



Safety Newsletter

April 2024

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Safety Office General Updates

Events

You can now find our upcoming events on the main page of the Safety Office website below 'Quick Links'. On each event page you can find the location, date and time. Contact and booking details are included on each page for your enquiries.

Teams

There is a new teams channel set up for DSOs hosting networking, sharing of information and peer to peer support. Presentation slides from the DSO networking events are also placed in the files on this channel for future reference.

To join the channel: UoC_DSO SafetyNet please contact safety.training@admin.cam.ac.uk.

Safety Management System Project

At the DSO event this week we mentioned progress with the Managing Safety IT project, and we had a good attendance at the Show and Tell session later in the week where we saw the progress that is being made. If you did not receive an invite to the Show and Tell session and would like to in future, please email Harry Worsnop - hw683@cam.ac.uk.



Safety Office Staff Updates

Recruitment: The Safety Office has been actively recruiting to a number of positions, some new and others to fill vacancies.

The December Safety Newsletter (page 3) provided information about our plans to recruit three new three-year fixed term **Senior Safety Outreach Advisors**. Towards the end of February we conducted interviews for these positions and offers have been made to two candidates.

The role of **Assistant Radiation Projection Officer**, advertised before Christmas, remains unfilled. Brian Sullivan's retirement from his role as QA Technician provides this team the opportunity to embark afresh on recruitment to this section.

Currently we are considering how to progress the role of **Safety Support Assistant - Biological** that was advertised early this year.

At the end of 2023, we advertised for a **Safety Support Assistant – electrical and mechanical**. Possibly, due to current demand for these skills in the building industry, we failed to fill this role. The expertise within this team continues to evolve so we plan to re-advertise seeking a candidate with broad health and safety experience.

The role of **Safety Auditor**, two-year fixed term, remains unfilled and finally, interviews will take place shortly for the **Head of the Safety Office**.

We were delighted that joint funding with the West Cambridge Sharing Project meant we could extend Sara Green's fixed term contract for another 12 months. Sara is our **Digital Content Designer** and is responsible for all the excellent new on-line training modules that we hope you are enjoying.

Farewell:

- Brian Sullivan retires at the end of March after 18.5 years of service in the radiation team.
- Anne-Marie Farmer will be retiring at the end of March. We thank both and wish them happy and long retirements.

New arrivals: John Dalton joined the Safety Office to bridge the period between when Anne-Marie Farmer leaves and a new Head of the Safety Office is appointed. To ensure a smooth and effective handover, John joined the Safety Office at the start of February 2024.



Safety Office Training Information

Since our last Safety Newsletter, the Safety Office has launched three new online courses:



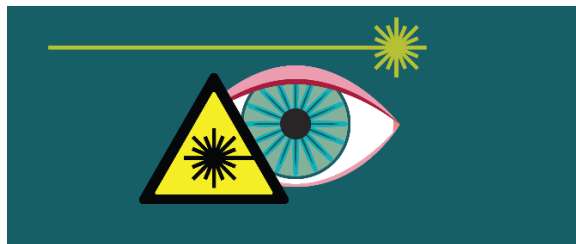
Introduction to risk assessment

This course looks at the principles of risk assessment, defining key terms, outlining the 5 steps to risk assessment, and explaining why risk assessments are important to our work in the University.

Introduction to laser safety

An overview of laser safety, designed to complement practical instruction given on the use of specific equipment.

This course looks at the properties of laser radiation, the hazards that can arise, and how we can be safe and compliant when working with lasers at the University.



Introduction to working safely with X-ray generators

An introduction to safe working with fully enclosed X-ray generating equipment, designed to complement practical instruction given on the use of specific equipment.

This course looks at the risks to health of exposure to X-ray radiation, how work with X-rays is regulated under UK law and University arrangements, and typical control measures put in place to reduce the risks and ensure your safe work with X-ray equipment.



All online courses can be booked on UTBS, where you will also find a full list of objectives for each course.



