

SCHOOL of CHEMISTRY HEALTH and SAFETY COMMITTEE

Monday 9th January 2012 at 14:00 in Room 4.20

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. T. Aspinall, Dr. R. Blagg, Dr. P. Quayle, Mrs. C. Taylor

1. Apologies

Mr. J. Hughes, Prof. M. Anderson

2. Minutes of the meeting held on the 31st of October 2011

The minutes of the meeting were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

EMA informed the committee that fire awareness still needed to be looked at and that the training will be run within the School by the external trainers this year. In future years this may be run by the newly appointed fire-training officer.

JCW informed the committee that the laboratory notebooks reminder to students had now been circulated to all researchers.

The management committee has now passed the clothing policy recommended by the committee. EMA circulated an email across the School informing of the new mandatory policy to wear a laboratory coat at all times when inside a laboratory.

EMA would be running another safety course on the 23rd of January.

EMA reported that there was still no mechanism in place for safety matters of the Schools researchers working at Dalton Cumbria Facility being reported back to the School. GDS was asked to write to Andrew Sherry on the matter. NB commented that the RBS was not enough.

The variance in temperature in room GE.06 had been monitored since the last meeting. It was observed to be much better than in previous months.

Representatives from a research group wishing to work with explosive materials had been in contact with the Greater Manchester Police Explosives licensing officer with EMA, and a licence to acquire and a certificate to keep, explosives had been applied for.

4. Correspondence

EMA reported she had received a correspondence from CD relating to the chemical weapon return.

A new drug precursor licence was received at the end of November. This will now run to the end of 2012.

5. Cost benefit analysis of replacing safety showers and eye wash stations with Diphoterene.

EMA talked about the cost benefit analysis of using Diphoterene instead of safety showers. She informed the committee that there were 26 safety showers which would take 108 hours of some one's time to run on a weekly basis. To run the eyewash stations on a weekly basis for a year would require 87 hours. It was proposed that these should be replaced with Diphoterene. Two sizes of spray were suggested; 100ml or 200ml. The 100ml size would be suitable to treat an area of the body the size of face or hand. The 200ml size would be suitable for treating an area of the body the size of an arm or leg. Cost would be around £950 for purchasing the 100ml size and £1456 for the 200ml size. The diphoterene would have a shelf life of two years.

The use of diphoterene would reduce the risk of legionella and remove risks of injury from manual handling and slips, trips and falls that are inherent with the activity of running the showers.

GDS asked EMA what she proposed to do for the treatment of thermal burns? EMA replied that a tap and a piece of rubber tube could be used for this.

CD informed the committee that cleaning up drips from the showers following testing may take additional time.

GDS asked if we could all view the cost benefit analysis before making a decision? The committee agreed to this. The item will be placed on the agenda for discussion at the next Health and Safety meeting.

6. Health and safety aspects of the School's risk register

JCW discussed the document labelled "Chemistry Risk Dec 2010-2011.xls". He said there were three items that related to Health and Safety. These were items 4,10, and 11. #4) Criminal and Terrorist activity, #10) Failure to provide a world-class teaching and learning experience and #11) Risk of litigation from students due to assessment or treatment.

JCW asked the committee was there anything else that should be placed in this document for future years? Data protection was discussed and agreed should be included in future versions of this document. It was raised that the University had recently been fined for a breach in the Data protection act in another School within the University. It was discussed that a second breach could have severe repercussions on the University.

Financial risk was another item that was discussed. The financial impact of changing the funding stream for undergraduate teaching by increased tuition fees of £9000 per annum per undergraduate

JCW commented that he believed that the risks of criminal and terrorist activity had been reduced from the levels estimated five years ago. EMA stated that she did not agree because chemicals were now ordered direct by the users through Science Warehouse or via the finance hub. This change has made it more difficult to monitor unusual chemical usage or orders.

JCW thanked the committee for their input.

7. Fire Evacuation

CD reported that the fire evacuation went smoothly. The building was evacuated in 5 minutes. One new School member was a little slow in evacuating. There was some confusion reported due to the fire alarm sounding similar to the alarm on the climbers that the window contractors use during their work. The new School member has now been spoken to in respect of the evacuation policy. CD mentioned that there would soon be a new member of the Central Safety team who would be responsible for running drills. EMA replied that she would contact her to discuss the training of fire marshals.

There was a real incident shortly after the fire evacuation, where the building needed to be evacuated. This was due to an assumed gas leak. The building was evacuated however no gas leak was discovered.

CD, SH, EMA and MT were all involved in an investigation following the incident to try to ascertain the source of the smell. Unfortunately they were unable to ascertain the cause. During the evacuation it was noted that none of the fire marshals had any paperwork to sign to confirm their respective areas had been cleared. It was decided that evacuation checklists would be kept at the main entrance.

SH said that since this incident he has smelled a faint smell similar to that observed on a number of occasions which had been traced to work involving mercaptans.

The question was asked whether chemists working with sulfur compounds needed refresher training on how to decontaminate equipment and wastes before removing them from fume hoods.

PQ asked if there a plan for evacuations on UCAS day. Where do we take the visitors? What do we then do? CD thought this was a good idea.

8. Safety Circular

SH presented a document on broken glassware which he would like to send round as a first School safety circular, which was agreed.

The committee agreed that the circulars should not always be for informing people of what they should be doing, but sometimes complementing and encouraging good work also.

The committee discussed other topics for future safety circulars; TA suggested housekeeping, GDS suggested tubing on Buchi's.

9. Latest accidents/incidents

A fridge lost electricity over the Christmas shutdown period. On return from the holiday period the contents of the fridge were found to be in poor condition. The question was asked whether the fridge was faulty and it was suggested that where an appliance trips the circuit breaker appliances in the surrounding area should be retested for electrical safety. The committee were keen for this to happen.

The question was raised whether we should have a central database of material safety data sheets?

An undergraduate came into contact with some lachrymatory vapour and was sent to hospital as a precaution.

10. Latest near misses

There was a trip on damaged flooring within the Schools Chemistry stores.

11. Issues with emergency services following accidents with the School

SH explained that there was an ambulance called to the Chemistry building following an accident. There appeared to be confusion by the ambulance staff as to where the Chemistry building was due to the University buildings all having the same university postcode and the drivers of emergency vehicles using SatNavs. SH suggested that when we have to call for an ambulance we should place someone outside the building to wait and flag down the ambulance as per the University First Aid procedure.

12. MIB update

TA reported to the committee that there had been a chemical spill. A shelf had collapsed resulting in the spilling of a number of chemicals:- thioglycolic acid, n-butyl tin hydride and p-toluenesulfonic acid. EMA provided assistance in the chemical spill cleanup. TA expressed her thanks to EMA for the assistance.

Following the chemical spill a Chemical spill team has been set up in the MIB.

There was another chemical spill of diisopropylethylamine. This was cleaned up by Jason Micklefield.

The HSE visited MIB to inspect the CAT3 labs on the 8th and 9th of November 2011. The inspection went well.

Two dry audits have been carried out since the last Health and Safety meeting. There is a plan for this to be continued throughout 2012, with 1 to 2 undertaken each month.

13. Latest inspection /Arrangements for inspections

Latest inspections

2nd Floor Upper Brook Street, 2nd Floor Dover Street.

Arrangements for inspections

7th floor, 6th floor, 5th floor Upper Brook Street to be inspected.

Volunteers

EMA, GDS, JM, SH, CD

14. AOB

None

