

Hopkins success

On 8th December 2008 the Schools of Biological Sciences and Chemistry, Food Biosciences and Pharmacy commenced occupation of the Hopkins Building. Several months of planning were tested to the full, and without a single reported injury to University staff, the physical move was a great success.



A working group was established early on in the project planning phase, with academic staff and technicians representing both Schools. An external project management company, Provelio, were also engaged and coordinated the removal companies employed for the project. Regular meetings and progress reports kept staff and students informed and open debate allowed everyone to raise issues.

There are numerous factors which contributed to the successful move, including delegation to small sub-groups responsibility for looking after specific areas; brainstorming to identify potential problems; breaking down the planned move into stages and assessing each stage; and using the skills of our competent and practical staff.

Other factors which helped in the smooth transition between AMS and the start of work in Hopkins included:

- clear contact details for key staff in AMS Tower and Hopkins buildings, allowing quick and easy communication during the move;
- the provision of floor plans detailing destination points for large equipment and packing crates;

- chemicals and hazardous materials moved only by School staff;
- lifting and moving equipment available for use;
- a safety lecture, which was presented to all Hopkins Building occupants before occupation (*Editor's note - the presentation accompanying the lecture was spectacular, well designed to get staff attention*);
- guided tours for all staff (of the then empty building) describing areas of interest and familiarising them with the building;
- the establishment of clear working rules for the new environment in Hopkins Building.

Building Managers

The University is in the process of appointing Building Managers for all academic and support buildings. This formalises existing informal arrangements that are already in place in many buildings.

The appointments are being made to enable the University to properly manage its premises and to ensure full compliance with fire and buildings-related health and safety legislation. The duties are set out in a new Safety Note 48 which is published on H&SS web site. The full list of Building Managers will be published on the web site shortly for general information.

Two short training modules are being organised by H&SS. These will cover fire safety management, and general building health and safety issues. The focus will be on what building managers are expected to do, and how. We will be offering several dates for each module, starting in May, and will advise newly appointed Building Managers of these as soon as possible.

Building Managers are asked to book onto both modules - contact Rebecca Bridges on extension 8888, or email safety@reading.ac.uk once the dates have been confirmed.

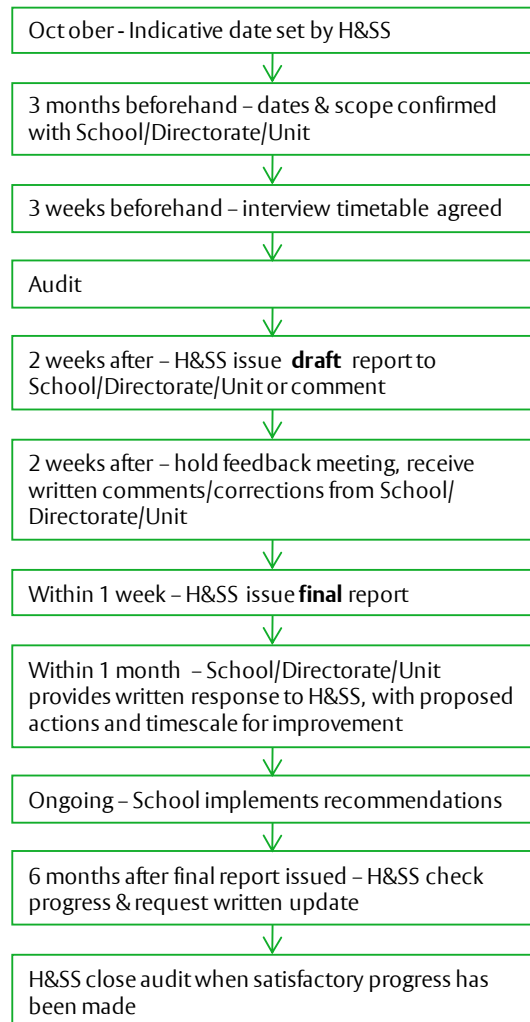
Health & well being week

Don't forget - 31 March to 2 April

Health and well being week will have sessions on stress & work life balance, healthy eating, posture, smoking cessation, and blood and cholesterol checks. The University's chair suppliers will be there with workstation chairs - find out how to sit properly at your

Audit process

In previous issues of Safety Matters we've said quite a lot about lessons to be learnt from H&S audits. However it is clear that units are not quite sure what form the audit process will take, or what they are expected to do in response to our audit report. The flow chart below explains the process.



New Safety Guides

The Health and Safety Committee have approved the following revised or new Safety Guides and Safety Notes:

- SG 7 Outside normal working hours (revised)
- SG 16 Working with ionising radiations (revised)
- SG17 Classification of radiation workers and areas (revised)
- SG18 Acquisition and disposal of radioactive materials (revised)
- SG19 Working with open sources of ionising radiation (revised)
- SG 21 Safe use of lasers (revised)
- SG34A Fire safety management (revised)
- SG41 Lifting operations and equipment NEW

Safety Notes

- SN 44 Low energy light bulbs NEW
- SN 47 Access to roofs NEW
- SN 45 Honoraria for health and safety responsibilities NEW
- SN 48 Duties of a Building Manager NEW
- SN 52 The safe use of electrical extension systems NEW

Copies are being put on the Health and Safety Services web site.