Physical Safety

Travel Safety

The pilot of **Peregrine Foresight** (for pre-travel risk assessments) has now been running in Archaeology, Education, Engineering, Law and Materials Science & Metallurgy since November. We have learned a lot about how the system operates, and about the variety of attitudes to travel risk amongst colleagues using the system. In response to feedback, we've been working on these actions over Lent Term:

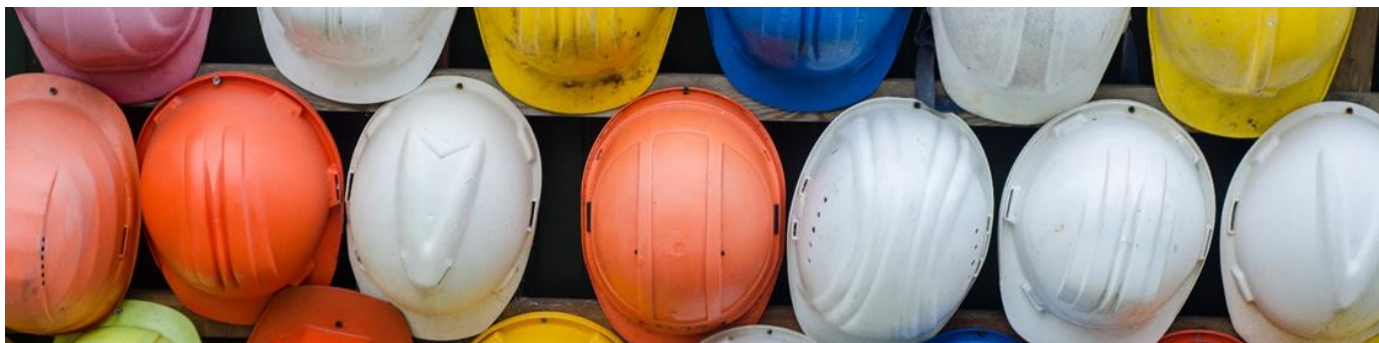
- Revising the risk assessment templates within Foresight for Conference trips (and similar non-practical activities) and Fieldwork. The new trip types will go live in the system before Easter;
- Working with Peregrine to get some key developments made to the system so it is easier to use and better meets our requirements;
- Developing communications materials to support departments when implementing Foresight. These focus on messages to explain why pre-travel risk assessment is important, that the University has a duty of care to help staff and students be as safe as possible when travelling, and the benefits to travellers of planning a safer trip.

The Heads of Institutions briefing on 17 April will include a presentation on travel safety and risk management to outline Heads of Departments' responsibilities and allow for questions and discussion. Following this, there will be further communication with the departments who are preparing to implement following completion of Approvers training in the autumn.

A Travel Incident Management Plan has also been in development this year and we are hoping that Health & Safety Executive Committee will sign off the final version at its meeting this month. This plan outlines how we will respond when an emergency situation arises affecting travellers on University business. Departments have a role to play in this plan and further briefing will take place in Easter Term.

Contact:

- Gillian Weale, Head of Helpdesk Operations
and/or
- Andrea Eccles, Head of Physical Safety



Physical Safety

Safety Alert for Gas Regulators

It has come to the attention of the Safety Office that members of the University have received an email from Swagelok informing them that they can refurbish Swagelok gas regulators themselves with the use of a kit they offer for sale. The email contains a link to a YouTube instructional video showing how you can do this.

We are advised by BOC that you **MUST NOT** attempt to refurbish your own regulators, by performing this task you become liable as the manufacturer of the regulator, should it fail in any way and cause injury. You have to be able to prove to be a competent person in refurbishing regulators to perform this task.

It must also be noted that BOC or any other regulatory inspection body will not perform statutory inspections of regulators that have been serviced or refurbished by non-competent persons, and therefore would advise that the regulator is replaced before inspection can occur.

If you have any concerns relating to the above please contact the safety office for further advice.

