

SCHOOL of CHEMISTRY HEALTH and SAFETY COMMITTEE

Monday 22nd of July 2013 at 14:00 in Room 7.28

In Attendance

Prof. J. C. Whitehead (Chair), Dr. E.M. Armstrong, Mr. G. Smith (Minutes), Dr. M. Attfield, Dr. P. Quayle, Dr. J. Morrison, Ms. C. Davidge, Dr. J. Gardiner, Dr. N. Bryan, Mr S Holden, Dr. P. Gorry

1. **Apologies**

Mr. J. Hughes, Mrs. C. Taylor, Dr. T. Aspinall

2. **Minutes of the meeting held on the 20th of May 2013**

The minutes were accepted as a correct record.

3. **Matters Arising**

It was agreed that an e-mail would be sent to PI's to remind them of the importance of personally signing off safety paperwork for their groups as this is a responsibility that cannot be delegated.

An open meeting has been scheduled with researchers on July 31 where safety showers and other safety concerns raised by the researchers will be discussed.

EMA is chase up Estates and Facilities for a price to provide pegs in the teaching laboratory for laboratory coats. The student laboratory coats will be kept within the teaching laboratory and be washed at the end of semester via the University laundry service.

The next poster campaign to be produced by SH would be 'Shut the sash.'

4. **Correspondence**

The annual monitoring report request has been received from Health and Safety Services.

Melanie Taylor has also requested an update of the position in respect of handling nanomaterials following the publication by the HSE of the results of their investigations in the University sector two years ago. These points, summarised, were: to review training in respect of glove selection and removal of contaminated gloves, the use of balances in fume hoods when weighing out nanoparticles and the siting the balance on a damp cloth or Kim wipe to minimise dissemination of airborne particles, laundering of lab coats, noting duration of likely exposures in risk assessments, and recording the amounts of nanomaterials used and synthesised.

5. **HASMAP audit/ Annual monitoring report**

Part 2 of the HASMAP audit was carried out this year for the Chemistry Building. (This audit refers only to the Chemistry Building only and not to the whole School of Chemistry).

The section that referred to the dissemination of information was awarded a value of zero.

The audit focused on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV). The audit concluded that there was not a robust system in place with regard to PPE. Everyone should have a laboratory coat and all demonstrators were to be reminded about wearing a laboratory coat.

The mechanical workshop was found to have inadequate procedures to ensure safe working. It was also recommended that Health and Safety inspection reports should form part of the minutes at all health and safety meetings. When minutes are uploaded to the web the inspection reports should be attached to the back of the health and safety minutes.

Peter Quayle asked just what was meant by the recommendation at the bottom of page 8 of the audit report (Section C8.1).

C8.1 The level of supervision (in terms of its quality rather than quantity) in the teaching labs should be reviewed and measures put in place to ensure that precautions are consistently applied.

The committee was not sure what this meant and JCW would ask for further clarification.

6. Chemical risk assessment process

The format of the chemical risk assessment form was raised by one of the post docs, with a number of suggestions to improve the forms and increase compliance. Based on these, EMA made a number of changes to simplify the forms and guidance. The consensus was that the new form was more user friendly, but needed further tweaking. There was discussion as to whether a handwritten form was acceptable and it was decided that it wasn't.

JCW suggested that the form should be taken to the open meeting for feedback – agreed. Mindful of an incident where ether ignited while being decanted and the vapour came in contact with a hotplate, JM suggest that it would be beneficial for the instruction on what to do in emergency to be on the front of the form. It was suggested that different coloured labels could be used on the form to depict what type of fire extinguishers would be suitable for use in an emergency with the advantage being that the labels would be visible from a distance.

7. Safety Showers

Safety showers are to be discussed at the open meeting and feedback brought to the next Health and Safety Committee meeting.

8. Latest accident/ incidents

A researcher sustained eye irritation after searching in a fridge for chemicals, fortunately the damage was reversible.

SH and EMA investigated the fridge that contained the fumes that had caused this incident and found a cylinder in poor condition and a damaged cap on a bottle of chloro silane.

It was proposed that the generic laboratory risk assessment be expanded to include a requirement for regular checks on the content of fridge and freezers. The CRA could also be used to highlight chemicals that would need regular checking if kept in storage. JCW asked if the fridge had broken or failed to keep the correct temperature. EMA replied that the fridge temperature appeared to be ok although the precise running temperature was not measured. SH commented that all the chemicals were stored in trays which made it easier to deal with.

There was a serious accident involving the dispensing of liquid nitrogen on the Stores loading bay. A valve was inadvertently left open and liquid nitrogen spurted onto the researcher and went through two layers of clothing to cause a significant surface skin burn. Following the accident a new training system has been implemented and new cryogenic gloves ordered.

9. Latest near misses

There were no near misses reported during this time period.

10. Latest inspections/ Arrangements for inspections

The third floor of the Dover Street wing had been inspected and a piece of software called i-auditor had been used to generate the report. There was still a lot of work to do on the template, but EMA envisaged that using the software should make it quicker to produce inspection reports. The only negative thing found with the software was that there was nowhere until the end of the report to comment on good points/practice. CD asked whether it was possible to go back to the software designer and ask for this to be changed?

EMA reported that she had been invited to view the Chemistry Building fire risk assessment for the building on a central server.

The third floor Dover Street wing's main problem was poor housekeeping. Concern was raised over how "sharps" were handled in the laboratories inspected. It was pleasing however that little broken glass was observed throughout the inspection.

A number of fume cupboard bases were observed to be cracked. Three of these bases would be replaced this year with an additional two replaced on the first floor of the building.

It was noted that seating in the write-up rooms had seen a lot of use and was no longer fit for purpose (15 years old) and needed replacing.,

It was agreed that inspections would be carried out on the 1st, 2nd and basement floors of the building. The make-up of the inspection team was not decided at the meeting.

11. School safety alert

SH proposed that the next School safety alert should be on safe handling and disposal of sharps. The committee agreed with this proposal.

The longer length needles should be washed out then could be stored sharp side down, held upright by the outside of the needle pressed into plasticine or blutack attached to the wall of a beaker. Another alternative suggested for storage of sharps was for the clean sharps to be inserted into a cork ring.

12. MIB update

EMA reported that Tanya Aspinall had now started maternity leave and that an appointment would be made to cover for this. The appointee would report to Linda Green in FLS. EMA and SH would however advise on chemical safety within MIB.

13. AOB

A post graduate committee meeting had been held since our last health and safety meeting, chaired by Robin Pritchard. Safety issues were raised with regard to emergency drench showers, fire blankets and communication. It was intended that the open meeting would be a start in improving communication on safety issues, however there was a pressing need to put together and maintain an up to date post graduate/ post doc email list to ensure that information was efficiently disseminated.

Student demonstrators were discussed. It was agreed that an early post graduate list was beneficial to allow comprehensive demonstrator training to take place

The collection and storage of waste solvent waste was to be changed. The 25L containers would be changed to 10 L containers which would help solve the manual handling and stockpiling issues that currently exist with the 25 litre containers. The disposal cost would however go up to cover the additional costs..

Safety champions will be introduced throughout the building. It is planned that they will meet with EMA at least twice a year.

EMA also stated that she was happy for more open meetings if that was what people wanted.

It was agreed that the postgraduate committee would decide on the post graduate representative for the health and safety committee.

Date of next meeting

30th of September at 3.00pm (note later starting time). (Post-meeting postponement to 28 October at 3.00pm).