

Christmas preparations

Father Christmas is at his home at the North Pole making his final preparations for delivering this year's Christmas presents.....

This year he's registered on the University car share database (www.rucarsharing.com) to try and cut sleigh miles. As yet he has not found a match but he is hopeful as more people join the scheme he might have some success. He hadn't realised that the scheme also covered walking and cycling to work (Bike and WalkBUDi) so maybe he can change his travel routine and get some company.

His elves are busy loading the sleigh. They have been busy this year, but they have still found time to attend **manual handling** training and undertake **manual handling risk assessments**. In fact it has been so successful that they have made efficiencies in the loading operation and there has been a reduction in injuries and accidents.

He stands admiring his sleigh, no need for a 'no smoking sign' here as it does not have a roof and hence it doesn't count as an enclosed workplace. However his elves do find it quite chilly standing 10 metres away from the workshop, so many of them are planning to contact Occupational Health in the New Year to help give up smoking.

Once the team has finished their rounds, there is the annual Christmas party. Unfortunately due to changes in the tax regime this year, he has had to charge his elves for attending so that he can provide the alcohol. He's also realised that he has to apply to the local authority for a **temporary event notice**; he did think about just supplying hot



chocolate after 11pm, but that also required a licence! Oh well, just one of the minor inconveniences associated with 24 hour drinking.

Highlights 2007

The year started with a bad **January storm** that damaged trees and had slates flying off roofs round campus. One of the positives that came out of this was that senior management reviewed how well the situation had been handled. Timely communications with campus occupants was a problem area. With valuable input from the Business Continuity Manager, the University has now made good progress in improving systems for emergency communications across campus.

In March the Environment Agency made several recommendations for improvement in our management of

radioactive sources. This provided a reminder that working practices need to be reviewed from time to time to ensure that they remain 'best practice'. The majority of the EA's recommendations have been implemented, but this will be checked when H&SS audit the relevant School(s) in 2007/08.

In June, two inspectors from the HSE visited to follow up on the University's report of potential exposure to **asbestos**. The inspectors were satisfied with the University's plans for improvement. We are pleased to say that the last improvement action was completed when a seminar on asbestos awareness was held in November for AHSCs and technicians. For those of you who missed this, we will be planning to run similar sessions as a regular event in the future.

A continuing theme has been **road safety**. If you see an accident 'hot spot' please report it to Health and Safety Services so that the funding available for road improvements can be targeted at the highest risk areas. With this in mind, some further improvements are planned for the Pepper Lane entrance.

Xmas shopping

Only 14 shopping days to Christmas. Here are some ideas for 'healthy lifestyle' presents.

- Try a 'Mousebean' ergonomic hand rest (www.mousebean.com) for use at home or at work;
- A Respro Hi Viz Rucksack Cover will make cycling safer on these dark nights;
- SportsPark membership gives reduced rates for the Active Lifestyles and VO₂ programmes on offer.

Advice for a safe Christmas – take care, and enjoy yourself!

Over the Christmas and New Year period people spend more time at home and whilst people are celebrating with friends and family, fire risks increase. People are more likely to be distracted and therefore vulnerable to accidental fires.

By taking a few simple steps this Christmas, and following our tips below, the risk of fire around the home can be reduced, enabling everyone to enjoy a happy and fire safe Christmas.

Christmas tree safety tips

- ✓ Always choose a freshly cut tree. To test a tree, strike the stump down on a firm surface. If the needles fall off, the tree is too dry. Place the tree in a stand which can be filled with water. The tree could absorb as much as a gallon of water in the first day.
- ✓ Use wire or nylon cord to secure the tree to the wall or ceiling to prevent it from being knocked over by children or pets.
- ✓ Place the tree well away from sparks and open flame.
- ✓ Always keep the tree well watered. Check and refill often.
- ✓ Use only non-combustible decorations.
- ✓ Check and replace any worn or damaged light sets.
- ✓ Use BS approved lights and NEVER USE CANDLES!
- ✓ Disconnect lights at bedtime or when unattended.
- ✓ Use miniature lights that produce less heat.
- ✓ Ensure there is a working smoke detector installed in your home.
- ✓ Don't burn tree branches in the fireplace – they can throw off large amounts of heat, causing a fire. Christmas trees also produce oily soot which may damage the fireplace.

Decorative lights

- ✓ Check the maximum amps that can be handled by the fuse in the plug.
- ✓ If bulbs blow, replace them.
- ✓ Turn decorative lights off at night and when you go out.
- ✗ Don't let bulbs touch anything that can burn easily like paper or fabrics.

Candles

- ✗ Don't leave them unattended.
- ✓ Put them out completely at night.
- ✓ Keep them away from anything that can catch fire, like Christmas trees.
- ✓ Make sure they're in secure holders on a heat resistant surface.

Decorations

- ! Given half a chance, paper decorations will burn.
- ✓ Use your common sense and keep decorations and greetings cards away from heaters, lights, the fireplace and candles.

Parties

- ! The risk of accidents, especially in the kitchen, is greater after alcohol is consumed.
- ✓ Let your guests know where to find the door and window keys.
- ✓ Look out for elderly people, children and anyone with problems getting about.
- ✓ Make sure exits are kept clear.
- ✓ If people are smoking put out extra ashtrays and make sure all cigarettes are put out properly.
- ✓ Check that matches and lighters are not left lying around for children to play with.

Winter fire safety

Useful advice can be found at <http://www.firekills.gov.uk/leaflets/p>

df/english/firesafetywinter.pdf. This is particularly relevant to elderly relatives, friends and neighbours.

H&S audit programme

Health & Safety Services have started the 2007/08 audit programme. Relevant Heads of School/Directorate and AHSCs have been notified.

Those areas being audited are: Human & Environmental Sciences; Chemistry; ICMA; Biological Sciences; Construction Management; Psychology; Languages; FMD Projects Feasibility & Design; FMD Conference Office; Park Group Halls; Information Services (MERL).

If you're being audited, and even if you are not, key issues to think about are planning for improvement, risk assessment and training.

Safe & secure?

Have you checked that everything is off? Don't rely on anyone else.

DO IT "YOURS-ELF"!



Please help us to enjoy a safe and happy holiday by ensuring that your work space is safe and secure before you leave.

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