Gas safety

During recent safety inspections carried out by members of the health and safety team we have found **Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders being stored incorrectly. LPG cylinders have been seen close to live electrical equipment, obstructing a means of escape route and left in an area unsecured open to the public.**

Hazards of LPG

LPG is a colourless liquid which readily evaporates into a gas. It has no smell, although it will normally have an odour added to help detect leaks. When mixed with air, the gas can burn or explode when it meets a source of ignition. It is heavier than air, so it tends to sink towards the ground. LPG can flow for long distances along the ground, and can collect in drains, gullies and cellars.

LPG is supplied in pressurised cylinders to keep it liquefied. The cylinders are strong and not easily damaged, although the valve at the top can be vulnerable to impact. Leaks can occur from valves and pipe connections, most likely as a gas. Liquid LPG can cause cold burns to the skin.

Do's	Don'ts
Store LPG cylinders in a well ventilated position, preferably in the open air.	Don't store below ground level in cellars, basements or pits.
Take steps to prevent people from tampering with unattended cylinders e.g. store cylinders in a secure fenced area.	Don't obstruct means of escape with stored cylinders.
Prevent smoking close to LPG Cylinders.	Don't store cylinders within 1 metre of a heat or ignition source, such as live electrical equipment.
Keep flammable liquids, combustible, corrosive, oxidising and toxic materials and compressed gas cylinders separate from LPG cylinders.	Don't try to put out a fire involving LPG - leave it the fire brigade and evacuate the area.
Ask for advice from Health & Safety Services before storing LPG cylinders anywhere inside a building.	Don't store LPG cylinders on their sides - keep them upright to prevent leakage of liquefied gas. Always check that the protective cap or plug is fitted to the outlet valve.

If more information is needed about the storage and use of LPG, contact Health and Safety Services.

Gas cylinders and cryogenic gases

Senior technicians and H&SS staff attended a gas safety training course last week. This was geared towards safe use of industrial gas cylinders and regulators, and handling of cryogenic gases. This is the first step in cascading training to all staff and postgraduates students who handle or use laboratory gases. Selected key points from the training were:

- you must have standard operating procedures (SOPs) e.g. how to connect a gas regulator, filling and moving cryogenic vessels. All users must be trained in accordance with the SOP, and assessed for competency before being allowed to work unsupervised;
- ‘sniffling’ of cylinders is no longer recommended;
- avoid ‘churning’ of cylinders if possible, use a suitable trolley;
- ‘home made’ attachments for decanting liquid nitrogen mean that the person who designed and manufactured the attachment takes on all the legal responsibilities of a designer under Section 6 of the Health and Safety at Work Act. It’s much better to buy a proprietary piece of kit from reputable suppliers!
- you must have an emergency plan that takes into account the ‘worst case’ scenario – primarily a catastrophic release of gas;
- if sending a cryogenic vessel in a lift, you must vent to atmosphere in a safe area, until the pressure falls below 50% of the relief valve set pressure.

Risk assessment – two sides of the coin

In the summer term, we will be asking Schools/Directorates to provide copies of their risk registers and risk assessments. To put this exercise in perspective, here are two angles on risk assessment.

Firstly, a safety adviser acting as a consultant to a quarrying company has recently been prosecuted and fined after HSE found that he had failed to make a suitable assessment of the risk to health of employees exposed to respirable crystalline silica, arising from the processing of sandstone.

As a result he was fined £1,000 and ordered to pay costs of £700, having pleaded guilty to an offence under the Health and Safety at Work Act. *So we all have to make sure our risk assessments are undertaken thoroughly and that obviously significant risks are not overlooked.*

However, on the other side of the coin, it is a waste of time and resources to prepare written risk assessments for insignificant or trivial risks. As an example, many departments will use small quantities of everyday chemicals which have a hazard warning label and are supplied with a safety data sheet. In these circumstances

HSE’s guidance is that where there is little or no risk, you only need to record:

- the substances and the form in which it occurs - liquid, powder, pellets, dust etc;
- the measures to be taken to adequately control exposure e.g. taking account of the information provided by the supplier, and using the substances in accordance with their accompanying instructions; and
- a statement that because the substances pose little or no risk, a detailed risk assessment is not necessary.

Where exposure to a number of different hazardous substances pose little or no risk, the employer may group together on a single record the significant findings of the assessments for all the individual substances. The record may also group together the significant findings for similar substances of low risk e.g. lubricants or detergents.

So using the standard University RA1 form may well be sufficient, rather than using the more complex COSHH risk assessment form for every individual low risk substance.

Estates & Construction H&S Adviser

Larry Woodley has joined Health and Safety Services as our Estates and Construction Health and Safety Adviser.



Larry has many years of experience working in the construction industry. Initially training as a draughtsman before moving into civil engineering, he has worked on a variety of projects within the UK and abroad, including harbours

in Central America, housing estates in Europe and oil distribution facilities in Africa. More recently he has moved into health and safety and has been a H&S adviser for various UK based facilities and estates management teams, including research establishments.

Larry’s role is to advise on health and safety issues relevant to the estates, maintenance and project teams of FMD. He is based in the FMD building and can be contacted on 0118 378 7290 (internal 7290) or via email l.p.woodley@reading.ac.uk.

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