

# SSHE Newsletter 2/2014

September 2014

## 1) Organisational Change

SSHE changed its organisation as of 1 September 2014 in the wake of Dominik Brem's, formerly head of the Environment and Hazardous Waste Disposal department and deputy head of SSHE, move to the Building and Constructions Infrastructure Division, where he took over the new staff position "Sustainability and Scientific Concepts". He will be taking some of the responsibilities (campus sustainability) from the last seven years with him to his new position. This was an opportunity for SSHE to review the existing organisation and make some sensible adjustments. The responsibilities regarding ETH Zurich's technical environmental protection and management and the role of the environmental officer will remain with SSHE:

- Until the organisation has been consolidated, the head of SSHE, Katherine Timmel, will act as the interim environmental officer. Where this role can best be accommodated will then be decided.
- Reto Suter will take charge of the Resources and Environment Management of the Federal Administration (RUMBA) and of the environmental management at ETH Zurich. He will also take on the role of deputy head of SSHE.
- Technical environmental protection and the responsibilities regarding hazardous waste disposal and hazardous material will be integrated into the department of Chemical and Radiation Protection, Biosafety and Occupational Safety (CABS). The newly formed department will be headed by Silke Kiesewetter, with Ines Raabe as her deputy.
- The energy officer, Wolfgang Seifert, will forthwith report directly to the head of SSHE. He will also be joining the Building and Constructions Infrastructure Division as of 2015, where he will continue in his role as energy officer.

## 2) Measures against Building Contaminants at ETH Zurich



In the past, building contaminants such as asbestos were often used in the construction of buildings. Asbestos was regarded as a "miracle fibre" and is indeed extremely durable and fireproof. As these contaminants are now known to be extremely harmful for humans (carcinogenic etc.), however, buildings affected have to be renovated at great expense.

Remediation works are subject to strict requirements: Contractors have to be recognised by Suva, register planned projects with Suva and have them approved by the Umwelt- und Gesundheitsschutz der Stadt Zürich (UGZ). The remediation takes place in a sealed zone, under low pressure that is constantly monitored. Special filters clean the exhaust air and conduct it outside. These zones can only be accessed via decontamination air locks. In addition to this, air measurements show whether the safety measures are effective.

In 2014 ETH Zurich started a comprehensive "screening" campaign, i.e. buildings constructed in 1994 or before are being inspected with regard to the presence of contaminants to determine the renovation needs. Moreover, the removal of contaminants is an integral part of three ongoing large-scale renovation projects: the ML district heating power plant, the HPM, and the HPR physics canteen. These remediation works take place within the building perimeter and are barely visible to you. As members of ETH Zurich, however, you may encounter smaller remediation works. Unless you enter the air locks, however, there is no risk whatsoever.

ETH Zurich goes to great lengths to protect its members from building contaminants. The SSHE staff is on hand to answer any questions you might have.

**Regula Rüegg, SSHE building contaminants specialist, is on maternity leave until 1 February 2015.**

Nevertheless, representation is guaranteed:

- *If the release of asbestos fibres is suspected*, please inform the Emergency Desk immediately (internal: 888, external: 044 342 11 88).
- *For urgent questions* (e.g. concerning pending specialist-trade work), please email [sgu-gebaeudeschadstoffe@ethz.ch](mailto:sgu-gebaeudeschadstoffe@ethz.ch) or contact Silke Kiesewetter (044 632 76 29) or Katherine Timmel (044 632 21 69).
- Please also send *inspection reports* to [sgu-gebaeudeschadstoffe@ethz.ch](mailto:sgu-gebaeudeschadstoffe@ethz.ch).

### 3) Updating Notification Addresses and Alarm Sheets

Machines and devices that are relevant for personal or building safety can be connected to the building automation system at ETH Zurich. This guarantees that alarms or defects are registered at the Emergency Desk (AZ). For these machines and devices, the responsible users must fill out an alarm sheet defining the persons to be contacted by the AZ to rectify any damage in the event of an incident – together with the stand-by team from the Facility Management Infrastructure Division if need be. You will find further information on the alarm sheets [here](#).

The number of alarms or defect reports received by the AZ around the clock is impressive. Unfortunately, the alarm organisation staff keep discovering addresses which are no longer current, a circumstance which jeopardises fast intervention. This applies for both the alarm sheets and the information displayed directly on the equipment. As these addresses are pivotal for tackling an emergency successfully, they have to be kept up-to-date by the users responsible.