British Engineering Inspection asset stickers

As part of the BES contract, and to help users identify if a pressure asset has been correctly inspected in accordance with the statutory inspection time frame the BES engineer should be placing a sticker on the asset to confirm the date of last inspection and when it is next due. We are aware that this has not occurred on some recent inspections. Can we ask that you check pressure assets within your dept. that fall under the Pressure System Safety Regulations to look for this inspection sticker and let the Safety Office know if these are missing? This will then be addressed directly with BES.

Provision of DSE equipment

At the recent DSO Update event, questions were raised regarding the provision of DSE equipment for those partaking in hybrid working, in particular whether the department has to fund and supply DSE equipment to a home working environment. The University's Hybrid Working Policy (<https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/policies-procedures/hybrid-working-policy>) explains that the University supplies individuals with a core set of IT equipment (a laptop,



Physical Safety

Provision of DSE equipment



headset, keyboard and mouse for use both in the University workspace and in the remote working environment, with access to the use of a docking station and monitor in the University workspace). However, 'as a standard practice, equipment will not be duplicated for hybrid workers unless part of reasonable adjustments to support those with disabilities and long-term health

conditions, but Institutions are strongly encouraged to provide further equipment, such as a monitor, if resources are available to do so.'

The policy also states that it aims to enable staff to work in this way if their role allows for such working and they wish to do so. The employee, if making a choice to work away from University premises, and therefore in line with the guidance that compliments the Policy they have to ensure that their chosen workspace is safe and secure, adequate in terms of space, lighting and appropriate for their tasks. To help assess this, they are asked to complete an assessment of their workstation as described in the Display Screen Equipment Policy <https://www.safety.admin.cam.ac.uk/system/files/hsd005p.pdf>

If sufficient requirements cannot be met in the home environment and issues have been raised during the assessment process then it may not be suitable for this individual to work away from University premises and they will need to come and work back in the department where the correct equipment must be provided.

April is Stress Awareness Month

April is Stress Awareness Month and the HSE have launched their 'Working Minds Campaign' inviting employers and managers to focus on one of the campaign's 5 steps for each of the 5 weeks (the 5 Rs):

- **R**each out and have conversations
- **R**ecognise the signs and causes of stress
- **R**espond to any risks you've identified
- **R**eflect on actions you've agreed and taken
- **M**ake it **R**outine





Physical Safety

More details can be found here [April is Stress Awareness Month](#)

The Safety Office would like to bring this worthwhile campaign to the attention of all departments and institutions.

WEEE Waste

The Safety Office has been informed that some departments are not safely disposing electrical items (e.g. laser equipment left outside for waste collection). **All equipment for disposal must have their electric cables and plugs cut off** to eliminate the possibility of a person using unsafe equipment.



Estate Safety

Asbestos, Fire and Water Safety – A general overview from the Estate Team

The Asbestos, Fire and Water Safety Teams are located within Estates Division and provide expert advice and guidance to the University community, supporting compliance across the entire Estate.

The **Fire Safety** Team is responsible for providing advice and support in all areas of fire safety. This includes but is not limited to; auditing of departments, facilitating visits from Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue service, management of the Fire Risk Assessments program, conducting post risk assessment follow ups with departments, arranging fire safety training, and advising on any building works from a fire safety perspective. We are also responsible for ensuring our Service Provider is maintaining all our fire safety systems across the Estate.

For updates from the Fire Safety Team, please see the dedicated **Fire Safety Section** of this Newsletter.



A new University **Asbestos** Policy is being drafted following initial stakeholder engagement. Further and wider engagement with Departments is proposed this Spring once the draft is complete, to maximise the balance between compliance and operating the University's Estate.

Similarly, the Local Asbestos Management Plan (LAMP) template is being rewritten ahead of estate wide engaging with each department to discuss local arrangements to translate the University's overarching policy into operational procedures and management. The intention is to start meeting Departmental asbestos coordinator(s) from summer 2024 to review existing arrangements and help develop a new LAMP.

