

## ZONE OHS COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

All staff received an email on 22nd May calling for nominations for the election of employee representatives to all 12 of the University's Zone Occupational Health and Safety Committees for the 1st July 2006 to 30th June 2008 term. The nomination period closed on 2nd June 2006.

The number of nominations received exceeded the number of positions available in Zone 6, Zone 9 and Zone 12. As a result, online elections were held in these Zones to determine the filling of available positions. Results of the elections have now been posted on the OHSIM website (<http://www.usyd.edu.au/ohs/committees/Elections/Election06.shtml>). OHSIM welcomes the newly elected members and thanks those who have retired.

Following the election of employee representatives, OHSIM will review the employer representatives on all Zone OHS Committees. Recent changes in the organisational structure of the University are likely to result in some recommendations for changes to employer representatives.

Home pages detailing OHS Committee members and a coloured map showing the OHS Committee Zones are available online from [http://www.usyd.edu.au/ohs/committees/zone\\_com.shtml](http://www.usyd.edu.au/ohs/committees/zone_com.shtml).

## OHSRM PROGRAM SELF-AUDIT 2006

The 2006 ohsm Audit has been announced. This audit presents an opportunity for each department to showcase local OHS risk management activities and demonstrate improvements sought from the previous audit. Six months has been allowed for completion of the ohsm audit (from July to December), an increase from the three months for the previous audit. This is to provide Departments with the opportunity to juggle the timing of their audit with other competing work demands.

The audit has been modified to reflect feedback from the previous audit and improve the audit process to make it as painless as possible. Any such modifications had to be weighed against legislative imperatives and retaining enough consistency to allow bench-marking with previous audit results. The number of audit elements has been reduced from 12 to 8 to simplify the audit, avoid repetition and eliminate those elements that were not applicable to the majority of departments e.g. health monitoring.

In-house ohsm Auditors are again being nominated by Department Heads to assist auditing locally, although Departments with fewer than 10 employees have been offered external assistance to complete the audit. In-house ohsm Auditor training is being enhanced to give better guidance and practice in conducting the audit, interpreting the results

and judgment in scoring. Staff are requested to cooperate with their local ohsmr auditor during the audit process.

The significant changes in management structure across the University and associated reformations do present challenges to effectively completing the 2006 audit and bench-marking OHS performance over time. For guidance on the forthcoming ohsmr audit or any aspects of the ohsmr Program please contact OHSIM.

[http://www.usyd.edu.au/ohs/ohs\\_manual/ohsmr.shtml](http://www.usyd.edu.au/ohs/ohs_manual/ohsmr.shtml).

## FIRST AID POLICY & PROCEDURES REVIEW

OHSIM is now calling for comment on proposed revisions to the University's First Aid Policy and Implementation Procedures. The proposed new document is at [http://www.usyd.edu.au/ohs/docs/ohs/FIRST\\_AID-2006Draft.pdf](http://www.usyd.edu.au/ohs/docs/ohs/FIRST_AID-2006Draft.pdf).

Please make your comments in writing to Leanne Mumford, Senior OHS Officer, OHSIM, K07, email [lmumford@usyd.edu.au](mailto:lmumford@usyd.edu.au), by Friday 28th July 2006.

## STAYING HEALTHY IN WINTER

Colds and flu are common illnesses people experience in winter months. There are some simple things everyone can do to help stay healthy in winter. You can help your immune system by:

- getting plenty of sleep - 7 to 8 hours each night
- exercising regularly unless you are sick
- drinking lots of fluids and eating well-balanced meals
- avoiding close contact with cold and flu sufferers
- getting the flu vaccine if you are in a high risk group.

You can minimise transmission of colds and flu to others by:

- washing your hands regularly to reduce infection
- covering your nose and mouth with a tissue or handkerchief when you cough and sneeze
- staying at home and keeping away from crowded places if you are sick
- going to your doctor if you are sick.

To recover as quickly as possible from colds or the flu, stay at home, get plenty of rest and drink plenty of fluids. Treat the symptoms if you are unwell. Over-the-counter cold remedies, pain relievers and decongestants are often helpful in making you feel better. Antibiotics usually don't help with colds and flu, which are caused by viruses. Antibiotics may be prescribed for bacterial infections.

For further health promotion information see the NSW Health Department website <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/topics/index.html>.

## ALUMINIUM ALLOY SCUBA CYLINDERS ALERT

Worksafe Western Australia issued a safety alert in March 2006 concerning SCUBA gas cylinders made of an aluminium alloy (AA6351) after one exploded due to sustained load cracking.

