

# UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

## SCHOOL OF CHEMISTRY

*Minutes of the School Safety Committee Meeting held on  
Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 at 10.00 am*

<b>Present:</b>	Alan Aitken [RAA]	School Safety Coordinator (Chair)
	Eli Zysman-Colman [EZC]	Deputy Safety Coordinator and Inorganic Representative
	Chris Goodsell [CG]	Estates
	Magnus Alphey [MA]	BSRC, X-Ray
	Paul Connor [PAC]	Physical
	Iain Smellie [IAS]	Teaching
	Brian Walker [BW]	Technical
	Iona Hutchison [ILH]	Disability Officer
	Terry Smith [TKS]	Biohazards Officer
	Garry Muir (GM)	Janitorial Representative

### 1. Apologies

Juan Carlos Penedo, Carolyn Busby, Andrea Burke.

RAA welcomed everyone particularly the Janitorial Representative who is here for the first time.

### 2. Minutes of Previous Meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017 and matters arising

These were circulated and considered at the Staff Council Meeting in March.

### 3. Report on developments since the last meeting:

#### (a) Record keeping, SharePoint:

We can see some progress in this. RAA has spoken to Fraser Kirk and the IT Services Unit has completed its evaluation of the system and has put in a recommendation to the Business Development Committee for their approval and to give the final go-ahead for the system. Hopefully we may have something in place in time for September. This is a comprehensive record-keeping package which will allow us to keep an individual safety record for all personnel in the School, including training. Fraser is keeping us up-dated on any developments.

(b) Waste Disposal

(i) Legacy waste

RAA has sorted out and redistributed a huge amount of excess chemicals from the Cazin and Nolan period and recently has cleared out labs and made them available for new groups. This is set to continue as colleagues depart in the coming months.

(ii) Ongoing waste

RAA has just finished an order to Veolia for collection in early July. There is a suspicion that some groups that are working with toxic metals are hoarding waste and this will be discovered eventually. RAA put this in the newsletter as people should regularly send waste for disposal. There are quite a lot of metals that should be disposed of. IAS mentioned recovery of palladium, platinum etc if people have industrial contacts. PAC mentioned waste in a glove box (which was from Peter Bruce's time) that is needing repaired before PAC can deal with this. RAA noted this and will deal with it over the summer.

**[Action: RAA]**

(c) Use and Disposal of Needles

The new policy came into force in January and at the March meeting it was relatively new. Now most groups seem to have fully adopted the new system and there have been no new incidents of needles being improperly disposed of. EZC mentioned that when he was doing the lab inspection it was noted that plastic syringes are being put in the sharps bin as well as the needles which is increasing the volume of waste. RAA stated that this is historical and on instruction from Fife Council. Under no circumstances should syringes appear in normal domestic waste. RAA said if appropriate he could contact EHSS to see if Fife Council would be willing to change this policy so that clean plastic syringes could be put out for recycling. We are charged for sharps removal by volume. EZC suggested syringes could be put in a separate bin from the sharps. RAA said some groups are already doing this. GM mentioned that Fife Council probably have this rule as they won't know when syringes might be contaminated (drugs, blood etc). RAA confirmed that we don't want to have biohazard materials in the plastic recycling. RAA would support making a change to the rules on this point but he will have to liaise with EHSS. Syringes might need a variety of destinations if they are not going in the sharps bin. MA stated that in Biology they do separate the needles from the syringes.