E-Learning and bespoke face-to-face asbestos training is being designed for roll out later this year to meet legislation, raise asbestos awareness and underpin asbestos management.



A new University **Water Safety** Policy is being drafted and reviewed in stages. This will be augmented by an organisational Water Safety Plan, Procedures, and a review of the Management Responsibility structure.



Estate Safety

The Legionella training programme continues to be a great success story and offers different levels of City & Guilds accredited sessions aligned with roles and responsibilities and raises awareness in water safety. All training courses are available to all University staff.

Further details of this can be found via our Water Safety Community [Viva Engage page](#) or via our Water Safety Website.

Please contact us for advice, guidance and support:

Fire: E: UniversityFireSafety@admin.cam.ac.uk

W: www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/em/safety/fire/

Viva Engage: [Viva Engage - Fire Safety Community \(yammer.com\)](#)

Asbestos: E: AsbestosManagement@admin.cam.ac.uk

W: <https://www.em.admin.cam.ac.uk/what-we-do/estate-operations/health-safety/asbestos>

Water: E: EMWaterSafety@admin.cam.ac.uk

W: <https://www.em.admin.cam.ac.uk/what-we-do/estate-operations/health-safety/water-safety>

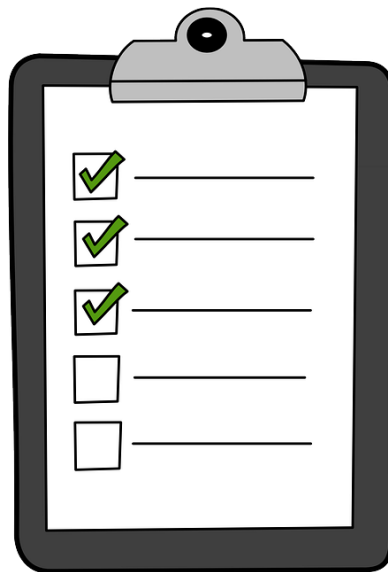
Viva Engage: [VivaEngage – Water Safety Community](#)



Fire Safety

The Fire Safety Team are currently in the process of delivering a **new Fire Safety Policy** which has been reviewed by the Enforcing Agency and the Health and Safety Executive. We have also obtained valuable feedback from departments before presenting the policy for committee approval. The new policy will help strengthen the importance of fire safety and make everyone aware of their roles and responsibilities.

Future developments will include the completion of numerous **Compartmentation surveys** across the Estate which will lead on to a remedial fire stopping project to improve fire containment. In addition, we are entering into a long-term **maintenance plan for fire alarm system** replacement and upgrading.





Accidents / Incidents Section

Springtime! – Time to repair, clean and tidy

With the long and wet winter almost over, now is a good time to make sure that areas on the outside of departmental buildings are in good condition and are safe to use. The following areas could have been affected by the winter and might be in need of maintenance and housekeeping:



- Paths around buildings, in particular those that get little daylight
- Bike sheds
- Underpasses
- Court yards
- Areas for waste collection and pick-up
- Outside stairs
- Trees – fallen/broken branches?
- Overflowing/damaged gutters
- Leaf/rubbish piles in corners
- Outside seating furniture

If the department does not have its own facilities team that can remedy an issue, get in touch with the maintenance team of the Estates Division (via the Helpdesk). They will be able to assist.

Waste Disposal



The Safety Office has been made aware of an incident where it appears that lab waste products were spilt on the ground outside near drains (see image).

Please make sure that where a spill does occur (e.g. because of a torn waste bag) that all items are safely picked up and disposed of in compliance with the department's waste stream.



Accidents / Incidents Section

How am I supposed to know? – Use of the DSO Questionnaire for AssessNET

We have received feedback from a few Departmental Safety Officers (DSO) and First Aiders that they have difficulties in knowing the answer to questions in the online accident/incident reporting system AssessNET during submission.



