

University of St. Andrews
SCHOOL OF CHEMISTRY

*Minutes of the School Health and Safety Committee Meeting held on
Tuesday 1st December 2015 at 2.00 pm*

Present: Dr Filip Wormald [PWo] - Health and Safety Coordinator (Chair)
Dr Alan Aitken [RAA]
Dr Paul Connor [PAC]
Dr Ian Smellie [IAS]
Dr John Smith [JSGS]
Mr Brian Walker [BW]
Mrs Carolyn Busby [Secretary]

1. Apologies

Apologies received from EZC, ILH and PAW.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th August 2015 were taken as read and approved.

3. Matters Arising

JSGS stated that a cyanide sign had been put up in Room 401. PWo stated that the waste complex issues had been partially sorted out but not fully due to issues with the building works and storage of their materials. JSGS said that people are still putting items out for disposal without the proper forms. JSGS looked into charges for the uplift of waste and HoS and CAM are to speak to Finance about this as the costs should come out of Supervisors' grants. There was a recent cost of £21 for disposal of 3 chairs and £50 for a bookcase.

4. Report from Health & Safety Coordinator (PWo)

As PWo has been absent for a lot of the time since the last meeting, he asked EZC to provide details of anything specific during the time he deputised for PWo but there was nothing to report.

5. Laboratory Coats

HoS had asked the Committee to look at this again as there had been some confusion following the email sent out. The policy that was decided previously was that Lab coats should be worn in all "wet" labs to stay in line with funding bodies' requirements, HSE recommendations and good laboratory practice. PWo emphasised that this does not mean ALL labs as some of the major facilities (solid state, solution state NMR etc.) do not require lab coats to be worn. The decision that was made previously by the H & S Committee should be maintained. Lab coats must be worn in wet labs but are not necessary in instrument labs - the latter should be stated in the general risk assessment for these facilities

[Action: PWo]

6. Evacuation Plan for Disabled Persons

PWo stated that there was no specific policy (guidelines) within the University for the evacuation of disabled persons but that there were support methods in place. The University (EHSS) has now produced a draft document and PWo had produced a more Chemistry-specific draft document which had been circulated to the Committee members. This gives instructions for the designated evacuation team. However RAA felt that the plan needed urgent clarification. PWo and JSGS stated that this must be done through EHSS, our risk assessors and insurance teams first.

Eight people have been trained in the use of evacuation chairs and they will be told when a disabled student is in the building (by email.) PWo stated that guidance is needed for staff as well as a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan [PEEP] for each individual disabled person, which is provided by Occupational Health and the H&S coordinator. PWo will ask how we should deal with out of hours working for disabled people and the fact that entrance into the building, during a fire alarm is only through an emergency exit if a person is in a refuge waiting for evacuation. These doors are locked and access would only be possible if others have exited via that specific door. Therefore the evacuation person may not have access to the refuge. PWo will discuss these issues with the director of H&S and the university risk advisor.

[Action: PWo]

RAA pointed out that at present the EVAC chair is on Level 3 as there is nowhere to put it on Level 4. JSGS said a bracket could be provided. RAA stated he needs to know what his duty is as an EVAC person and is he covered by insurance.

JSGS confirmed that some of the secretarial staff had been shown how to work the phone system in the janitors' box at the main door. PWo stated it is not possible for him to test the system and this has to be done by the company, Fire Protection Group, who will test it every 3 months. JSGS will clarify this with the company.

[Action: JSGS]

IAS stated that in Medical Science Iain and Dominic had been trained to take a disabled student to the refuge point but in reality it is probably better to evacuate them to Physics as it is closer depending on which end of the lab the person is in.

PWo raised the issue of what would happen if there are two disabled people in the building at the same time as this could be the case for the next academic year. RAA pointed out that the EVAC team needs to know where the EVAC chair is kept and they need to be sent a list of duties. PWo and JSGS pointed out again this cannot be done until we have received guidance but an intermediate plan is needed. PWo will speak to Director of EHSS, insurance and risk assessors to establish proper procedures in all these issues as a matter of urgency.

[Action: PWo]

7. **Portable and fixed gas alarms**

BW is asked to install these but JSGS said that they are governed by Estates. The alarms should be tested every 6 months by an outside company and there is a maintenance programme in place. JSGS confirmed that the alarms for PCJK, PAW and NMR are all maintained. RAA thought a list should be created and JSGS offered to make up a list of all existing systems in the building.

