

SCHOOL of CHEMISTRY HEALTH and SAFETY COMMITTEE

Monday 19th March 2012 at 14:00 in Room 7.27

In Attendance

Prof. J. C. Whitehead (Chair), Dr. E.M. Armstrong, Mr. G. Smith (Minutes), Mr S Holden, Dr. M. Attfield, Dr. C. Davidge, Dr. J. Morrison, Dr. N. Bryan, Dr. D. Berrisford, Dr. N. Bryan, Dr. T. Aspinall, Dr. N. Bryan, Dr. R. Blagg, Prof M. Anderson, Mrs. C. Taylor, Dr. P. Quayle

Dr. P. Quayle in attendance for agenda items 1, 2, 3 and 6 only

1. Apologies

Mr J. Hughes

2. Minutes of the meeting held on the 9th of January 2012

The minutes of the meeting were confirmed with minor typographical corrections to be amended.

3. Matters Arising

Fire awareness training will be held on the 8th of May. The same trainers will be used as last time this course was run.

There have been a number of problems with extremes of temperature within the School with some laboratories being very cold and some write-up rooms being far too warm. EMA informed the committee that part of the problem was related to the window contractors as while they are still working on the outside of the building office windows cannot be opened for safety reasons.

JCW informed the committee that he had spoken to the Director of Estates in respect of the unacceptable temperature variations.

Carolyn Gamble starts her role as University fire safety training officer in April. She is scheduled to provide fire marshal training for the Chemistry building fire marshals in May.

SH raised concerns that on the last fire evacuation when the alarm sounded people from the lecture theatres left the building but remained just outside the door which impeded other people evacuating the building. He suggested there was a need for people to move further away from the building on evacuating.

CD suggested that the circulated minutes prior to the committee meetings should be called unconfirmed minutes rather than draft minutes.

6. Student and DSO Assessment Procedures

PQ raised concerns that there were a number of students who had been found to be undertaking chemistry practical sessions without disclosing any disabilities. One student was found to be carrying out chemistry sessions in the synthesis laboratory despite being blind in one eye and partially sighted in the other one.

This was without doubt dangerous for the student and dangerous for the other students within the laboratory. It was suspected that the student did not say anything due to fear he would be removed from the course. Another student who is deaf had not disclosed anything either.

JCW said that the School would be able to educate all of these students and the University had procedures and schemes in place to provide necessary support. MA stated that surely there is a need to disclose if their disabilities may endanger the safety of other people.

EMA replied that she would actively encourage students to come forward with disabilities during her training courses. CD replied that if the students chose not to disclose information, it was not the DSO's fault. It is very complex with equality and diversity laws as to just what we can make the students disclose. CD agreed to take this issue back to Melanie Taylor for further guidance.

4. Correspondence

None.

5. Replacement of safety showers and eye wash stations with Diphoterene

The committee discussed the document titled "Item 5 Gareth supporting document". The general consensus of the committee was they wanted consistency throughout the building. As such the committee decided that option 6 (Assess each location where a shower and eye wash station is currently installed. Decide on a case-by-case basis if the showers are a benefit or a hindrance) was unsuitable. TA commented that in MIB there was no drench showers however the researchers were keen to have them. In MIB diphoterene is always used for first aid treatment. CD pointed out to the committee that control of legionella was a statutory duty not just a University policy. She went on to state that she envisaged it to cost approximately £3000 for one person running the showers and eyewash stations in accordance with the University policy. The cost of purchasing the diphoterene would be approximately £2000. It would need to be repurchased on a biannual basis. EMA expressed her preference for the showers to be replaced with a provision of diphoterene but with the drench sprays being retained. The committee considered the idea of retaining a couple of drench showers being retained per floor. JM reminded the committee that the drench showers had never previously been used in the Chemistry building in the previous ten to fifteen years. JCW stated that he was in favor of the eye wash sprays being retained and the drench showers being replaced with diphoterene. The committee accepted the recommendation.

7. Progress on actions identified on the School's annual monitoring report to OSHTAG

CD reported to the committee that OSHTAG were reasonably happy with our annual monitoring report. JCW asked that the report be circulated to the committee for discussion at the next meeting. It was mentioned that PDR's would be used to for identifying health and safety training.

8. Progress towards action plan created as a result of HASMAP audit report.

CD spoke to the committee about the HASMAP audit process. She explained that the audit was being carried out in stages over a number of years. This year leadership and planning would be audited. SH asked if the document was confidential or could any one see it? JCW was happy for the document to be seen by the committee and GDS was asked to circulate the report.

9. Safety Sampling

SH expressed his concern that PPE was not being correctly worn within the Chemistry building laboratories and said in his opinion, standards were slipping. He also expressed grave concerns about the quantity of broken glassware being used within the School as Despite a safety circular on broken glassware in February another student had to go to hospital as a result of an injury from such equipment.

