

SAFETY MATTERS

SEPTEMBER 2016

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the September edition of the Safety Matters newsletter.

H&S Services team news -

Many of you will be aware that Moira Simpson, Director of H&S Services will be retiring at the end of October. Moira has led the H&S Services team for over 11 years and has overseen significant changes and improvements in H&S management at the University. Moira and her husband are planning to retire to the East Coast of Scotland, spending time hill walking, cycling, and possibly taking up golf. Also leaving the team in October will be Gretta Roberts. Gretta has been the Biological & Scientific Safety Advisor since 2009. She has been influential in her work with the science Schools, and her experience, energy and high standards will be missed. She is moving to a new role as Science Safety Advisor at Swansea University where apparently her office has a sea view. Recruitment to fill both these posts is currently underway and updates will be circulated in due course.

OVERSEAS TRAVEL APPROVAL

This is to advise all staff and postgraduate students about changes to the arrangements for approving all work-related overseas travel.

Where you intend to travel to a country or an area of a country where the UK.GOV web site (Foreign and Commonwealth Office) advises against **all but essential travel**, all such travel requests must be approved by your Head of School, Head of Function, or Pro Vice-Chancellor in the case of the VC's office. This is a change from current practice which has previously required these requests to go to the Vice-Chancellor.

If you propose to travel to a country or an area of a country where the FCO advise against **all travel**, this must be approved by the Vice-Chancellor, or in his absence the delegated Responsible Officer (Deputy or Pro-Vice-Chancellor) (as currently).

In both scenarios, the request to approve travel must be accompanied by a risk assessment and a business case that sets out the benefits to the University that justifies the risks involved, and explains how risks will be mitigated.

Safety Code of Practice 38 Overseas Travel and 32 Fieldwork are being amended to reflect these changes, and will be published on the H&S Services web site in October. Likewise, the on-line risk management travel forms on the Insurance Office web site (at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/finance/Insurance/fcs-ins-business.aspx>) are being amended so that travel notifications will be re-directed to the correct managers.

Please remember that completion of the relevant forms is mandatory for all travel overseas – it enables the University to know where its travellers are, and in the event of an incident overseas, we rely on this information to check that people are safe. If you have not completed the form, any expenses you have incurred will not be reimbursed, unless in exceptional circumstances.

Please see the procurement website for the financial procedures for organising travel

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/procurement/> .

**Moira Simpson, H&S Services,
Director.**

RECENT ACCIDENT & INCIDENTS

In the last quarter we had 58 incidents reported, including:

- 10 slips, trips and falls
- 2 injuries caused by manual handling
- 10 sport related injuries
- 5 incidents requiring first aid treatment
- 5 non-work related illnesses
- 2 contact with hot surfaces
- 1 incident involving verbal assault
- 7 road traffic or cycle related incidents
- 6 reported near miss incidents
- 10 other types of incidents

The overall number of incidents is slightly down on previous quarters, but this is probably as a result of our campuses being rather quiet at this time of year,

Reporting of near miss incidents has increased over the last couple of months. Reporting these incidents means that we can investigate and learn from them, with an aim at preventing a repeat event which could cause an injury or damage. So thank you to those of you who reported these events and please keep them coming.

Similarly there has been an increase in awareness and reporting of road traffic and cycling related incidents on campus – again knowing that these have occurred helps us to pin point areas of campus which the University can then investigate and plan to improve.

REWARDING FIRST AIDERS

In most of our buildings, Services and Schools we have people who volunteer to train and act as first aiders. As you can see from the accident and incident statistics our first aiders respond to a number of work-related incidents and non-work related illnesses each month. They provide a valuable service to the staff and students at the University and we would like to encourage areas to use the Celebrating Success system to reward first aiders for their contribution – details of the Celebrating Success system can be found at:

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/humanresources/WorkingatReading/RewardandBenefits/humres-rewardingstaff.aspx>. If you would like to nominate a first aider please contact your School/Service nominators or alternatively email us at safety@reading.ac.uk and we can pass on the nomination to the relevant people.

FOCUS ON: FIRE RISKS FROM AEROSOLS

Many aerosol cans contain propellants, such as butane or propane.

These propellants are very flammable which means that the gases can easily ignite if used in close proximity to naked flames or hot surfaces. A severe fire at the Glasgow School of Art

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-27556659)

[scotland-glasgow-west-27556659](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-27556659) is believed to have been caused by cans of expanding foam which were sprayed near to an overhead projector. It's thought that propellant gases were drawn into the projector via the cooling fan and the highly flammable gas and air mixture was ignited by electrical components within the projector.

As a general rule aerosols with a flammable gas propellant will carry a risk warning label similar to the ones below:



If your aerosols have these labels then you will know that the contents will ignite very easily if exposed to an ignition source such as a naked flame or a hot surface

Aerosols that are labelled Extremely (Category 1) or Highly (Category 2) Flammable should only be used if absolutely necessary – try to source similar products which are not flammable (and do not carry these warning symbols).

If you must use flammable aerosols then follow these simple safety rules:

- Ensure there is a risk assessment in place for the activity before starting work and read the instructions on the can before using
- Always use in a well ventilated area
- Do not spray on or near a naked flame, hot surfaces or other source of ignition such as an electric fire



- Keep the containers out of direct sunlight and do not expose to temperatures exceeding 50°C
- Put the aerosols away after use and if you have more than one or two aerosol cans in your workplace you should store them in an appropriate secure metal cupboard

If you need further advice, please speak to your H&S Coordinator in the first instance or contact us in H&S services.

Peter Lawther. *Fire Safety Advisor*

TECHNICAL SERVICES H&S TRAINING

Over the summer period H&S Services have undertaken an intensive H&S training programme for Technical Services. More than 25 courses have been run with over 150 attendees covering a range of topics from the Principles of Risk Assessment to training with Cryogenic gases and Gas Cylinders.

On the whole feedback has been positive, with an average rating of ★★★★★ and participants feeling they have learnt something new that is relevant to their job.



We would like to thank Technical Services and especially the course participants for this investment of time and their commitment to improve overall knowledge of safe working practices.

Gretta Roberts, *Biological & Scientific Safety Advisor*

FORTHCOMING TRAINING

The 2016/2017 H&S training programme courses is now available on the H&S Services training webpages (<https://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/health-and-safety/hs-training/hs-training-coursedetails.aspx>)

Some of the courses coming up in the next few weeks include:

First aid courses:

First aid at work certificate – 12th-14th October

First aid at work certificate refresher course – 29th and 30th September

1 day first aid course – 3rd October

Automatic External Defibrillator training for first aiders – 6th September

Fire safety courses:

Fire evacuation officer training – 9th September

Fire evacuation chair training – 21st September

Fire warden training – 14th September

Other courses:

Managing H&S for H&S Coordinators – 20th September

Accident and Incident Investigation – 27th September

DSE assessor course – part 1 and part 2 - 7th of September and repeated 14th of September

Managing Health and Safety in Research – 7th September

If you would like to attend any of the above courses please use [Employee self service](#) booking system and search for the course using the Learning Activity Search button in the Learning area. If you have any problems with this booking method, or if you are a postgraduate student, please contact us to book a place by emailing safety@reading.ac.uk.

CONTACT THE TEAM

For help and advice from H&S Services please contact safety@reading.ac.uk or telephone 0118 378 8888

We would welcome feedback on our Safety Matters newsletter – to participate please take a couple of minutes to fill out the survey on <https://reading.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/safety-matters-newsletter-feedback>