

## Smoking ban

**On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007 new legislation is being introduced in England which prohibits smoking in any enclosed work space. The University has reviewed its current smoking policy and has decided to extend the current ban on smoking in academic buildings to include Halls of Residence and areas immediately outside campus buildings. These areas will be 'smokefree' from 1 July.**

From 1 July it will be illegal to smoke in any enclosed or semi-enclosed workspace. The aim behind the new legislation is to ensure a healthier environment so that everyone can work and socialise free from secondhand smoke.

Underlying this are the health risks from inhaling second hand smoke. Government advice is that this is a serious health hazard, and there is no safe level of exposure. Every time someone breathes in secondhand smoke, they breathe in over 4,000 chemicals. Many are highly toxic. More than 50 are known to cause cancer. And, because 85% of secondhand smoke is invisible and odourless, even though you think the atmosphere around you is not particularly smoky you may be at more risk than you realise.

Medical and scientific evidence shows that exposure to secondhand smoke increases the risk of serious medical conditions such as lung cancer, heart disease, asthma attacks, childhood respiratory disease, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and reduced lung function.

Recognising this, and the fact that non-smokers find it unpleasant to have cigarette smoke drift into their offices from smoking outside, the University has decided to extend its current no smoking policy.

**With effect from 1 July, no smoking will be allowed in the following areas:**

- Inside any academic building, including individual offices (no change from current policy);

- Inside Halls of Residence, including study bedrooms;
- Inside work vehicles;
- Inside private vehicles used for work, where a passenger is sharing the vehicle;
- Within 10 metres of any building on campus (unless you are passing by on a recognised path).

By law, from 1 July anyone who smokes in an enclosed or semi-enclosed smokefree area will be committing a criminal offence. They will also be in breach of the University's policy if they smoke in any of the above areas.

Around 70% of smokers say they want to stop smoking. The new smokefree law could provide extra motivation to do so. The University Occupational Health provider offers help for staff who wish to give up smoking – they can be contacted on 0118 322 7629. The NHS SMOKEFREE web site has information on support sessions that are available locally in Berkshire.

**It's time to go smokefree!**



## Radiation safety

Following a visit by Environment Agency inspectors, areas for improvement of the University's management arrangements for the control of radioactive sources have been identified. This includes revising some procedures and the creation of a new Radiation Safety Sub-Committee.

The procedures have been revised to reflect the EA inspectors' comments, particularly with regard to record keeping and timescales for disposal

of radioactive waste. This will be reflected in a revised Safety Guide 19. Particular points to note are:

- Very Low Level waste (VLLW) disposal is the only permitted route for disposal of solid radioactive waste;
- Users of Open sources of radioactive material must be able to demonstrate that (i) all VLLW is removed from the University campus (via the general waste skips, operated by Select Environmental Services) within 14 days of production; and (ii) that the “single item” limits for VLLW have not been exceeded.

The new Radiation Safety Sub-Committee will oversee arrangements for the acquisition, use, storage and disposal of radioactive materials and ensure common high standards are adopted across the University.

The Sub-Committee will be comprised of the University Radiation Safety Officer; all the School Radiation Protection Supervisors and School Laser Safety Officers, together with representatives of relevant recognised Unions.

Anyone needing more information should contact Malcolm Iosson on Extn. 8887.

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## Building work do's and don'ts

**In the last issue of Safety Matters we highlighted the dangers of asbestos being disturbed by 'DIY' type work, without adequate checks being made with FMD about the safety of the planned work. Since then HSE inspectors have visited the University and have reinforced the message that all minor building work undertaken by Schools/Departments must be properly controlled and planned.**

HSE's message was not restricted to the management of asbestos, although this was the primary reason for their visit. They emphasised that there are other risks from undertaking minor building work without carrying out some basic

safety checks first. Therefore all Departments and staff must follow the Do's and Don'ts below:

### Do

- Use the FMD 'Authorisation to Work' form on the Maintenance web site at <http://www.fmd.reading.ac.uk/maintenance/documents/Authorisation%20to%20Work.pdf> to check that the work you plan to do is safe, before starting work.
- Let FMD Maintenance know if you are installing equipment with pressure systems so that FMD can include it on the timetable for statutory inspections;
- Remember that connecting pipes to water supplies can be a source for legionella bacteria growth;
- Note that some studwork walls may not be strong enough to take shelves;
- Consider that increasing ventilation may affect any gas appliances in the area.
- Make sure the person doing the work is insured to carry out that type of work;
- Remember that if you are in charge of work, you are responsible for making sure that it is undertaken safely.

### Don't

- Forget that the University asbestos register is available via Wren Web;
- Forget that walls can have hidden services embedded within them;
- Use suppliers/contractors that are not contracted via Procurement or FMD;
- Let untrained staff do work they are not competent to do;
- Risk it! – ask FMD for advice.

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## Event licensing

**There have been recent changes in the legislation that applies to the sale of alcohol at events and to the provision of regulated public entertainment. This applies to all events being run by University departments where either alcohol is provided on direct sale or as part of**

### **the ticket price, or where there is entertainment open to the public.**

We are coming to the time of year when departments may be planning social events. Therefore if you are planning an event which:

- is not being held in a premises which already have a premises licence (check with Commercial Services and Campus Services if in doubt), and
- is supplying alcohol and you are charging for this (either directly or indirectly)

then you need to apply at least 10 days in advance of the event to the Local Authority for a temporary event notice (TEN), with a copy to the police. It is best to apply the sooner the better and preferably before you sell any tickets.

If you are planning an event open to the public that provides “regulated entertainment” i.e. a performance such as a play, dancing, or live music, then you will also need a temporary event notice (whether or not alcohol is provided).

Applications must be to the Local Authority where the event is being held (either Wokingham District or Reading Borough, depending on the location of the venue. A copy must also be provided to the police.

The most important part of this new system is that no authorisation is required as such from the licensing authority for the event to take place. Instead notice of the intended event must be given and in general only the police may then intervene to prevent the event from taking place or to agree a modification of the arrangements for the event.

If you need any further advice about social events, please contact H&SS. Our Safety Guide 33 on Events has just been updated and will be available shortly on the web site.

**Health and Safety Services**  
Facilities Management Directorate

Extension 8888

Web: [www.fmd.rdg.ac.uk/safety/](http://www.fmd.rdg.ac.uk/safety/)

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Contact: Moira Simpson, Head of Health and Safety Services