



The University of Hong Kong

# SAFETY MATTERS

August 28, 2006

To: List C

## **Occupational Health & Safety Ordinance & Regulation**

Department Heads, managers of centres & units may wish to be reminded that the University is subjected to the control of the Occupational Safety & Health Ordinance & Regulation. Safety Office has prepared a Guidance Notes for compliance since its promulgation. Like previous years, I take the opportunity to refresh you on your obligations as a responsible person by referring you to the Guidance Notes which have been updated and a copy is attached. You may wish to review the Notes with your Departmental Safety Representative or colleagues who are involved in assisting in health and safety matters of your operation.

It has come also to our notice that many Departments have overlooked the requirements for the first aid box and its provision. In particular, the required level of provision in the box has not been provided or replenished and the name of the persons responsible for the first aid box is not indicated in the first aid booklet.

Many departments are inevitably involved in manual handling operations which are required by law to comply with a very prescriptive performance standard like appointing a trained person to oversee manual handling operations; a risk assessment is conducted and documented; mitigating measures are in place and taken to reduce the health and safety risks, monitoring the effectiveness of the mitigating measures etc. Please check that such measures are in place.

Injuries as a result of or purporting to be caused by manual handling have become a headache for many organizations. They may appear to be rather minor and simple in the first place but may eventually become complicated with prolong sick leave and may even end up with legal proceeding. Evidence and records demonstrating compliance of the statutory requirements by an employer is often required by the Health and Safety Officers of Labour Department during their routine inspections failing which prosecution may follow. Departments are strongly advised to ensure compliance.

Heads are reminded that the University as an employer is required by law to report accidents at work to Labour Department. It is incumbent on the Departments to ensure that there are procedures in place for accident reporting and they are followed.

If there are any queries with the Regulation, feel free to contact Des Mabbott or Rheo LAM.



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Acting Director of Safety

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Enc.

c.c. Deans of the Faculties  
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## Guidance Notes for Compliance with The Occupational Safety & Health Regulation

### (I) Introduction

The Occupational Safety & Health Regulation (OSHR) made under the Occupational Safety & Health Ordinance (OSHO) (Cap 509) consists of 32 sections associated with 'general' safety issues.

The Ordinance & Regulations can be viewed on [www.legislation.gov.hk/eng/home.htm](http://www.legislation.gov.hk/eng/home.htm).

The following paragraphs are meant to assist Heads or responsible person to understand the legislation's requirements and contain the Safety Office's practicable suggestions and recommendations on how the University as an employer, local manager, department heads and all those who are assigned with management and supervisory responsibilities can ensure they & the area under their control meet the requirements of the regulations.

It is advisable to circulate this document to all these staff though it is also posted in the HKU Intranet.

Des Mabbott and Rheo LAM of the Safety Office are happy to discuss with individuals who have problems with this document.

### (II) Part II – Accident Prevention (Regulations 3-6)

Accidents are caused, they don't just happen.

Accident prevention can only be effective if long term safety plans are in place. Most accidents are caused by a combination of an unsafe act and an unsafe condition which in most cases are traceable to be of mis-management origin. A good health & safety management system is most crucial in preventing accidents and achieving a safe system of work which comprises the provision of safe plant and equipment; adequate training, instruction and supervision.

#### 1. Safe Plant & Equipment

In relation to accident prevention by providing plant and equipment that are safe & without risk to the safety & health of employees, it is always useful & effective for the responsible persons to:

- Check with the supplier or manufacturer on the safety standards the equipment is made to.
- Acquire the ancillary safety equipment necessary for its safe operation.



- Identify the training need of the equipment operator and maintenance personnel.
- Secure the safety training necessary for its safe operation and maintenance.
- Establish an effective maintenance programme & ensure it is in force.
- Ensure procedures are established and implemented to ensure all maintenance personnel are protected from the hazards that are associated with the operation in respect of the materials, plant and equipment involved.
- Ensure that for old plant and machinery which may not be designed and constructed to have guards built-in, guards or safe guards are provided for the dangerous parts.
- Ensure that trainees and students only operate the machines & plants under supervision or when adequate training has been completed.

## 2. Edge Protection

To prevent persons from falling from height or falling into vessels or containers with harmful substance, edge protection is required to a height of not less than 900 mm.

Check for such fall edges and provide protection. Teagle openings which are normally closed can escape attention and ensure protection is already in place before they are open.

### (III) Part III – Fire Precautions (Regulations 7-11)

#### 1. Means of Escape in Case of Fire

To enable Heads to comply with the fire precaution regulations they may wish to consider appointing an individual to take on the monitoring role to ensure exits are not locked and/or unuseable and that the means of escape remain clear.

Ensure that regular (monthly) physical checks are made to confirm that fire exit doors can be open from inside without using a key.