Some of you might not know that the Safety Office has a Word document available containing the questions that are asked within the AssessNET accident/incident module. The document is called ***'Further Questions by the DSO for Portal Users'***. The completion of the form helps the person submitting the information on AssessNET and can be added to the incident record as an attachment.

How the form can be used:

- The form can be made available to a First Aider assisting an injured or a person (being unwell), a witness or the person involved in an accident or near miss.
- Completed forms should be sent to the DSO for them to fully complete the incident report on AssessNET.
- Please complete sections of the AssessNET by copying/pasting text into the relevant fields – do not refer to the attached form alone. The information will otherwise not be available in a downloadable format of the accident report.
- For auditing purposes: attach completed form to the incident record.

The DSO Questionnaire is available on the Safety Office Accident/Incident webpages:
<https://www.safety.admin.cam.ac.uk/subjects/accidents-and-incidents/report-accidentincident>



Accidents / Incidents Section

How to deal with suspect packages and letters?



The Accident/Incident team has received recently two incident reports where departments received suspect packages and letters. The Safety Office has a dedicated guidance leaflet for 'Dealing with Suspect Letters and Packages'.

The guidance is currently under review due to it being a few years old, but the advice within is still valid.

It is available on our website here:

<https://www.safety.admin.cam.ac.uk/system/files/hsd102m.pdf>

AssessNET – Issue of Gender

Some First Aiders have raised the issue of having to declare on AssessNET the gender of the injured person and reported feeling uneasy having to ask for this information. Some of the injured individuals also are reluctant to be put into the binary male/female category.

We have looked into the possibility whether we could introduce the option 'rather not say' within the software, but unfortunately, the selectable options are 'hardwired' into AssessNET and therefore can't be changed. Riskex (the manufacturer of the software) explained to us that the software has to be compliant with H&S law. Under the RIDDOR reporting requirements to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) the question of gender is asked (male/female) and is part of the mandatory question set on the submission page on the HSE website. We in the Safety Office would like to assure you that we do not use data in relation to gender. Departments (and the injured person) can select what they feel to be the most appropriate answer when reporting certain injuries. We are happy for First Aiders choosing not to ask this question at all when dealing with the injured person having sustained minor (non-reportable) injuries. However, if the injury is reportable under the RIDDOR regulations, then a choice must be made. The DSO should then explain to the injured person why the question is asked and that the choice is left to the injured person.



Accidents / Incidents Section

AssessNET – QR barcodes



We are currently finalising leaflet designs as part of our '**See It, Say It, Report It**' campaign. AssessNET linked QR barcodes will be made available on safety leaflets that can be displayed on notice boards in tea rooms, store/goods-in areas and lab/office areas.

The purpose of this capability is for staff and students being able to use their smart phones to submit an incident via the Portal on AssessNET. The use of QR codes for incident reporting requires us to be mindful and careful in the use of the code so that the QR code can't be used for criminal activities. It is important that the QR code is only accessible for staff and students and not members of the public. We want to avoid that criminals are sticking another (unsafe) QR code on top of the 'original' code, thereby creating a link to unsafe webpages/web addresses.

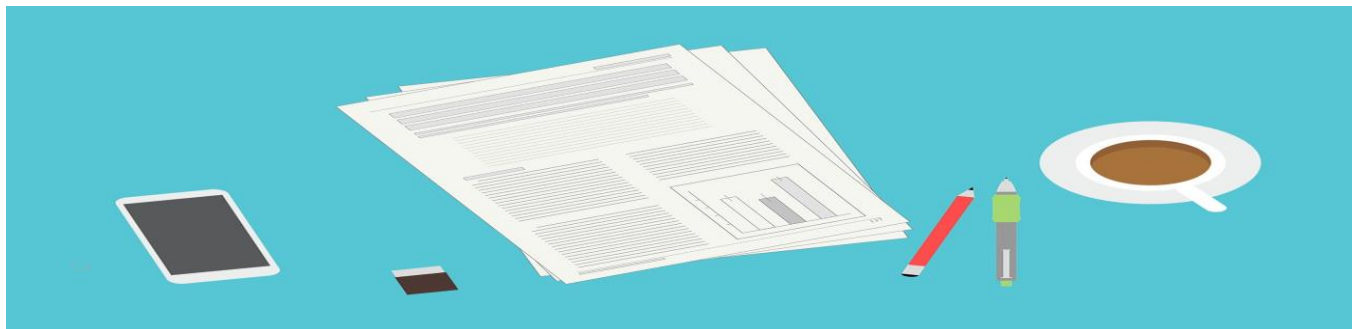
Once the leaflets are finalised, we will send some templates out to our DSO alongside some guidance in how to use these safely.

