

SCHOOL OF CHEMISTRY
University of St Andrews

*Minutes of the School Safety Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 26th August 2014 in
Room 222 at 11.00 am*

Present: Dr Filip Wormald [PW] (Health and Safety Coordinator) (Chair)
Mrs Carolyn M. Busby (Secretary)
Prof Nick J. Westwood [NJW] (Deputy Health and Safety Coordinator)
Dr Michael Corr [MC]
Dr Eli Zysman-Colman [EZC] (Deputy Health and Safety Coordinator)
Prof Paul C. J. Kamer [PCJK]
Mrs Marjory Parker [MP]

1. Matters arising from Minutes of last meeting

NJW advised that Teaching Lab matters were ongoing.

CAPOD Health and Safety (H & S) Course – PW has spoken to EHSS and is waiting for feedback.

[Action: PW]

Fire Alarm and Building Evacuation Procedures - PW asked EZC if he had looked into creating a voluntary messaging service for letting people know by text how long the building would be closed in the event of a fire evacuation. He has not done so yet but will look at this.

[Action: EZC]

Disabilities Report – The disabled UG student was designated a space in the Teaching Lab and this has worked out fine so far.

2. Fire Risk Assessment Report

This fire risk assessment report is part of an institution-wide health & safety audit (HASMAPP) focusing on four topics:

1. Fire safety
2. Contract safety management
3. Work away from the University
4. Category 3 pathogens

PW has received this report for the whole Purdie Building created by EHSS and external assessors. This is a lengthy report showing where we fit in with regulations and giving costs and targets for various recommendations totalling ~£80,000. The largest cost was to replace

the existing lift with a fire-proof one at £50,000. PW has completed immediate issues already. EZC asked which budget would these upgrades come from, is it for insurance purposes and do we have to do it. The insurance costs could go down if we follow the recommendations. PW noted a large majority of the upgrades are suggestions and that certain issues such as installing fire-proof doors could be completed. Fire extinguishers have already been checked and upgraded following the report but their best location still needs to be assessed. Duct doors require to be upgraded at a cost of £10,000. Some plant room fire doors are not fire resistant. EZC thought if the University would pay then everything should be done. Some items were immediate, others more long-term. For example the plastic sheeting on the ceiling of some of the Labs on Levels 1 and 2 and the NMR room require to be made of a non-flammable material. This has also been brought up by the Fire Brigade previously too. JSGS would need to ask Estates to find a replacement material that would be fire resistant and provide protection against flooding.

[Action: JSGS]

Another issue is that plant rooms are being used as storage rooms. These in fact belong to Estates who also leave boxes etc in them. PW indicated he has already asked for these to be cleared as the cardboard boxes, wooden crates and chemicals are a fire hazard. PW confirmed these rooms should be kept locked by Estates personnel– PW will contact Estates.

[Action: PW]

PW reported that the number of call outs by Fife fire services to the department has gone down and noted the School has not had a visit from the fire service since November. This is due to being able to quickly identify the alarm as false and requesting the fire services stand down before deployment.

[Action: PW]

Disability Access – There are refuges in stairwells throughout Purdie for disabled persons to call for assistance. Presently, we do not have any routines or people trained to evacuate personnel in a wheelchair or someone who cannot walk downstairs. The School of Medicine has special evacuation chairs to carry personnel downstairs if required. PW confirmed, the School will have one 2nd year student in a wheelchair that will be in the Purdie building for tutorials and there is the possibility of disabled visitors and PhD students in the future in the Purdie building. The Committee thought the building should be set up for disabled evacuation. The Committee, thought it was timely to have evacuation chairs and training in their use. PW noted he will go to the Medical building with Iona Hutchison (Disabilities Officer) to discuss what they have in place and take up the issue with EHSS. The evacuation plan in the H & S booklet should be updated to be applicable to disabled people.

[Action: W/ILH]

PCJK queried if the School have an evacuation procedure for gases, and confirmed he has installed detectors in his own lab. Sasol and John Irvine also have CO detectors and if they flash then it is treated as a fire and the building is evacuated. However, this equipment is not connected to the fire alarm directly. EZC commented there should be a risk assessment for

dealing with gases especially as the new CDT students will be using more gases in the labs. PW said that in the report, it is stated that the alarm system needs to be upgraded to a BS code. PW to find out if gas detectors could be connected to the fire alarm system. PW will look into this with EHSS.

[Action: PW]

PK enquired if the small lift could be modified to transport cylinders rather than using the passenger lift but this is unlikely due to space and cost.

PW stated that there were too many action points for this meeting and NJW suggested sharing out the tasks. PW to send file to everyone on the Committee. EZC pointed out that if Chemistry money has to be used then we need to look at what is demanded rather than recommended. H & S have to come back to PW with priorities. He has already dealt with immediate ones but will be speaking to H & S Director.

[Action: PW]

3. Phase 2 of CHARM

Phase 2 of CHARM will be released soon. MC raised various issues that he had been asked about from Post Docs. PW said these issues were already reported and taken into account in the new improved version. This includes editing COSHH forms. EZC would like to be able to add a comment/give feedback even when he is accepting a COSSH form. PW will ask if this is possible.

[Action: PW]

MC noted you cannot log out if using a shared computer. PW replied that having to close the browser is the preferred method of exiting by IT.

CHARM Board meeting this week where PW will ask if changes for the new version are complete and been implemented as agreed by the board.

4. Annual Lab Inspection

PW informed the Committee he has completed the annual laboratory inspection. There were no major issues but general clean-up of bottles, solvents and chemicals stored in the wrong place. Many labs have outdated COSSH and overnight forms. PW indicated this needs to be addressed and must be up to date. The new Overnight forms only need basic information as details should be on the COSSH forms. EZC pointed out that Joe Crayston's old lab (247) needs to be decontaminated as mercury has been found in it. PW said that mercury had been dumped in a service tower this week and is being removed. PW will look into the state of this lab.

Action: PW

5. Waste Disposal

Fife Council has threatened to stop picking up waste due to potential injury to their employees. PW has asked Estates to put up clearer signs for the waste disposal area stating what should go where. In addition, email correspondence has been sent out stating the clear glass boxes should be taped up and put in the Commercial Waste skip also in H&S handbook. Also Winchesters have been dropped and not cleared up. There should be a brush available to clear this up.

There was debate as to when waste is taken away. Marjory observed you can put in a request for uplift but they do not arrive on a specific day. NJW thought someone should be put in charge of the waste area because of the threat from Fife Council. It was agreed that this would be difficult although it might be possible for the Janitors to keep an eye on the state of the area. PW will speak to the Head Janitor, John Jardine about this possibility. During induction students/staff are made aware of the procedures for waste disposal and this is in the H&S handbook. It was generally thought that guidelines should be available on-line not just in the safety handbook so it is easily accessible and that Postdocs should be responsible for telling other group members what is required.

It was pointed out that computers etc have to be disposed of in a certain way/recycled. MP remarked that Estates will pick these up but a signed form is required by a reporting officer. There are several reporting officers in the building but it seems most people are unaware of this. PW will circulate who these people are to the school.

PCJK pointed out that in teaching labs a lot of chemicals go down the sink (diluted). PW believed the quality of the water going out of the building is monitored and this needs to be addressed. NJW asked if we could ask to check this report. PW will ask JSJS for copies.

[Action: PW]

MC asked about the next cyanide training course and PW will find out from occupational health.

[Action: PW]

The meeting closed at 12.30 pm. The date of the next Safety Committee Meeting was not confirmed but will take place prior to the next school council meeting.

Filip Solberg-Wormald
26.8.14