

UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

SCHOOL OF CHEMISTRY

*Minutes of the School Safety Committee Meeting held on  
Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> May at 14.00*

<b>Present:</b>	Alan Aitken [RAA]	School Safety Coordinator (Chair)
	Eli Zysman-Colman [EZC]	Deputy Safety Coordinator and Inorganic Representative
	Magnus Alphey [MA]	BSRC, X-Ray
	Paul Connor [PAC]	Physical
	Juan Carlos Penedo [JCP]	Laser Safety Officer
	Iain Smellie [IAS]	Teaching
	Terry Smith [TKS]	Biohazards Officer
	Brian Walker [BW]	Technical
	Carolyn Busby [CMB]	Secretarial
	Tommaso Di Rocco [TDR]	Research Officer (Earth and Environmental Sciences)
	Nick Taylor [NT]	(Janitorial representative)

1. **Apologies**

Andrea Burke, Chris Goodsell, Iona Hutchison, Garry Muir.

2. **Minutes of previous meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017 and matters arising**

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

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

(a) Record keeping, SharePoint

RAA reminded the Committee that SharePoint is an information system which is being rolled out throughout the University and the hope is to merge safety related records within the School of Chemistry with a more general record-keeping system which will replace the forms that new arrivals have to fill in. Fraser is making progress on this and the objective is to have the system in place by September so that all new people will log on when they arrive and we will be able to collate information eg what safety training each person has had, what courses they have attended etc. At that point the intention is to require everyone to take the on-line test which some people have never had to do.

**[Action: RAA/FK]**

(b) Roof fire replacement works

The work on the roof is essentially finished and the scaffolding will be taken down. The work has taken since last July to reinstate the fume cupboards which were damaged during the major fire. There are a few teething problems but the job is now finished.

4. **Register of gas monitors following incident on 27<sup>th</sup> September**

This followed on from a potential fluorine monitor emergency in Geosciences but there had never been fluorine in the building. RAA confirmed that every gas monitor around the building now has a clear notice beside it telling people what action to take in the event of an emergency. These have been designed using a standard template throughout the University. BW mentioned that he had brought this up before, regarding maintenance of these monitors. RAA confirmed that Estates took the list of the monitors and created a maintenance record and they have all the necessary information. These signs were implemented in January 2018.

5. **Number of out of hours access doors and sign in procedure**

At a previous meeting it was suggested that the Surface Science door would no longer be used as an overnight door and the lock was to be changed to cut down the number of places where people can enter the building out of hours. As far as RAA is aware that has not yet happened although it was endorsed by the School Council in December.

**[Action: RAA/CAG]**

**Roof access procedure**

Workmen have to get permission to go on the roof of the building and recently RAA removed a notice which was dated 2005 which is obviously completely out of date. RAA assumed that CAG has to be contacted if anyone wants to go on the roof but if he is absent then they go to the office. CMB explained that there is a form in room 214 which has to be completed when roof access is required and Linda keeps the roof key. RAA felt this needs to be tightened up as the form states that the person who signs it certifies that there are no toxic gases being released on the roof and it is safe to work there. EZC mentioned an email from CAG received during the meeting stating that he wanted to discuss related issues with RAA. BW stated that anyone who goes on the roof has to go through Estates/CAG. RAA said that you have to be sure no-one is using eg liquid ammonia as workers could be overcome. This is something that the Safety Coordinator used to do, then John Smith took over. MA suggested that an email should be sent round to check that it is safe for workers to be on the roof at a specific period of time. MA also felt that we would also need to be told when work had been completed. RAA will discuss this with CAG.

**[Action: RAA/CAG]**

6. **Survey of magnetic fields – 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017**

At the previous meeting, the inspection of magnetic fields had taken place but we were still waiting for the written report. The report subsequently detailed action that needs to be taken: lines to be painted on the floor, notices to be put up in ESR room etc. RAA needs to check that this is going to be done as the inspection was last November. BW asked if there is anywhere that the magnetic field affects the lab above. RAA stated that the inspector used a probe and that possibility should have been taken care of. He also said that there is no signage on the door of the ESR machine and signs were only put up for the NMR room and this needs to be addressed.