**[Action: RAA]**

#### **4. Annual Safety Inspections and Report (due date August 2017)**

Since the last meeting two teams have completed these. EZC and PAC inspected all parts of the Purdie Building and RAA and IAS inspected the Chemistry parts of BMS and BSRC buildings. RAA will provide an individual report to each supervisor to highlight anything needing attention. RAA put a summary in the newsletter and there are no major causes for concern. Things that are noted tend to be ongoing issues of general untidiness, flammable solvent storage and fire doors being propped open. The inspection was done efficiently by both teams and RAA proposed this system continue in the future. GM volunteered to flag up the problem of fire doors being propped open to the janitorial staff so they could act on this where appropriate. PAC said the provision of fire extinguishers was variable and some small rooms did not have an extinguisher in them. Sylvia mentioned this was a cost-saving measure where a fire extinguisher was provided in the corridor within a certain distance of the labs. PAC thought there should be an extinguisher in every chemical lab. RAA will look into this but there is a University Fire Officer who decides on the placement and number of extinguishers in the building. EZC didn't think this was consistent. RAA pointed out that the usage of rooms does change over time so perhaps this is the time for a survey/evaluation of this by the Fire Officer. RAA has one extra extinguisher so he can immediately replace one if it is used.

**[Action: RAA]**

#### **5. Earthing of metal frames with earth bonding clamps (BW)**

BW informed the committee that at the moment we have PAT testing every two years by a contractor and have internal PAT testing to test earthing on new equipment by Derek Waddell (DW) and anything that comes from outside/other departments should be also tested by DW. We have fixed wire testing for heavier duty items every two years by contractors. Several years ago there was an incident where a frame became live and it wasn't covered by any of these tests. It was equipment from the USA and was never earthed by the company. It was decided after a meeting with Estates that we would take care of that ourselves. A register was put together which is kept by DW and he started earthing all the metal frames in the same way as you would earth radiator and gas pipes. We put earth tags or clamps on a lot of the frames that had electrical equipment in them or cables on them and DW kept a register of this. BW thinks this should be periodically updated and added to. All these earths should be checked and BW feels this should be followed up. RAA wondered whose responsibility this is and BW thinks it is Estates who should cover all the PAT testing. People might not know that when new equipment comes in from outside that it should go to DW for testing before it is used. RAA said this is in the safety handbook but how is this enforced. CAG asked if there is a process to check that equipment is tested. BW said equipment can come in from the USA that doesn't comply with standards in Europe. BW adds an earth to heaters etc and clips it onto the metal work but often people take panels off instruments which are earthed and no one is checking if these panels are put back on. RAA asked if BW has any suggestions as he has highlighted this problem. BW thought that RAA should speak to DW and make sure these are looked at. BW said sometimes people buy in equipment themselves rather than through stores but anything new should be checked by the companies in any case. BW suggested that this register should be updated and MA thought perhaps a reminder should be put out to all supervisors. The

contractors are instructed to do it every 2 years and BW suggested that DW should also check everything every two years. BW did a lot of checking himself when the problem first occurred then DW took this on. RAA to speak to Alex Slawin (DW's line manager) and ask her to arrange for that to be a regular duty for DW.

[Action: RAA]

#### 6. **Earthing of Purification Systems (BW)**

BW wanted to point out that static can build up on these systems when you are doing purification with solvents and you need to have an earth on the actual containers and the system. The purpose of that is to bleed away the current so you don't get the static building up on any metal parts. BW stated that people were only earthing them as they saw fit but he asked for primary earths to be fitted. It is connected by the electrician back to a proper primary earth and this has been done. It was agreed that Estates would take over the integrity of these earths, ie you need to check the resistance and check you have a good connection as it can be bad if these things go wrong. These are the systems that Andy Smith uses that passes the solvent through a column and is a safe alternative to distillation. BW said they need to find out where they are. There is only a limited number of these (3) in Chemistry (plus one or two in Sasol) so this is a manageable job for Estates. There are bonding clamps to each vessel and this is a high tech piece of equipment which should be kitted out for earthing. CAG will be given a list of the location of these.

[Action: RAA/CAG]

#### 7. **AOB**

RAA noted that he would be attending the twice a year meeting of the BSRC safety committee the following day.

The next meeting of the committee would be in late August in time for the minutes to be discussed at the 4th September Staff Council meeting.

R A Aitken  
31.05.17