

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

University Health & Safety Executive Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the University Health and Safety Executive Committee
held on 5 March 2012.

Present: Mr K Sloan (Chair), Mr N Sanders, Professor M Shipman, Mr C Sury,
Mr D Wallis, Mr R Wilson

Apologies: Professor Stuart Croft, Mrs E Brown, Ms J Horsburgh, Mrs L McCarthy

In Attendance: Mr M Blair, Professor A Easton (for item 05/11-12), Mrs C Farren, Dr I
MacKirdy

09/11-12 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2011 should be
approved subject to the correction of the date to read:

05/11-12

(d) RESOLVED

(iii) '....at the meeting of the Committee in June 2012'

10/11-12 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

REPORTED:

No conflicts of interest were raised.

11/11-12 University Genetic Modification and Biosafety Committee

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Chair and the Secretary of the University Genetic Modification
and Biosafety Committee (GMBSC) on the meeting of the GMBSC held on 8
February 2012 (paper UHSEC 07/11-12), noting the GMBSC was now
established and was identifying priority issues for action with the Health and
Safety Department.

(a) Review of Schedule 5 Pathogens and Toxins

REPORTED: (by Professor A Easton)

That the requirements and recommendations for improvement identified during an enforcement agency inspection issued in December 2011 were being progressed.

(b) Health and Safety Executive Inspection September 2010 (Minute 05(c)/11-12 refers)

REPORTED: (by Professor A Easton)

That the GMBSC had received confirmation that the actions arising from the inspection had been completed.

(c) Biosafety and Genetic Modification Website

REPORTED: (by Professor A Easton)

That the GMBSC had noted and approved its terms of reference.

(d) Committee Process and Timescales

REPORTED: (by Professor A Easton)

That there were agreed processes, including on-line assessments between meetings of the GMBSC, in place for assessing and approving research projects and facilities and responding to principal investigators in a timely fashion.

(e) Project Assessment Update

REPORTED: (by Dr I MacKirdy)

That project assessments had been issued to principal investigators.

(f) New Containment Laboratory

REPORTED: (by Professor A Easton)

That the GMBSC had considered and approved with certain caveats the risk assessment of a new containment level 1 microbiological laboratory in the School of Engineering.

(g) New Project Proposals

REPORTED: (by Dr I MacKirdy)

That the GMBSC had approved assessments on submitted projects.

(h) Annual Review of Biosafety

CONSIDERED:

The Annual Review of Biosafety for 2011 by the Biosafety Advisor, Neil Hawthorne (paper GMBSC 12/11-12).

REPORTED: (by Professor A Easton)

That the programme of hygiene monitoring should be considered as an exemplar.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Committee approved the Annual Review of Biosafety for 2011 (paper GMBSC 12/11-12) as recommended by the GMBSC.
- (ii) That the GMBSC should lead the standardisation and dissemination of good microbiological practice, training and experience across the University taking account of the important roles of Departmental Health and Safety Committees and postgraduate research students in this process and good practice in other institutions.
- (iii) That the plan for implementation of the recommendations be reported to the Committee in October 2012.

12/11-12 University Health & Safety Committee

CONSIDERED:

A report from the Director of Health and Safety on the meeting of the University Health & Safety Committee held on 21 February 2012 (paper UHSEC 08/11-12).

(a) Driving on Business

REPORTED: (by Dr I MacKirdy)

That a working group had been convened to review the current practice and the development of a consistent, risk-based approach for monitoring driving mileage and hours.

(b) Annual Review of Incidents

CONSIDERED:

A review of incidents during 2011 (paper UHSEC 08/11-12).

REPORTED: (by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (i) That an all-time low number of incidents had been reported in the last year; slips and trips and lifting and handling incidents were the most significant incident categories.
- (ii) That Commercial Group were utilising incident data and were putting into place remedial measures to reduce their number.
- (iii) That staff would not notice any change in the reporting of incidents as the changes to RIDDOR in April 2012 only invoke changes to the way in which incidents need to be notified to the HSE; notably the change from an over 3 days incident will become over 7 days. The regulations will still require the University to maintain records for over 3 day incidents.
- (iv) That the incidence of student related RIDDOR incidents had fallen and was less than the norm for other institutions and there was confidence in the figures since the University relied not only on reporting by students but also by functions such as Security, the Students' Union, and others.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Health and Safety propose key risk indicators to use as proactive measures for demonstrating improvements in performance following the significant reduction in RIDDOR incidents.

