulated to the Committee showing that the building moat is being used for sleeping, drinking and substance abuse by homeless persons. There is an obvious risk to building users from contaminated substances, sharps, hazardous materials and the possibility of theft or damage to the building and its fittings (e.g. the external pressurised gas cylinders).

EMA is progressing the issue with Estates, and will involve Ian Halliwell. CW said that he would raise the matter at the Faculty Review if this was necessary.

9. AOB

The fire alarm renewal project is out to tender. Assuming there are no other issues then this should be complete by Christmas.

Arrangements for the annual fire drill need to be made. It was suggested the week beginning 12/10/2009 might be suitable, preferably with the first year students in the laboratories.

Fire awareness and fire extinguisher training has been arranged for Thursday 29th October.

The University is installing fire and first aid notices in a corporate-style holder.

A request has been made to change the time of the weekly fire alarm test from 3.45 p.m. to 1.45 p.m. on Wednesdays. This will need synchronising with the issuing of the new fire notices.

Safety inductions are offered on Fresher's Week and monthly thereafter on a timetable that is set a year in advance. Despite this there are many instances of people wanting, for various reasons, a personal induction, causing EMA to spend much time on these.

The revised health and safety manual is now on the School website.

NMR sample tubes are not being collected from the basement after testing, leading to a large accumulation (containing noxious solvents). These will be sent to the teaching laboratories for washing and re-use.

CW asked if any liability remains regarding the Faraday building. EMA replied that there are still three demonstration cylinders to be dealt with.

CD informed the meeting that the cost of disposal of legacy materials must be born by the School.

AG enquired as the whether the new corridor into stores should be treated as a fire exit – as it contains pressurised gas cylinders and is locked in the event of a fire alarm. EMA will raise this issue with the University Fire Officer.

10. Dates of next meetings

Monday 26th October at 14:30 in Room 4.20.

Monday 21st December at 14:30 in Room TBC.

Monday 15th February at 14:30 in Room TBC.

Monday 19th April at 14:30 in Room TBC.

Monday 21st June at 15:00 in Room TBC.

The meeting closed at 15:50