December 2012

Below are a few updates following the SoMS Health and Safety Consultation Committee last month; you can find the meeting minutes on [this page](#).

### Medical assessments

The following positions will require pre-employment medical assessments for new recruits:

- Work with animals: allergy and lung function test
- Work with carcinogens: general health monitoring
- Work with schedule 14 chemicals: general health monitoring
- Heavy lifting/physically demanding tasks: manual handling assessment
- Work requiring frequent use of hearing protection: Hearing test
- Work with lasers: eye testing

If you are planning on recruiting someone please ensure that you highlight to the HR contact that this position may require the medical assessment – see the [HR pre-employment checking matrix](#).

### Moving to a PC2 lab in the refurbished building?

If so, please check that you have attended PC2 training. These training courses are only available once a month and get booked up well in advance. If you are currently based in a PC1 lab and will be moving to PC2 please book onto a training course now, so that you are not delayed in starting work in the new building next year. Go to [myUNSW](#) to book training (if a date is not available sign up for the wait list of the last course listed).

### New/revised guidance released

**Disinfection of Tissue Culture Waste Guideline** – this provides detailed advice on chlorine, iodine and virkon as disinfectants and dilutions tables.

**Incident Investigation Guide** – any incident that becomes an approved workers compensation case must have a detailed investigation. This provides guidance and a template for the supervisor to use to carry out the investigation.
### Electrical testing & tagging

Lab electrical equipment is tested and tagged every 2 years and office electrical equipment is every 5 years. All portable electrical items must have a tag. If an item is new then it can have a “New to service” tag. This also applies to any personal electrical items that you use regularly in the workplace (e.g. personal laptop). If you’ve got anything that needs to be tested bring it to room 405 in the Lowy on Thursday 13th December and Frank Jones will test it for you.

### Incident statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main incidents in the last 3 months</th>
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<tr>
<td>A mercury thermometer broke in a water bath</td>
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<tr>
<td>A finger injury from a portable whiteboard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paraformaldehyde fumes filled a lab when a solution was being made up outside a fumehood</td>
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<tr>
<td>A fracture was sustained from slipping on a leaf outside the Wallace Wurth building</td>
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<tr>
<td>An puncture wound occurred from re-sheathing sharp tweezers</td>
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You can find a breakdown of all the hazards and incidents statistics so far this year [here](#).

### Scalpel blade removers

Stores are now stocking the ClickSmart blade removal device that allows the removal of a blade without having to touch it. The container holds up to 100 blades and is suitable for size #3, 4, 5, 7 & 9 scalpel handles. Maximum blade size #36.

Purchase these online at [http://webstore.science.unsw.edu.au/](http://webstore.science.unsw.edu.au/) or contact stores@unsw.edu.au. See the SoMS Sharps Protocol for advice on sharps management.

### Inspections

Your H&S committee has inspected all lab and office areas across the SoMS portfolio in 2012 (34 inspections reports submitted). This is a huge number of inspections, well done to the committee for undertaking this task. The majority of hazards reported related to chemical, housekeeping, fire and electrical. The purpose of the inspections are an independent check that the area is safe and following the UNSW safety management procedures.

### Chemical clear out

Now is a good time to dispose of any excess chemicals you’ve got. The last day for collection of chemical waste is Thursday 20th December. Please submit the chemical waste disposal form and have your chemicals, appropriately labelled, in the waste store before this day. The UNSW Lab hazardous waste disposal procedure can be found [here](#).
**Major spill kit**

In the unlikely event of a spill in your lab there is a major spill kit available for the Wallace Wurth & Lowy buildings, it is located in the first aid room on the 4th floor of the Lowy. This kit has a large number of absorbent mats, absorbent powders, respirators, overalls, gum boots, brushes and other materials that may be used. Always inform your supervisor and seek advice before attempting to clean up a spill; refer to the H&S Unit [various spills procedures](#) and if in doubt report it to Security (Ext. 5666) who will coordinate a Hazmat response.

**Reduced emergency personnel cover**

Over the Christmas break and during January there will be reduced coverage of emergency control personnel e.g. floor wardens and first aiders will be away on annual leave. Security will take the role of Chief Fire Warden during some of this period. In the event of an incident the responsible supervisor must respond, investigate and carry out any corrective actions. While Blathnaid Farrell is on annual leave contact Martina Lavin or Ken Wyse for any health or safety queries.

Have a safe and lovely break.

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Keep an eye on the [SoMS Health and Safety Home Page](#) for regular news updates