(c) Annual Review of Fire Incidents

CONSIDERED:

A review of fire incidents in 2011 in light of benchmark information (paper UHSC 09/11-12).

REPORTED: (by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (i) That there were 14 fires including a significant fire in a bedroom where the smoke detector had been covered by the occupant and 2 cases of arson.
- (ii) That the significant proportion of false alarms had been associated with smoke from cooking in residences and these had been recognised as having a negative impact on occupants.

(by Mr R. Wilson)

- (iii) That the recorded number of fire alarm activations may be an under-estimate of the actual number in residences and in academic buildings.

- (iv) That reports of lack of hot water in some of the residences may be linked to the automatic shut off of the gas supply upon fire alarm activations.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Fire Safety Advisor seek confirmation from other sources including the Estates Office and the Residential Life Wardens Group about the number of fire alarm activations so that the Committee can have confidence in the statistics.
- (ii) That the benchmark of less than 20 alarms per 1000 detector heads in residential premises was endorsed by the Committee on the basis that they are so disruptive.
- (iii) That the Fire Safety Advisor carry out and review with the Residential Warden Liaison Group, the Commercial Group and the Estates Office a more detailed analysis of the fire incidents in residences in order to target specific areas for improvement.
- (iv) That an action plan be drawn up in conjunction with the Students' Union to identify ways to reduce the number of false alarm activations.

(d) Annual Health and Safety Report, 2011

CONSIDERED:

The Annual Health and Safety Report for 2011 from the Director of Health and Safety (paper UHSC 10/11-12, Revised).

REPORTED: (by Dr I MacKirdy)

That a detailed review of health and safety was in progress across the University involving the assessment of key hazards and highlighting management issues.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Health and Safety provide the Committee with a summary following the review of health and safety performance.

RECOMMENDED (to the Council):

That the Annual Health and Safety Report for 2011 be approved.

(e) UCEA Annual H&S Report and Action Plan

RECEIVED:

The UCEA Annual Health and Safety Report (paper UHSC 11/11-12) and Plan for 2011 (paper UHSC 12/11-12).

(f) Electronic Cigarettes

CONSIDERED:

A paper from the Director of Health and Safety on the impact of electronic cigarettes on the University Smoking Policy (paper UHSC 13/11-12).

REPORTED: (by Dr I MacKirdy)

- (i) That the Department of Health “is not aware of any evidence about the long-term safety of e-cigarettes and, as such, would suggest that consumers exercise caution.”
- (ii) That the use of these products undermined enforcement of the Smoking Policy by giving the impression that smoking was permitted and by discouraging people from challenging smokers
- (iii) That there had been an incident where fumes from electronic cigarettes had triggered the fire detector in a study bedroom.
- (iv) That the Students’ Union had been consulted and agreed that a change to the policy to incorporate electronic cigarettes was acceptable.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Smoking Policy be extended to prohibit the use of electronic cigarettes wherever smoking is prohibited as of summer 2012 on the basis that these new products did not provide recognised health benefits while introducing several negative consequences and in particular undermined the enforcement of the Smoking Policy.
- (ii) That the Director of Health and Safety revise the Smoking Policy for consideration by the Committee.
- (iii) That the Director of Health and Safety address communications relating to this change and ensure handbooks and other documents, hard copy or electronic be updated.

(g) Effectiveness of the University Health and Safety Committee

REPORTED: (by the Registrar)

That there was evidence that the University Health and Safety Committee was dealing effectively with the health, safety and welfare of staff.

13/11-12 Dates of Future Meetings

REPORTED:

That future meetings of the Committee will be held on 14 June 2012 at 11:30 in CMR 1.1, University House