**[Action: RAA/CAG]**

7. **Procedure when lifts get stuck**

This was brought up at the BSRC Safety Meeting last week as within the BSRC building someone was stuck in the lift for several hours. There was a long discussion but the key point is that the suggestion was made that if the lift company gets a call to say that someone is stuck in the lift, they should immediately notify the out of hours office at the University. They currently don't do that. The lift company gets the message and despatches an engineer to fix it but if they notified the University then a janitor could be sent immediately. JCP was concerned that it took at least an hour for an engineer to come from Edinburgh. EZC wondered if we had a legal obligation to contact someone locally eg security at the University and MA agreed this was what was needed, perhaps an additional phone in the lift so that someone can be there quickly to reassure the person who is stuck in the lift. At the BSRC meeting it was agreed to try to get the lift companies in the University as a whole to agree to notify the out of hours office as soon as they get a call. CAG is to pursue this with Estates in order to get a uniform policy throughout the University. EZC felt it is incumbent on the University to have a way in which it can be notified separately rather than through an external agent. RAA felt we had to wait to see what progress CAG makes on this based on the suggestion at the BSRC meeting. RAA mentioned that the emergency notice in the lift may need to be modified once the new procedure is confirmed.

**[Action: CAG/RAA]**

8. **Revised occupational exposure limits from 21<sup>st</sup> August 2018**

RAA has to modify the CHARM database in August when the new limits come into force. There are no real significant changes. TKS suggested sending an email to Chemistry staff giving the new limits but EZC thought this should go in the newsletter or on the Safety website. RAA agreed he would notify people appropriately that these limits would be coming into force.

**[Action: RAA]**

9. **Annual Safety Inspections and Report (due date November 2018)**

The annual safety inspections are due to be done and the report is now due in November. RAA suggested the previous teams continue to do this and that they should be complete by the end of July. EZC/PAC will take half and RAA/IAS the other half.

The aim will be to get reports to supervisors as soon as possible once they are finished. Overall the teams should try to stick to breaches of the rules rather than just “not quite best practice”. There is a move within the University over safety to deconvolute policy vs. guidance and the safety handbooks are being gone through to sift out what is enforceable as opposed to just guidance/good practice. The University is consolidating its legal position so that rules can be enforced. Reports to supervisors should therefore concentrate on things that they have to do. EZC and PAC will do Purdie and RAA and IAS will do BMS + Annexe. RAA has pre-printed forms to issue.

10. **Policy on smoking near building entrance**

This arose as one of the ashtrays outside a door went on fire. This raised the question of where these ashtrays should be sited and EZC made the suggestion that there should be an exclusion zone so many meters from a building. RAA asked Paul Szawlowski about the legal situation for this and as long as it is in the open air and not surrounded by a building on 3 sides there is no restriction. There is no distance specified and this would be discretionary and there is no legal framework to enforce that. RAA wondered who would enforce this if there was a different rule for different buildings. It would be better if it was uniform. EZC stated that the site of the ashtrays influence where people go to smoke and the issue is that when you leave the building you will pass through people who are smoking and you are inhaling the smoke. In EZC’s previous office he could smell smoke from people smoking outside. TKS asked who should be emptying the ashtrays and RAA said this was Estates’ responsibility. They tend to go on fire if they haven’t been emptied. EZC pointed out that this is a separate point to where they should be sited. The siting is also Estates’ responsibility. If the School wants to implement a policy then they have to inform Estates what that will be. JCP said that smoking is not allowed at the front of the main BMS building entrance. The Medical Science Building has a policy that smoking is absolutely not permitted outside the front door of the building but this is not always respected. JCP pointed out that there are ashtrays immediately outside the three Chemistry entrances but for the BMS or BSRC entrances, they are sited a short distance away from the entrances. It was suggested that the former be moved so many metres away from the entrances and that this should be put forward to the School Council for approval and then put to Estates. MA asked if a shelter should be provided since one reason for smokers currently staying close to the entrances is to keep under cover when it is wet. EZC feels that this is a health issue not safety. First of all, a policy needs to be agreed at the School Council meeting and after that RAA will consult Chris and map out possible new locations for the ashtrays. EZC felt that the University should not be promoting smoking in any way including providing a shelter but it was pointed out that many companies do provide such a shelter as a facility for their employees.

