

## Building work starts

Construction work has now started on three prestigious new buildings at the heart of Whiteknights campus. These are the Student Services building, the extension to the Student Union, and the ICMA Centre extension and new Business School. There are also other smaller projects under way round campus, including the refurbishment of the Sports Centre.



What this means is that Whiteknights campus will see a lot of building work over the next couple of years. Inevitably there will be some disruption to normal campus life, including restrictions on access, construction traffic, noise, changes to parking arrangements and use of temporary accommodation.

Facilities Management Directorate will be working with the contractors to minimise disruption and where possible to plan the construction work round important University events such as exams and open days. However if there are any concerns about the impact of the work, the first point of contact is the FMD Helpdesk, Extn. 7000.

From a health and safety point of view we will be monitoring the contractors to ensure a safe site, both for the construction workers and for University staff, students and visitors. If any member of the University identifies a safety issue associated with the building work



(e.g. noise, dust, road safety, working overhead etc) then please phone or email Health and Safety Services immediately and we will investigate.

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## Fire safety workshops

**Health and Safety Services will be running short one-hour workshops in November for Area Health and Safety Co-ordinators. These will give practical guidance on changes in fire safety legislation and what it means for our fire safety management procedures.**

The new legislation (the Fire Safety Order) takes effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006. It has led us to review the Fire Safety Maintenance Checklists that are completed each term by AHSCs. The workshops will therefore introduce AHSCs to the changes to checklists and provide examples (photos!) of what to look for when

walking round to complete the checklist.

Recent inspections by the Fire Authority have highlighted the need to accurately record defects and take action to undertake repairs. Therefore we will also explain how the Fire Safety Maintenance Checklist fits into our risk assessment and maintenance procedures.

The workshops will offer a good opportunity for AHSCs to ask questions. **Because of the importance of fire safety to life safety and business continuity, we would like to encourage as many AHSCs as possible to attend. Dates will be announced shortly.**

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## H&S training programme

**Health and Safety Services training prospectus has now been published. Hard copies have been distributed and an electronic version is available on our web site.**

If you are a new member of staff, have taken on new H&S responsibilities, have changed job, or think you need refresher training, take a look at our programme and agree with your manager if you need to book on a course.

If you manage a School, department or team, consider if you or any members of your team would benefit from safety management training. This is MANDATORY for all newly appointed Heads of School and Departments.

We are also happy to organise bespoke courses to suit teams or departments. Please contact Jonathan Crabb on Extn. 7738 if you would like to discuss this option.

# European Week for Health and Safety at Work – ‘Safe Start’



This year's European Week for Health and Safety at Work runs from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> October and is dedicated to the occupational health and safety (OSH) of young people (under the age of 25). For the University this includes young employees or temporary staff working in offices, catering, workshops or laboratories. It could also include our students, especially those on courses that include work placements, and courses with a vocational bias.

The Health and Safety Executive web site at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/campaigns/ewroweek/index.htm> has helpful information for young people, employers, parents and supervisors of young people. This includes fact sheets, leaflets and pocket guidance documents.

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (<http://ew2006.osha.eu.int/>) is also promoting the integration of OSH into education, with the aim of promoting risk awareness, preparing young people for their first day at work, and for their OSH responsibilities in their future careers.

## What you can do

If you supervise young people, you might want to look at the materials on the HSE web site and think about how you could use them. For example you might give out the fact sheet for young people as part of induction training.

If you teach on a vocational course, now would be a good time to consider if OSH can be worked into the course material now or in the future. Some Schools/Departments already do this very successfully,

and Health and Safety Services will always be happy to contribute.

Ideas could include asking students to: risk assess a typical work activity or their own student project; identify what employers have to do to manage health and safety in a particular industry; design out hazards in an engineering or construction project; or a drama project based on the consequences of a serious accident.

## Parents

If you are a parent, and your sons and daughters are about to start work, then the fact sheet for parents sets out some useful steps that you can take to help your children and make sure they are safe at work.

# Hand arm vibration

**Hand-arm vibration is vibration transmitted from work processes into workers' hands and arms. The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 (the Vibration Regulations), came into force on 6 July 2005 and aim to protect workers from risks to health from vibration.**

Hand arm vibration can be caused by operating hand-held power tools. At least 300,000 workers have reported symptoms of Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) in the UK. HAVS is the most common disease assessed by the

Department for Work and Pensions and is the most common disease reported under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR).

