



EDUCATION SAFETY NEWS



January 2002

News from HSE's Education Services Advisory Committees

Welcome Back

It is some time since our last newsletter (formerly called ESAC News) appeared.

Education Safety News describes the work of HSE's ESACs (our Education Services Advisory Committees) and will include items on related health and safety topics. It is for anyone in education with a role to play in health and safety.

This edition is only being sent by email to interested parties - we are relying on you distribute it further.

If you would like to receive future issues directly, please contact the Secretariat. We hope further issues will also appear on HSE's website.

New Advisory Committees

The *Health and Safety Commission* has reconstituted its Advisory Committees (ACs). The ACs allow HSC/HSE to consult with employer and employee representatives about health, safety and welfare. Other interested parties are also represented, for example Governor and Parent Teacher Associations and government departments.

There are now two ACs covering education:

- **Schools Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)**
- **Higher and Further Education Advisory Committee (HIFEAC)**

Their predecessor, the Education Services Advisory Committee (ESAC), played an important role in directing HSE's work programmes and developing guidance. We hope the new Advisory Committees will be more active in setting the agenda for health and safety in education, in the delivery of programmes and

prompt stakeholders to take action to improve standards on the management of health and safety in schools, colleges and universities.



SEAC/HIFEAC Open Meeting 7 March 2002

Our next meeting will be a joint OPEN MEETING. It will be held on 7 March 2002 at NASUWT's Training and Conference Centre, Hillscourt Education Centre, Rednal, Birmingham. There will be a discussion of the draft workplans developed by both ACs. Those attending will have the opportunity to ask questions. It would be helpful to have advance notification of your questions.

We are keen to invite all relevant stakeholders.

If you wish to suggest an organisation that should be invited please let the Secretariat know.

Responsibilities for Health and Safety in Schools

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has recently issued:

Health and Safety: Responsibility and Powers (DfES/0803/2001)

This has been sent to all Local Education Authorities and all Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors.

The document confirms the legal responsibilities for health and safety in schools of all types (both community/voluntary controlled schools and independent schools). The document provides important advice on school funding arrangements and the LEA's or other employer's powers and obligations. Copies are available from DfES and on their website.

This document is one of several new items of guidance being prepared by DfES. Other documents will discuss safety on school trips, overseas visits and outdoor activities. Copies of the draft versions are available at www.teachernet.gov.uk/visits.



New publications on ICT equipment

Readers may be familiar with BECTa's (British Educational Communications and Technology Agency) information sheet:

Designing computer suites and workstations in schools.

BECTa are preparing new information sheets providing practical guidance for teachers and school managers on controlling the risks from all types of ICT equipment:

- **Planning the Installation and Use of ICT**
- **Safe Use of ICT in Schools**

Drafts are available for comment at <http://www.becta.org.uk/>.

Sharing Good Practice

The Advisory Committees are keen to promote examples of good practice. This item has been contributed by Norman Guffick, School Governor, and a member of SEAC and describes one method by which a school can monitor risks on site.

“Employees – as well as employers – have duties and responsibilities under health and safety regulations. Rossmere Primary School in Hartlepool has identified a method whereupon the staff and the health and safety representative can work together to identify and control risks arising in classrooms and other areas of the school.

A simple form is placed into a pocket and hung in a designated place for staff to use in the event that they identify a hazard in the work area/classroom.

Staff can complete the form and submit it to the department/school health & safety representative for attention and resolution. Copies are placed into the school's health & safety filing system for record purposes. A copy of the form is appended to this newsletter.”



Training for a purpose

This item has been submitted by Ian Draper, TUC Nominee to HIFEAC and SEAC. Ian teaches in Northamptonshire, is an elected NEC Member and chairs NASUWT Trades Union Education & Training Committee, including Health & Safety in its remit.

“Trades Union Health & Safety Representative training and follow-up activity forms one of the basic platforms for ensuring that the profile of Health, Safety and Welfare in the workplace is high on the agenda.

TUC and affiliate unions provide Safety Representative Training, covering the basics of safety legislation, inspection processes and reporting methods. Practical sessions often include carrying out a simple inspection of a workplace,

producing a report, and taking this up with 'a manager' in a simulated meeting within the course.

NASUWT courses at different levels cover a range of issues and skills for lay representatives. Discussion focuses on regular dialogue with Safety Managers, Headteachers or Principals on relevant matters, emphasising rights to paid time to carry out functions and duties under the Act. All too often we meet Safety Representatives whose activities are marginalised, by simple barriers such as Supply Cover cost being put forward as reasons why this vital activity cannot go ahead.

The duty of employers and managers is simple and clear. NASUWT advice to its Representatives is that Schools and Colleges should include in their Health & Safety budget apportionment of sufficient money to enable Supply Cover to be provided to release Safety Representatives for their entitlement.

*Our more advanced courses examine risk assessment processes and topic investigations, promoting detailed discussion on a range of issues specific to schools and colleges. Those establishments which take health & safety seriously are easily identifiable. It is the others where the matter seems to be put of little priority that gives cause for concern. In some instances, this extends to failure on the part of managers to acknowledge the benefits of working **with** the Trades Unions in seeking to improve all aspects of working conditions.*

With the new partnership approach being developed, Health & Safety is an obvious area for agreement on collective work, for the benefit of the education environment in which our students learn, and our teachers teach.