[Action: JSGS]

BW stated that sometimes alarms go off and people don't know what to do and that there are different levels and limits on different alarms. JSGS said that there should be notes outside the lab saying what to do if any alarm does go off. PWO stated that if a CO alarm goes off then the building should be evacuated according to procedure.

BW mentioned portable gas detection systems which only last about 2 years and that these should be regarded as disposable items. He doesn't know how many might be beyond their use-by date. PWO said that portable systems are needed and a register of portable alarms systems should be made and the committee agreed.

[Action: PWO]

It was mentioned that Geosciences should be sending risk assessments to PWO on paper but that in reality they don't do this. JSGS is to ask if they are keeping Fluorine in the Geosciences lab area.

[Action: JSGS]

8. **Report from Buildings Officer [JSGS]**

JSGS reported that the Purdie Annexe was due to be completed by 14th December but is 2 weeks behind schedule. The solvent store refurbishment includes alarms (legal requirement) and a beacon will be put just inside the door and another in the main Stores for Artur. A policy needs to be developed for Artur and others working in the Stores. The solvent store should be finished at the same time as the Annexe and the temporary store will be removed from the car park. A 2nd escape route from the back of the building has been created to meet regulations. All alarms and electrics are being refurbished but an automatic extinguisher system was not installed. This was not needed because solvents are stored in small containers and the cost of installing a system would have been too great.

JSGS stated that Rooms 137 and 138 opposite the Geoscience labs are being converted into labs for Geosciences, one for Mass Spec and one for HF.

JSGS had received complaints regarding the programme for painting the toilets and this is continuing with the painting of Level 1 Gents, starting tomorrow (2nd December). PAC pointed out that if someone burned themselves in the lab they need to get into the sinks and if these are closed then they have to go up or down levels. JSGS advised that the cleaners or painters would let anyone in to access sinks in this type of emergency.

8. Report from Chemical Hazards Officer [RAA]

Following on from previous Minutes, RAA stated that there was still some material left by DJCH. It had been noted and photographed and quotes had been received by EHSS from disposal companies but no pick up has been made. PWO is to speak to EHSS about this. RAA and Bobby Cathcart brought to the attention of the committee that there is still propylene oxide and Butane gas in the old DJCH labs. PWO will check this and arrange for disposal. Bobby Cathcart had also found cylinders in rooms 464 and 465 which had never been used. JSGS stated that the number of cylinders in labs has been reduced dramatically and there should not be anything in labs that is not being used. Bobby has left these particular ones where they are but PWO must check with EZC.

[Action: PWO]

RAA sent out an email and informed all new students about the regulations for storing poisons in a lockable cupboard. He feels that there now needs to be an email sent to Supervisors to see what has been done about this. PAC said there was a lack of lockable cupboards for poisons. RAA took the initiative in sending out the email about this but it needs to be followed up to check for compliance. PWO said as the HoS had decided differently he will speak with the HoS.

[Action: PWO]

Annual Lab Inspections – These were carried out and the reports have been given to HoS for signature and they are due to be sent to EHSS for audit by 31st December. EHSS keep copies of the reports for audit. PWO will send out the results to the individual supervisors.

There was some discussion on waste disposal and RAA stated that it is a big issue when people leave and that the academic involved should pay for any disposal costs. PWO added that this has been an issue for many years and this is difficult to impose and verify.

The Committee decided that the main points to pass on to the School Council Meeting would be making sure staff know the policies on Lab coats and poison cupboards.

9. AOB

The University Christmas closure was discussed as this has been raised by those who want to work between Christmas and New Year. Members of staff are required to come into the building in any case to complete certain tasks eg filling magnets. It was decided that people should be allowed in the building and that the weekend rules would apply as there would be no safety/first aid cover ie no working alone or doing dangerous experiments.

JSGS asked if there is a replacement for PWO who will be leaving officially at the end of April but as yet no-one has been identified.

10. Date of next meeting

The date will be circulated in due course and will be in advance of the School Council Meeting in March.

The meeting closed at 3.20 pm.

Filip Wormald
4th December 2015