The Vibration Regulations introduce two action levels and limit values for hand-arm and whole-body vibration. However there is a transitional period from the exposure limit value for hand-arm vibration until 2010 as many older tools and machinery

cannot keep exposures below the exposure limit.

There are simple, non-technical and common sense measures which can be introduced to reduce exposure to vibration. Where required, managers must ensure that:

- Control measures to reduce vibration are properly applied; and
- Information, training and health surveillance is provided.

## The effects of hand arm vibration

The effects on people include:

- Pain, distress and sleep disturbance;
- Inability to do fine work (e.g. assembling small components) or everyday tasks (e.g. fastening buttons);
- Reduced ability to work in cold or damp conditions (i.e. most outdoor work) which would trigger painful finger blanching attacks;
- Reduced grip strength, which might affect the ability to do work safely.



Vibration White Finger

## What kind of tools and equipment can cause ill health from vibration?

There are hundreds of different types of hand-held power tools and equipment which can cause ill health from vibration. Some of the more common ones are:

- Chainsaws;
- Hammer drills;
- Hand-held grinders;
- Impact wrenches;

- Jigsaws;
- Polishers;
- Power hammers and chisels;
- Powered lawn mowers;
- Powered sanders;
- Strimmers/brush cutters.



If you or your staff use these types of tools, please contact Health and Safety Services for further information and advice on how you can meet the requirements of the Vibration Regulations.

## UV exposure

Following a recent case of over-exposure to UV radiation that resulted in a member of staff needing hospital treatment, we provide advice on safe working practices with man-made sources of UV in laboratories.

Ultraviolet radiation is the part of the electromagnetic spectrum in the wavelength between 1 nm to 400 nm. It is sub-divided into “extreme” or “vacuum UV” (less than 100 nm); UVC (100 – 280 nm); UVB (280 – 315 nm) and UVA (315 – 400 nm). UVC is strongly absorbed by nucleic acids, whilst UVB is strongly absorbed by proteins – hence neither UVB nor UVC have great penetrating power in human tissue. However, UVB is a hazard to the eyes, as it can be absorbed in the cornea and lens, causing photokeratitis (“snow-blindness”) as a short-term effect, and cataract (opacity of the lens) as a long-term effect.

Because of the nature and power of the sources of radiation, if exposure does occur in a laboratory or

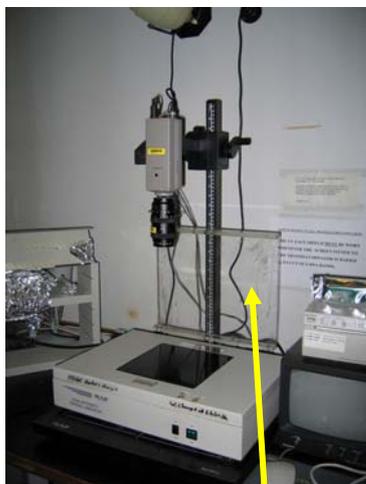
workshop, it is likely to cause (at the very least) a case of severe sunburn to exposed skin, and possibly photokeratitis. The risk depends on the wavelength of the radiation emitted and the power of the source. Radiation in the UVB region presents the greatest immediate risk, although high exposure to all forms of UV radiation can present long-term risks of skin cancers and eye problems.

Many UV sources in laboratories are designed to contain the radiation within a scientific instrument such as a spectrophotometer, but there are instruments (“open sources”) which are designed to emit UV radiation into the local environment e.g. UV **transilluminators** detect the presence of molecules of interest by induced fluorescence. Other open sources include **germicidal lamps** (UVC - used for surface sterilisation of equipment such as a microbiological safety cabinet); chromatography viewers (UVB) and mineral or security marking viewing lamps (UVA or “blacklight”).

### Controlling exposure

Anyone who uses an “open” source of UV radiation must be given sufficient information, instruction and training to be able to use the source safely. The risks of exposure must be assessed, and a set of local rules prepared to allow users to work in safety.

Effective “engineering controls” (shields and interlocks) are the first line of defence.



UV transilluminator with shield installed in wrong position, providing the operator with no protection

This should be followed by administrative measures (local rules and training). The use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is last in the line of defences.

### Use of PPE

For instruments without interlocked shields, the use of PPE is mandatory. Suitable PPE for protection against UV radiation consists of a face shield, UV-impervious gloves and lab coat. High SPF sunscreen may be a useful addition, but must never be used as a primary form of PPE.

Anyone who uses “open” sources of UV radiation on a regular basis should make arrangements with their line manager to be under Occupational Health surveillance.