**[Action: School Council, RAA/CAG]**

## 11. AOB

MA said that at the BSRC safety meeting it was raised that there had been several accidents with students and a technician being cut by needles when transporting them to a sharps bin and also a technician wiping a bench was cut by a scalpel. MA asked if there had been any further issues with sharps in Chemistry. RAA stated that there had been no other incidents and that the use of needles has dramatically fallen in Chemistry. The issue is really good practice as far as the needles are concerned and perhaps the sharps bin needs to be moved closer to where people are working.

RAA informed the committee that Angus Clarke the Director of EHSS has resigned and the post is being advertised. RAA then handed round a list that has been sent from EHSS of potential Safety Courses that are available in the coming year. This matter was raised at the PG committee a year ago as PG students wanted to know what courses would be available. Not all the courses are relevant but many of them would be useful. The timetable is a draft and could be altered to suit us if needed, however most of them are on a Wednesday afternoon which clashes with the School Colloquium and MA pointed out that this is the students' sports afternoon. RAA pointed out that these are optional, extra courses and that the School would be providing essential courses anyway. Many of these are open to the whole University so they could be vastly oversubscribed. EZC asked if they would be run through CAPOD and RAA said EHSS is planning to make use of PDMS for booking these courses which is new. RAA feels it is a good move and would like the Committee to agree on what courses would be of most use to Chemistry. COSHH and CHARM programme is already covered by our own course. Fieldwork is not relevant either and the provision and use of work and electrical equipment is more for use in workshops. RAA thinks all the others could be worthwhile. EZC questioned the late date for the laser safety course but JCP explained that for anyone working with lasers they are given an hour long DVD at the start that they have to watch and then they have to talk with him about laser use. These are courses on top of what is legally required of us. There was some discussion on the timing of the courses and how ideally they would all be at the start of the academic year but this wasn't practical and RAA felt they were educating people in a gradual way. RAA will respond positively to EHSS and thank them for the plan and indicate what would be relevant for the School of Chemistry. We should have a definite programme in place by September for new people starting. RAA will liaise with CMB in order to send out notifications about the courses.

**[Action: RAA/CMB]**

RAA wanted to notify people that the dangerous drugs precursor licence expired in April. Some of the chemicals were with PCJK and GJF now has them all in a secure location in his lab. It is very specific and you are not allowed to possess or use these unless you have the licence. DOH has to get a disclosure check again although by the time the licence is granted he will no longer be Head of School and the process will have to be done again with REM. This is expected to be granted in the next month.

RAA was notified of a student who was liable to take fits during their lab session and we were notified well in advance by Student Services and so we put as much in place

as we could so staff knew what to do in the event of something happening. RAA was contacted a few weeks ago by EHSS to ask about the student as there had been a breakdown in communications and there had been an incident. The student has non-epileptic fits – it is a rare syndrome. The student was upset as the ambulance was sent to the wrong building. It had gone to the Bute by mistake and the student went to student support who looked into this. The message is that if a student has an incident this should be a reportable accident and a form should be completed so we can keep track of this sort of thing. RAA says if an ambulance is ever called then this should trigger a report form so that we have statistics. IAS spoke to the student and there are known triggers, one of which is tiredness and being in a lab for 3 hours can cause problems. At the moment we are prepared for her to continue to Year 2 but RAA asked that any further incidents should be recorded. IAS thought that if first aiders were involved then it would be reported anyway but IAS didn't know which first aider intervened. There was only one incident in the whole year and IAS had approached the student to suggest moving her lab to the beginning of the week but she did not respond to this offer.

The next meeting will be in August and RAA suggested another virtual meeting as people may be on holiday at that time and it is difficult to get everyone together.

R A Aitken (31.05.18)