Within this concept, a commitment to involve and support trained Trades Union Safety Representatives must be of benefit. Taking on board their skilled knowledge and understanding of the job, allied with a knowledge of the law on safety must surely be an objective worth achieving. In seeking to meet HSC and sector targets on reduced accidents and absence, should we not all be working together?"

Asbestos

Much concern has been expressed over the years about the possible exposure of pupils, students, staff and visitors to asbestos.

New legal duties relating to the management of asbestos in premises are planned to come into force next year. Premises owners, managers and others with concerns over asbestos may wish to comment on HSE's Consultative Document CD176 (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/condocs/>).

In general, most work on asbestos materials should be carried out by licensed contractors. All persons with responsibility for the management of educational buildings should have systems in place to prevent persons being exposed to asbestos. This would normally mean that the premises have been surveyed for

the presence of asbestos. Systems should be in place to prevent any intrusive work on the building until the risk has been assessed. Even short-term work on asbestos panels and tiles can result in significant exposure. Any work which affects the fabric of the building should be strictly controlled. HSE's new leaflet *Managing Asbestos in Premises (INDG223)* provides useful advice.

Falls from height



Falls from height are one of the main causes of serious injury in the education sector. A particular risk exists where people may have to work on or near fragile roofing materials or where pupils may gain access to flat roofs.

The risk is exemplified by a recent prosecution of a London borough and its contractors. They were fined £4,500 and £6,000 for breaches of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 respectively. Costs of nearly £6,000 were also awarded.

The cases resulted from an accident that occurred when a fragile asbestos cement roof was being removed at a school. The injured person fell 3 m and suffered severe head injuries, which have had long-term effects.

Those in control of premises should identify any fragile roofing materials or skylights, ensure warning notices are displayed, control access to the roof and ensure safe systems of work are followed when any maintenance or repair work is carried out. Because pupils and/or trespassers may climb onto roofs suitable steps should be taken to prevent access.

New IOSH Specialist Group

The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health has established a new Specialist Group for safety practitioners working in education. Details are available on the IOSH website <http://www.iosh.co.uk/> or Tel: 0116 2573100.



HSE's enforcement activity

HSE has produced its most recent report on enforcement activity (Health and Safety Offences and Penalties). The report summarises lists all notices served and prosecutions taken during 2000/2001. There are also website databases which provide information on each prosecution and notice (www.hse-databases.co.uk/prosecutions).

At least 130 Improvement notices and 40 Prohibition Notices were served in the local government and education sectors. A notable prosecution in higher education and research involved a Research Council following a fatal asphyxiation due to liquid nitrogen. The Council were fined £25,000.

Carbon monoxide: a silent but deadly killer

There were 31 deaths arising from the use of gas last year. Twenty-four of the fatalities were due to carbon monoxide poisoning from gas appliances. These incidents often occur in rented properties and students are seen to be particularly at risk.

HSE has a new gas safety campaign aimed at first time renters such as students. The campaign will run over the winter period and urges all tenants to ensure landlords provide evidence that gas appliances have been checked for safety annually by a gas installer registered with CORGI (Council for Registered Gas Installers).

To check if installers are registered with CORGI phone 01256 372 3000. If you smell gas or suspect there is a gas escape, turn off the gas supply and 'phone the Transco Gas Emergency Freephone number: 0800 111999.

Further information is available on HSE's Gas Safety Advice Line 0800 300363 or <http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/index.htm>

Feedback

We would appreciate your comments on the newsletter and any suggestions for improvements. We would also welcome any items for inclusion in the next issue.

Make this your newsletter.

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Chair:	John Cullen	01582 444262	Secretary:	Robert Parkes 01245 706246

Other useful contacts:

HSE Infoline: 08701 545500
HSE Books: 01787 88165
Incident Contact Centre: 0845 3009923

HSE website: www.hse.gov.uk
HSE Direct: www.hsedirect.com

DfES website: www.dfes.gov.uk
DfES Publications: 0846 602260

Email dfes@prolog.uk.com

TUC website: www.tuc.org.uk
European Agency for Safety and Health at Work: <http://osha.eu.int>

CBI website: www.cbi.org.uk

STAFF HAZARD IDENTIFICATION FORM

H & S

Location	Class No:	Year Group

List significant hazards Identified	List groups of people who are at risk	Controls to cover risks (agreed with H&S Rep)
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Staff Name:	Date submitted to H&S Rep.	H&S Rep. Sign-off
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STAFF HAZARD IDENTIFICATION FORM

NOTES

1. This Staff Hazard Identification Form should be prominently displayed in each work area/classroom
2. If and when staff become aware of a potential hazard they should complete the first two columns of the Form ensuring also that the location, class No. and Year Group boxes are completed.
3. Staff should then sign and date the Form and hand the same into the School Administrator's Office for the attention of the H&S Representative.
4. A new Form should be collected from the Office at the same time and re-displayed in the work area/classroom as before
5. The H&S Representative will visit the location and confirm (with the Staff member) the reported hazard and agree any controls necessary to reduce the risks associated therewith
6. H&S Representative will file all completed Forms in the School H&S File
7. In the event that Controls can not be agreed to the satisfaction of both the member of Staff and the H&S Representative the matter will be brought to the attention of the Headteacher or Chair of Governors for resolution

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