SH proposed that safety surveys be undertaken to examine broken glassware, and the use of PPE. He suggested four people should undertake the sampling, with one being either a senior manager or academic. This idea was well received by the committee. MA suggested that information on broken glassware and PPE be circulated prior to the sampling. He suggested that the TV screens in the foyer could also be used for safety posters. RB expressed concerns that many people were guilty of only wearing normal glasses and not safety glasses within their laboratories.

It was agreed that sampling would take place prior to the next meeting and JCW stated that he would arrange for a senior member of staff to be available to assist with the safety sampling.

10. Safety circular

A safety circular was issued on broken glassware in February 2012.

It was decided that the next safety circular should cover the correct use of PPE in laboratories (laboratory coat and glasses).

11. Latest accidents/incidents

In the synthesis teaching laboratory, mixed laboratory wastes were found in the general bin comprising syringes and needles, unknown chemical (white powder) and broken glassware. As a result EMA gave the students a verbal reminder about correct disposal procedures. The laboratory scripts were also modified with additional information about the correct waste disposal procedures.

There was a severe glass cut to a one postgraduate from broken glassware, which required hospital treatment. Earlier in the academic year there was a similar accident where a final year postgraduate student was injured from broken glassware.

Disappointment was expressed that this injury was sustained so soon after the distribution of the safety circular on broken glassware.

A 2nd year undergraduate student was taken to hospital as a precautionary measure following inhalation of a chemical vapour but fortunately suffered no lasting ill-effects. Although the laboratory manual explicitly directed students to air-dry a particular product, at room temperature over lunch, one student ignored these instructions and placed their product in a drying oven which was kept at 100 °C. On opening the oven the student inhaled chemical fumes which were evolved during the drying process. As a result of this accident a revised version of the 2nd year laboratory script was produced which incorporated an **additional** safety warning concerning the drying of this particular product.

In one of the research laboratories there was an acid spillage by an undergraduate.

A plastic sample vial containing HF melted inside an autoclave in one of the research laboratories. The student was sent to hospital as a precaution due to involving HF.

During a flash bang demonstration one of the experiments went wrong resulting in hot glass fragments falling on to some of the audience who were seated some 20 ft away. One member of the audience

received cuts to the lip and hand. Accident investigation revealed that lack of preparation time played a part in the accident which is a risk when the demonstration lecture is performed outwith the School.

As a result of the accident EMA would be revisiting the risk assessment for the demonstration and one likely recommendation is that for shows taken out, preweighed, small amounts of chemicals would be used for demonstrations that need to be prepared live during the show..

Latest near misses

In Radiochem a scurrying noise was heard from the ceiling. The following morning an owl was discovered in one of the laboratories. After investigation, it was deemed that the only way the owl could have entered the building was through the extract ducting via the fan bypass loop. The owl was captured and taken to a sanctuary in Worsley woods.

12. MIB update

The MIB chemical spill team is now fully trained. They have all had training in use of respiratory protective equipment. The spills team is made up of Jason Micklefield, John Gardiner and three senior post-docs. The MIB personal have been advised of new procedure.

David Berrisford will be moving from MIB to the Chemistry building. Consequently John Gardiner will be taking over from David Berrisford as MIB chemical safety officer.

Another dry audit as been carried out since the last meeting.

On the 30th/31st Of January and 15th/16th February mandatory postgraduate training was carried out.

On the 1st of February an undergraduate induction session was run for students completing projects in MIB.

Completed annual general laboratory inspections. Housekeeping was the main issue raised.

The HASMAP report draft relating to safety management in MIB scored very well.

13. Latest inspection /Arrangements for inspections

Latest inspections

The 7th and 8th floor was inspected. The inspection report as yet as not been circulated. The 7th floor was in general found to be of a good standard. On the 8th floor one room revealed a number of chemical that were inappropriately stored.

No other inspections were carried out during this time period.

Arrangements for inspections

Synthesis teaching laboratory, measurements teaching laboratory, 6th floor and 5th floor to be inspected. It was agreed that the synthesis laboratory should be inspected while the students were still working in the laboratory.

14. AOB

EMA reported to the committee that there was a new guidance document in respect of nanosafety due to be released in July. The chemical risk assessment form devised and used by the School has been recognised as a good model and is likely to feature in this guidance document which has been jointly badged with the Health and Safety Executive, the University Chemical Safety Forum and the UK Nanosafety group.

Transport of dangerous goods was discussed CD mentioned that the University no longer had a dangerous goods safety advisor. CD was to raise this with Melanie Taylor.

Martin Atfield raised instances of theft. It was agreed that EMA would circulate an email to remind people to be vigilant around the University.