The University's Diving Safety Officer has recommended that all aluminium alloy SCUBA cylinders produced before 1991 be removed from service and replaced as a precaution to minimise the risk of failure and consequent injury, death or property damage.

For further information, contact Kate Stuart, Diving Safety Officer, ext 14062, email [k.stuart@unsw.edu.au](mailto:k.stuart@unsw.edu.au) (Kate occupies a joint position with University of NSW).

## GUIDELINES FOR ROOM HEATERS

The University recognises that, in buildings where air conditioning systems are not installed, room heaters may be required for thermal comfort during cool periods. Room heaters must be safe to use, taking into account the characteristics of the area to be heated and the activities conducted in the area. Heaters must be properly maintained and must be removed from service if not in good working order. Heaters with open flames or exposed elements capable of igniting fires are considered unsafe and must not be used. Existing heaters of these types must be progressively replaced with safer types. Floor model bar radiators are prohibited from use in any situation. Heaters must not be used in flammable atmospheres or near highly flammable materials where there is a likelihood of ignition.

The University has a commitment to energy efficiency. Considerations of energy efficiency and heating effectiveness shall be taken into account when selecting room heaters for a particular application. Room heaters shall not be used in air-conditioned areas during normal working hours when the air conditioning is functioning. The use of localised heating devices interferes with the effective operation of the air conditioning system.

Guidance on selection of safe and effective room heaters at the University is available on the OHSIM website at <http://www.usyd.edu.au/ohs/policies/ohs/heaters.shtml>.

## CHEMICAL & BIOLOGICAL LAB SECURITY

Because of the safety and security risks associated with hazardous substances, dangerous goods and biological materials, access to areas where these are stored and used must be restricted and limited to only those persons having a legitimate purpose. Local security procedures must be appropriate to the risk associated with the chemicals and biologicals stored and processes carried out, the location of the facility and the likelihood of mischief or sabotage.

Following is a summary of the general principles.

- Chemicals and biologicals must be stored in areas that are locked when unattended.
- Hazardous Area Signage must be displayed at the access doors to areas where chemicals and biologicals are used.
- Only those with a legitimate purpose should be permitted access to areas where chemicals and biologicals are used or stored.

- Strangers should be politely challenged - "can I help you?"
- Suspicious circumstances should be reported to Security Services immediately and prompt a review of stocks.

## CERTIFICATES OF COMPETENCY TO OPERATE MACHINERY, ETC AND "GREEN CARDS"

If you have a licence to operate certain equipment that was issued by NSW WorkCover before 1996, you may need to convert your licence to a national certificate of competency. This includes licences to operate cranes, forklifts, front end loaders, etc. Scaffolders' licences are also affected. After 30th June 2006 the old licences will no longer be recognised. Further information is available on the WorkCover website at <http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/OHS/ManagingSafetyRisks/CertificatesofCompetency/default.htm>.

Corporations may lodge bulk applications on behalf of their employees. Details about lodging bulk applications can be obtained by ringing the "Certification Hotline" on 02 4321 5497.

Note also that if you had a "Green Card" construction induction certificate issued before 29th March 2004, that certificate is no longer valid. Unless you converted your "Green Card" before 29 March 2006, you will need to undertake new training to qualify for a new certificate. See the WorkCover website at <http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/FAQs/Industry/OHSInduction/default.htm> for further information.

## LOCAL OHS INDUCTION FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

Staff and students should receive a structured induction to the space within which they will work or study. This should include:

- emergency procedures and exit routes
- hazards of the workplace
- mechanisms for reporting OHS issues of concern, incidents and hazards, etc.

Local inductions should be a systematic aspect of starting new staff or students in a workplace, and should be given within the first week. A satisfactory level of understanding should be confirmed via set questions and records of the local OHS induction training should be kept. The induction training must take into account the competence, experience and age of the new employee. Task specific OHS training may also be needed, depending on the activities to be undertaken.

Local induction should be supplemented by more general orientation for new staff. On-line resources for orienting and inducting new staff can be found at [http://www.ssdu.usyd.edu.au/orientation/orientation\\_vcs\\_welcome.shtml](http://www.ssdu.usyd.edu.au/orientation/orientation_vcs_welcome.shtml).

Address Label

This and other OHSIM Newsletters are also available on our website at [www.usyd.edu.au/ohs/news.shtml](http://www.usyd.edu.au/ohs/news.shtml).