Report any changes regarding the person responsible for the relevant machines and devices in your group immediately to the staff of your [building area](#) (Facility Management Infrastructure Division). By doing so, you are making a valuable contribution to safety and help to keep intervention times in the event of any damage as short as possible. Thank you for your cooperation.

**Notification Regarding Calls to the Emergency Desk**

If you dial the emergency phone numbers 888 (internal phones) and 044 342 11 88 (external phones) your call will be recorded. These recordings serve the reconstruction of emergency calls, quality assurance of the AZ as well as the protection of staff (e.g. as proof in telephone threat law suits).

### 4) Reporting Offences



Although ETH Zurich is essentially safe, sometimes thefts or other offences happen. You can fall victim to a criminal act irrespective of date, time or location. A theft is not only annoying; it causes various inconveniences and can trigger a great sense of insecurity in the victims.

This is why it is important that you report any theft you have suffered to us, whether the item stolen be the property of ETH or your own personal belonging. The SSHE security staff will record these reports, evaluate them and, if necessary, take action. Many measures are conceivable – from raising awareness to on-site surveillance. SSHE will report the theft of ETH property to the police. Any offences involving private property have to be reported to the police by the aggrieved party themselves. However, we will gladly help you compile the necessary information.

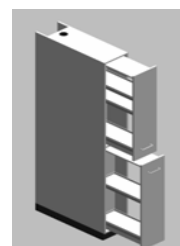
We also ask you to report any irregularities, suspicious incidents and any offences already committed, such as damage to property or graffiti, to ETH's Emergency Desk (tel. internal: 888, external: 044 342

11 88). Without your report, we remain unawares of the sphere of activity of delinquents and are unable to take any action. We rely on your information – help us so that we can keep ETH Zurich safe together. The [security staff](#) is on hand to answer any queries you might have.

## 5) Storing Acids, Alkalis, Solvents and Solid Chemicals

Liquid chemicals and flammable, oxidising, and toxic solids are to be stored in a ventilated cupboard to prevent hazards such as fires, explosions or leaks. Does this mean that any chemical can be stored in a ventilated pharmacist's cabinet, for instance?

The so-called pharmacist's cabinets which have drawers with shelves are suitable for the storage of non-hazardous solids, such as sodium chloride, in plastic containers. For liquids such as solvents or acids, however, these cupboards are unsuitable, since there is no protection against glass bottles that might fall out when the drawers are opened. Moreover, the spill trays are too small and do not provide sufficient protection against leakages. The coated chipboard is flammable and not resistant to acids and alkalis. In accordance with the relevant norms<sup>1</sup>, these have to be stored in special "acid cupboards" which are made of material that is resistant to vapours and leakages of the substances stored. Solvents belong in a safety cabinet, which must provide sufficient protection in the event of a fire, i.e. resist the flames. This is why safety cabinets are often made of



Pharmacist's  
cupboard



Example: safety cabinet

metal as it enables the fire brigade to intervene before flammable substances catch alight and cause an even bigger fire. Safety cabinets come in various sizes, for instance also as base support cabinets, and with different fire resistance periods of 15, 30, 60 and 90 minutes. The right cabinet, however, ultimately depends on the type and amount of solvents stored. Like solvents, flammable, oxidising and toxic solids also have to be stored in a cupboard made of flame-retardant or fire-proof material. Acid cupboards and safety cabinets must have spill trays and be labelled appropriately.

Do you have questions regarding the storage of your chemicals? The Chemical and Radiation Protection, Biosafety and Occupational Safety ([CABS](#)) department will be happy to help.

### IMPRINT

Editor ETH Zurich, Safety, Security, Health and Environment Staff Unit (SSHE)

Tel.: +41 (0)44 632 30 30, [Katherine Timmel](#) / [Reto Suter](#), [www.sicherheit.ethz.ch](http://www.sicherheit.ethz.ch)

<sup>1</sup> EKAS Guideline 1825 "Brennbare Flüssigkeiten – Lagern und Umgang", EN 14727 "Labormöbel – Schränke und Regale für Laboratorien – Anforderungen und Prüfverfahren", EN 14470-1 "Feuerwiderstandsfähige Lagerschranke – Teil 1: Sicherheitsschränke für brennbare Flüssigkeiten"