This could easily be considered as an extension of the role of the fire warden (where appointed).

Fire Wardens have proven to be invaluable in fire evacuation situations so perhaps with this additional duty Heads may wish to appoint one, and a deputy to cover in the Warden's absence.

However, this person or fire warden so appointed does not automatically absolve the responsibility of the Department Head in ensuring means of escape free from obstruction and safe exit locking arrangements.

When electric locks are installed at exit doors, checks should be made to ensure that they can be open from inside without using a key and in the event of power failure or fire alarm they are released automatically.

Estates Office is responsible for the installation and maintenance of all exit signs and exit locks.



It is the responsibility of the Department to report to the Estates Office if any exit signs are found not operating.

## 2. Additional Fire Safety Measures

Although Estates Office and Safety Office continually plan to upgrade the fire protection according to the priority and need of each building, Departments which consider improvements are urgently needed or when a notice for provision or improvement is received from the Government Departments, Safety Office should be consulted.

When a requirement for additional fire extinguishers exists, contact Safety Office for advice and provision.

## 3. Interfering with Fire Safety Measures

Department Heads should alert employees that anyone found interfering with or damaging fire safety measures is liable to prosecution.

# (IV) Part IV – Work Place Environment (Regulations 12-14)

## 1. Waste & General Cleanliness

It is the responsibility of the Head of Department to ensure that premises of his Department are kept free of debris, dirt & waste.

There are already in force procedures in handling, storage & disposal of chemical waste. For clinical and biohazardous wastes, the Department Head should ensure that standards & procedures for handling & disposal of such wastes are in force and are in compliance with the requirements of the Landlord (e.g. Hospital Authority) and the collecting authority, e.g. Food & Environmental Hygiene Department and Environmental Protection Department.

## 2. Ventilation

In general, adequate ventilation is provided when a premises is designed and constructed for its intended use. Subsequent alteration or gradual changes and introduction of plant and equipment or materials may necessitate a review by Safety Office on its adequacy. Departments which feel a ventilation problem is in existence should always initiate to contact Safety Office for a prompt review.

In ensuring effective elimination of contaminants and pollutants and other agents from escaping into the work environment or otherwise, Safety Office is responsible for testing and certification of fumecupboards, biological safety cabinets, fume hoods, recirculating fume cupboards or measuring air changes whereas the Estates Office is responsible for the design, installation and maintenance of the general ventilation system of all buildings. It is the responsibility of the Department Head or his representative to ensure that such fume cupboards and safety cabinets are tested and certified safe for use annually and to



ensure that any maintenance work and recommendations necessary for attaining adequate ventilation are promptly implemented.

### 3. Lighting

Different light intensity is required for different types of work and Safety Office can provide such measurements if doubts exist. Normally premises are designed for and provided with adequate lighting for its intended use at the beginning. Departments should initiate request for checks on the provision to cope with any subsequent changes that may have taken place over time.

### 4. Floor Drainage

Departments where ever possible should indicate before hand the requirements for special floor drain requirements to Estates Office when a new process/plant is planned. Meanwhile existing provisions should be reviewed to determine whether improvements are necessary to meet the regulations.

It is the responsibility of the Departments to provide suitable protective footwear and other apparels for persons on wet process to prevent slip & fall accidents and damage to limbs due to wetness.

## (V) Part V – Hygiene (Regulation 15-16)

### 1. Toilet Facilities

It is normally the case that adequate toilet facilities are already provided at the design and planning stage of a building. If, however, special requirements emerge, enquiries should be made to the Estates Office.

### 2. Drinking Water

This is not normally a problem on campus but special consideration may need to be given for such provision when an outing or field trip of prolonged duration takes place in remote areas.

Departments should have a programme to check the water dispensers are not contaminated.

## (VI) Part VI – First Aid Facilities (Regulations 17-21)

### 1. First Aid Box

At least one first aid box with approved contents should be provided on each floor and someone (the first aider if one is available) should be appointed to ensure that refills from UHS are made from time to time. A booklet "Hints on First Aid" available from the Safety Office is required to be stored in the first aid box. A team of at least 2 persons is appointed



to be responsible for first aid. The name of the persons responsible for the first aid box should be inserted in the "Hints on First Aid".

Requests for the provision of a first aid box with an initial supply of contents can be made to Safety Office.

Consideration should be given to provide portable first aid box/sac where situation warrants.

## 2. First Aider

Departments which have an employee strength of 150 or more must ensure there is at least one person trained in first aid for every 150 staff for statutory compliance. However, all Departments irrespective of their employee size, should encourage staff to undergo first aider training organised by Safety Office twice annually.

Names of the first aider should be displayed in the first aid box & other prominent locations.

## (VII) [Part VII - Manual Handling Operations](#)

Please click the heading for details.

RL/ii  
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