More information on UV will shortly be available in an updated version of Safety Guide 22 – “Control of exposure to Ultraviolet Radiation”, on the Health & Safety Services website.

## Personal safety and security

As the days are getting shorter and the new University year is about to start, this is an opportunity to remind staff and students about personal safety on campus.

When walking round campus, keep to well lit routes and be alert to what’s going on around you. Don’t take shortcuts, especially at night, when it would be sensible not to walk through wooded areas of campus on your own. It’s best not to use your mobile phone or mp3 player, which may attract unwelcome attention and distract you. Walk confidently, and if you think you are being followed, cross the road or change direction. If you are still being followed, head for the busiest place you can find/look for somebody who can help.

If you are walking around campus on your own you may want to consider buying a personal attack alarm from the shop on campus. Keep it to hand and in the unlikely event of having to use it, use the

few seconds surprise it will give you to run from an attacker.

If you feel threatened or there is an emergency **phone Security Services on 0118 378 6300**. This is manned 24 hours a day. Any security issues should be reported to the security general enquiries number on 0118 378 7799.

The University campuses are generally safe and pleasant places to live and work. Fortunately violent or sexual attacks on students and staff are very rare. Nevertheless nobody should be complacent. Adopting a few sensible procedures and being aware of the dangers will help you to avoid becoming a victim.

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## Waste disposal

**Are you sure that you are disposing of waste material correctly? The costs of getting it wrong can be quite high, regardless of any risk to staff or others who may have to handle the waste.**

A School at Whiteknights has just had to pay £1000 extra disposal costs because it was suspected that a general refuse skip had been contaminated by the illegal disposal of mercury. This followed the discovery of a small mercury spill on the roadway leading to the skip. As a result the skip had to be searched by hand by Grundon's to make sure that hazardous materials were not going to landfill. The skip was found to contain items that could be hazardous to people and to the environment (although not mercury). If checks had not been made, it could have left the University liable for prosecution.

**For health, safety and environmental reasons Schools/Departments must have rigorous procedures in place to manage the disposal of waste.**

Green skips are for glass, plastic, metal, and general refuse, which will be sorted by Grundons for recycling where possible. You can also put paper and cardboard into the green skips, but it's better if you use the blue recycling skips for these materials; this ensures that



**Blue bins for cardboard and paper  
Green bins for all other rubbish except hazardous waste**

they go for recycling and avoids landfill tax.

There are also two smaller bins located behind the Philip Lyle and URS buildings for plastic bottles and drinks cans.

Hazardous waste includes computers, monitors, TVs, all types of electronics, waste oil, chemicals (including empty containers unless they have been cleaned and hazard labels removed before disposal), fridges and freezers, paint and many other everyday items. It also includes **ALL hypodermic syringes and needles**, even if used for non-biological purposes. These must be placed in secure containers and disposed of as if they were clinical waste. Special arrangements are needed for hazardous materials - Campus Services will help with disposal and will advise on do's and don'ts (email [c.w.varnals@rdg.ac.uk](mailto:c.w.varnals@rdg.ac.uk)). The FMD Waste Services web site has information on the different disposal routes and what happens to your waste (<http://www.fmd.rdg.ac.uk/waste/>).

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## H&S audit programme

**Health and Safety Services are starting the audit programme of Schools and Departments to provide reassurance that the University's safety management system is working effectively.**

The programme includes Schools/Departments that undertake higher risk work e.g. involving radiation or biological agents, and

maintenance and grounds. However the majority of accidents and ill health are associated with what are perceived as low risk environments such as offices, so we will also be visiting a sample of Schools/ Directorates that are engaged in 'office-type' activities.

In the course of each audit we will be speaking to Heads of Schools, Area Health and Safety Co-ordinators and a random selection of staff. If anyone is worried about the audit process, please be reassured that this is a 'no-blame' exercise. The objectives are to verify that systems are working, identify good practice, agree where there is room for improvement and support the department in producing an action plan to do so.

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## Accident reporting

It is important that all accidents/incidents are reported to your manager immediately and recorded in the accident book in your School/Department. Injuries which require attention at hospital A & E and work-related injuries or ill health which mean that you are absent from work for more than three days (including weekends) must be reported to Health and Safety Services by your manager or AHSC. The University has by law to report certain accidents and incidents to the Health and Safety Executive so it is very important that you tell your manager if you are absent e.g. phone your manager at work and leave a message and a number that you can be contacted on. Remember you have health and safety responsibilities and this is one of them.

**Health And Safety Services**  
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Contact: Moira Simpson, Head of Health and Safety Services