AssessNET – Lost Time analysis



Various University Safety Sub-Committees are taking an interest in 'lost time' analysis (absence from work) as a result of work-related injuries and illness.

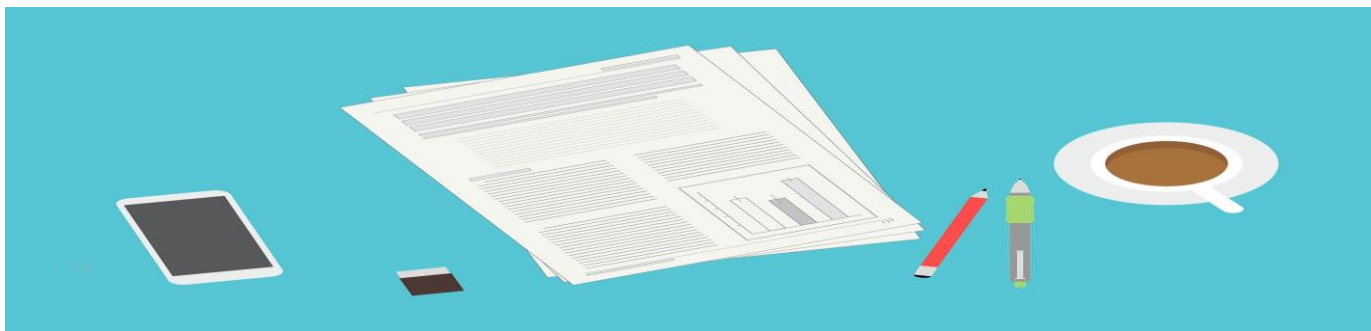
We would be grateful if registered users of AssessNET (DSOs, Departmental Administrators or other registered users) could please record absences from work if they are the result of a work-related injury or illness.



Audits Section

Update from the Auditing Team

Over 20 departments...	have welcomed us for a Safety Management Audit since we started in 2023. Thank you!
15 more departments...	are scheduled in soon.
Reaction to our auditing is positive...	because we aim to help departments from inside the University. We are hearing good word is spreading within Schools. We are always happy to listen to your feedback too.
Are you available between May and July 2024?	We are looking for more audits to be booked in between May and July, so please reach out to Jo (one of our Safety Coordinators) if this might work for you. Dates have been booking up fast. We will be visiting all of you during our cycle.
Have we visited you already?	We look forward to our six-month catch up and continue to encourage you to reach out to us for any more advice, support or questions you may have.
Who are we?	Mhairi Smeeton or Rory Feilen will lead your audit. Jo Mhishi may join to support and will be your key contact during planning.
What have we learnt?	Learning opportunities from the audits are tailored to you as a department, but we are starting to see hints of some early trends. We will share these when more audits have been completed.



Audits Section

Workshop Audits: 2024

A message for DSO's and Workshop managers/supervisors.

We are intending to start a review of the workshop audits carried out by the Safety Office in 2022/23.

