

School Safety Committee meeting minutes
19/June/2012, Rm 223, 10 am

Present: Nikolaj Gadegaard, Tony Kelly, Chris Pearce, Douglas Irons, Scott Roy, Bill Monaghan, Peter Miller, Bernie Hoey, Margret Lucas, Andrew Glidle. Apologies: John Davies, Donald Ballance

1) Minutes of previous meeting

The previously circulated minutes were examined and there were no queries.

2) Matters arising from Marsh Consulting report

AG gave a brief description/background to the Marsh Consulting report that was received in April and circulated to the School management and safety committee. Selected items for attention formed item 3 of the agenda.

3) Main areas of concern in Marsh Consulting report (attached):

Establishing the availability of competent safety advice

AG pointed out that the report asked for himself and Doug Irons to go on an IOSH 'Managing Safely' course. AG pointed out that this might be distinct from a course in which people would acquire detailed knowledge of how to provide specialist safety advice in particular areas. There was some discussion of the safety competencies within the school – there are a wide range of activities covering different sorts of disciplines and whilst there is significant 'experience', there is less in the way of certificated competency (except in a few areas, e.g. gas handling). AG said that he would investigate what courses were available from, for example, the respective learned societies. Doug and Bill Monaghan were going/have now gone on a GU run IOSH course, AG will go on an externally run one later in the summer.

Set-up formal checklists/inspections of workshops and laboratories

The Marsh report noted that there was a need for regular inspections of laboratories and it was agreed that these had lapsed within recent years. There was some discussion as to whether the checklists should be short, and appropriate to the areas being inspected, or longer and more generic. The consensus was that a more generic list would be better (to accommodate new equipment/risks appearing in an area in between inspections). AG would work with Doug to compile a suitable list (templates for this already exist from previous EEE inspections).

The frequency of inspections/audits was discussed and it was agreed that there should be major audits annually, with smaller lower level/housekeeping inspections on a 1-2 monthly basis. The annual audit would be done by AG and Doug, with one other person from the area being inspected, and the more frequent lower level inspections would be done by one or two other people preferably from outside the area, with different people looking at different areas during the course of the year.

Update process for recording, reporting and investigating accidents

Doug has already updated the accident reporting procedure and AG will incorporate a more detailed description of what to do on the School Safety web pages. Chris mentioned that safety was now the first item on their weekly I&E management meetings and this had already provided a route to reporting accidents.

More clearly define roles of people in the safety organogram

AG will make this clearer in the School Safety Manual – in the previous safety committee meeting, this matter was discussed and the outcome incorporated into the current safety manual. Following questions arising at the ENE research meeting over the relative responsibilities of technical and academic staff when it came to ensuring safety in student laboratories, AG had contacted David McLean who had indicated that both were responsible through a delegated responsibility chain, but that since academics were the ones who had the greatest interaction with the students in terms of giving them instructions, they should be the ones who also pass on the safety information and training, or if they themselves are not able to do the training, arrange for it to be done by someone who is.

Record who has read safety documentation

There was a discussion as to how it could be best ensured that new (and existing) people had read the safety documentation. AG said that he had been in touch with the secretaries dealing with PhD admissions, and they were willing to add a short paragraph to the end of the Welcome letter, saying what new students should do in this respect, and asking them to get in touch with AG or Doug within a week of starting. AG was also exploring several ways of implementing a recording system with Billy Allen and this will be trialled when he returns from holiday. Chris suggested using Moodle and at the meeting AG expressed reservations about this in terms of it being an impersonal introduction to the department for new people. Subsequent to the meeting, it has been found that Health and Wellbeing now ask all new staff to do a Moodle safety quiz within three months of starting, however compliance with this has been extremely poor, despite several reminders.

Establish dates for reviewing Risk Assessments/CoP's/Safety Manuals

The dates of all the documents are recorded electronically, and should be reviewed at least every three years.

Safety induction for new staff/PhD students/undergraduate students/visitors

Doug indicated that there was already an induction program for technical staff and AG said that he would put together a similar list on the Safety website; Nikolaj described the process for PhD students and said he would provide the relevant forms/instructions. Subsequently two new people have arrived in the Bio labs on level 8 and so they provide the opportunity for AG to work through what forms need to be filled in and the step-by-step processes in the induction procedure. Tony queried how short term visitors to the department would be guided to the safety information and AG said that he would do a series of webpages for different categories of staff and ensure that these were publicized through division/group meetings as well as e-mails.

Regular inspection of workshops

This was covered in an earlier item, but workshops in particular were highlighted in the Marsh report as needing regular inspections. Peter subsequently suggested that a database could be compiled which would automatically generate reminders of when equipment needed to be inspected/maintained. This can be discussed with Doug at a later date.

Portable appliance testing

Doug reported that progress towards this is in hand

- 4) Laboratory and room safety inspections/Audit (Who should do this, what's involved and when)

There was a brief discussion of when this should be, and later in the summer (before term starts) was thought most appropriate.

- 5) Safety talks (Who and When)

AG had given a talk to new PhD students last year, and would do so again this year; he had offered to do a similar thing for the Singapore students, but was told that one had been organised by the academics involved. Scott confirmed that all EEE students got a safety talk at the beginning of their course and AG said that he had had several enquiries from academics about what they should do, and so there is an indication that a suitable 'safety' message/culture was in existence. AG would follow up to get more detailed information about what was done across the school before the new academic year.