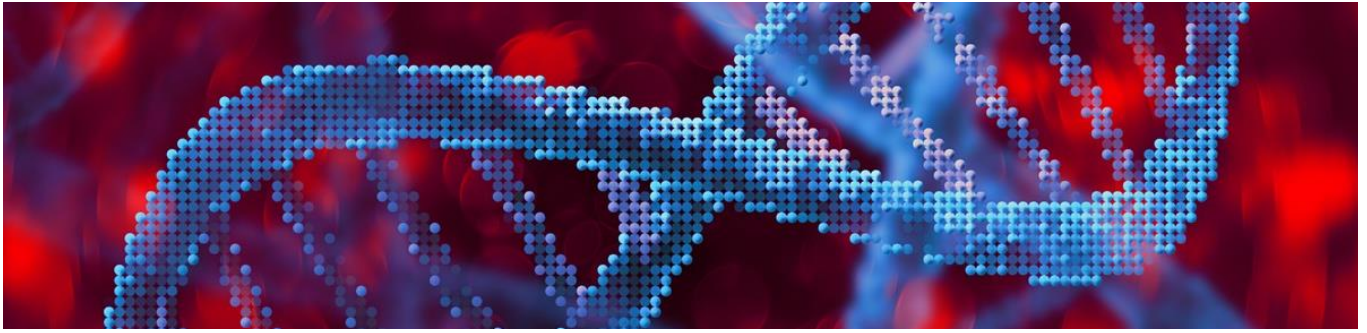
The intention is to review these every 2 years to help ensure continued legal compliance with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) and to capture any new equipment that may have been acquired since the last audit.

We will be contacting departments to arrange a mutually agreed time to do this.

Some workshops have only just been audited and others are undergoing great change or moving to another location, these reviews will not apply to these departments and you may have already been contacted by the Safety Office to discuss reviews for these areas already.

The purpose of this first review will be centred on the actions points raised at the audit and if these have been completed, if actions remain open we will be reviewing reasons for none completion and if further help is required.

Departments will be contacted by Neil Stanford (neil.stanford@admin.cam.ac.uk).



Biological Safety

Focus on Autoclaves

One focus of the biosafety team this year will be on **autoclaves**. Are we using them correctly? Are we sure they work as intended? Are training, servicing and maintenance up to scratch? Do we have all the records to prove the above?

Step one of our campaign is a **survey** sent to BSOs to catch all departments undertaking biological work. If your department/institute is inactivating biological waste and wasn't included, do contact us. The results of the survey will be used for step two: to shape the review of our guidance on autoclaves.

The results will be discussed further at the **BSO update event** on the 7th of May at the Sainsbury labs, 10am. Save the date, invites to BSOs & Co. to follow!





Chemical Safety

Explosives Pre-cursors and Poisons

Changes to the Control of Explosives Pre-cursors and Poisons Regulations 2023 came into force on 1st October 2023 which not only introduced new substances to the lists of regulated explosives precursors and poisons but placed an onus on the chemical supplier to verify the legitimacy of the professional user or business and to repeat this process every 18 months. This is not done centrally but at a departmental level as the department is receiving the chemicals.

Concern has been raised by some departments about staff giving their personal information to suppliers as the Regulations require suppliers to verify the details of the person ordering the substance. The legislation does permit the use of business ID cards, but the Safety Office understands that several departments have been challenged by Suppliers if staff have used their University Card. This is probably due to the fact that some cards do not have the individuals name in full. If this has happened in your department then we would like to know.

For details on the legislation please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supplying-explosives-precursors/supplying-explosives-precursors-and-poison>

For a comprehensive list of chemicals covered by the legislation please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supplying-explosives-precursors/supplying-explosives-precursors-and-poison#chemical-list>

University Hazardous Substance Risk Assessment Form

We are in the process of revising the University Hazardous Substance Risk Assessment (CoSHH) form to make it more user friendly.

If you would like to have input or would be keen to give feedback, then please contact Margaret Glendenning at chemicalsafety@admin.cam.ac.uk.



Radiation Safety

Two new online course were developed for radiation safety:

- Introduction to laser safety
- Introduction to working safely with X-ray generators

Further details are in the **Safety Office Training Information** section of the Safety Newsletter.