

SSHE Newsletter 3/2018

December 2018

1) Obstacle-Free at the ETH

ETH Zurich is a public university. Many of its buildings are freely accessible – not just to students and staff, but also to visitors. While most of us take using the ETH Zurich buildings and making the most of the available infrastructure for granted, for others it is much trickier. People with physical limitations, such as impaired mobility, vision or hearing, are confronted with various obstacles at the ETH, some of which are difficult or even impossible to surmount. For wheelchair-bound people, minor thresholds can already hamper access to a building. And how can someone who is visually impaired negotiate their way around the labyrinthine Main Building?

In order to improve the present situation, this year, Professor Ulrich Weidmann, Vice-President for Human Resources and Infrastructure, gave the green light for the long-term project *Barrier Free at ETH Zurich*. Its goal is to afford people with physical impairments or special needs access to those ETH Zurich's services, which have been denied or at least made difficult for them until now. First of all, various sub-projects – e.g. on mobility restrictions (headed by Urs Nussbaum, Services) and other limitations, i.e. primarily visual and hearing impairments (headed by Ines Raabe, SSHE) – are being conducted to ascertain the current state of affairs before compiling a plan of action with recommendations for improvements.

Currently, building access and building development are the focus. Later on down the line, however, other topics such as teaching, the library or the website will be addressed. It is a central issue for ETH to include external specialists and stakeholders, as well as affected members of ETH so that the most practical and adequate solutions possible can be found. Would you like to help us or do you have any questions? Get in touch! Email us at hindernisfrei@ethz.ch →.

2) Hazardous Waste Disposal



One of ETH Zurich's hazardous waste disposal points
(photo: Heidi Hostettler)

Hazardous waste such as chemicals, solvents, acids, alkalis, medication, mercury thermometers, paint spray cans or accumulators can be handed in for free at our hazardous waste disposal points (SAEs). Such waste must be collected separately and must not be disposed of via **the household trash or sewage system**.

Currently, work is underway to upgrade the disposal process and render it more efficient and safer: from 2019 all hazardous waste on the Hönggerberg campus will be recorded electronically. Anyone who hands in waste will receive a customer card, which they must bring with them whenever they dispose of hazardous waste.

Disposal containers are available free of charge at the SAEs. These must have labels and hazard symbols, which must be attached and completed before filling. Depending on the chemical properties of the hazardous waste, containers must be affixed with GHS hazard symbols (Globally Harmonised System for the classification and labelling of chemicals), e.g. corrosive or highly flammable. Many of the measures have already been implemented.

Hazardous waste is classified based on its hazardous properties and/or the manner of disposal, each in accordance with Appendix 1 of the Federal Department's of Environment, Transport, Energy and

Communication (DETEC) Ordinance on Lists for Handling Waste. Hazardous waste should be assigned to a hazardous waste category by the person handling it in. Relevant Information is provided in our [fact sheet](#) → (available in English as of January 2019). If you have any questions, please contact us via sonderabfall@ethz.ch → or complete the [online form](#) →. More details on the new disposal system are provided at our information events ([SSHE Course Calendar](#) →).

3) Specification Document for Group Safety Representatives Online

A professor's duties are challenging and varied: Besides top-flight research, teaching, and the transfer of knowledge and technology, they also have to take responsibility for their own group, including duty of care for all group members – also in terms of safety. In the [Compliance Guide](#) → (pp. 20–21), ETH Zurich therefore recommends that professors designate someone from their own group to implement the necessary safety measures. This group safety representative (GSR) can, for example, take over training for new group members and act as a contact person for SSHE to reduce the burden on supervisors.

We have outlined the GSR duties for you in a [specification document](#) →, which can be downloaded from our website (sicherheit.ethz.ch → Safety and security → Occupational safety → Tasks and responsibilities for supervisors). Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

4) Fire Safety Course 2018



Putting out fires with a fire blanket (photo: Heidi Hostettler)

Safety is a major priority at ETH Zurich. New students learn the theory on this during the first-semester lecture held by SSHE on their first day at university.

No sooner have the first-semester students plunged into student life than it is time to get their hands dirty – practical fire safety courses, which are held on the Höggerberg campus. This year, 1,330 students got training in how to handle extinguishers.

According to the course evaluation, almost all participants took new insights away with them from the roughly 75-minute course. They were not only taught how to use fire extinguishers and blankets correctly, but also how and where to find help in case of an incident.

The 111 trained members of the Fire Alarm Team, an intervention unit at ETH Zurich, were given in-depth insights into ETH Zurich's emergency organisation. The practical exercises were well received: Without any construction manual and purely by following instructions over radio communication, the participants had to build a Lego vehicle or plane. Another module examined the topics of "Burns and Inhalation Trauma" and provided information on raising the alarm, first aid, defibrillation and defibrillators. With feedback that was over 90% positive, we can look back on a well-attended fire safety course with extremely satisfied participants. We are already looking forward to the courses in the autumn of 2019.

Borrowing Extinguishers for LiPo Batteries

Nowadays, lithium polymer (LiPo) batteries are used for numerous different applications at ETH Zurich, such as robots, drones and eBikes. Despite their frequent use, however, LiPo batteries are not without risks; risk of fire is particularly an issue. Since September, it has therefore been possible to borrow F500 hand-held fire extinguishers from SSHE's Fire Safety and Explosion Protection Section for field tests (e.g. drone flights) free of charge. The maximum loan period is seven days. They can be borrowed and returned exclusively on the Hönggerberg campus (HPI F27) upon presentation of your ETH Card; transportation needs to be organised independently. To loan a fire extinguisher, please get in touch (sgu-safety@ethz.ch →) as early as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

5) Laboratory Animal Science – Course Fees

From March 2019, new fees will be charged for laboratory animal science (LTK) courses held jointly by ETH Zurich and the University of Zurich. There are two reasons for this decision: Firstly, the fees have not been adjusted for inflation since the courses first began in 1999 (LTK courses have been offered since 1999; jointly by ETH Zurich and UZH since 2015). During this 19-year period, the procurement costs have risen continuously and significantly, especially for animals and materials. Secondly, due to a legal change, new administrative requirements for a specialist vocation-independent training (FBA) must be fulfilled as of March 2019. These include the introduction of examinations for all basic training, i.e. for the LTK modules 1, 2, 20 and EGA (Ethics – Legislation – 3R and Alternative Methods). These courses are attended by 800 to 1,000 people every year, and implementation of the new legal requirements entails a considerable increase in the workload.

In order to continue to be able to offer the broad existing portfolio of high-quality courses, this step was therefore unavoidable. Please contact [Maïke Heimann](#) → if you have any questions. However, certain courses remain free of charge for members of ETH Zurich (module EGA and LTK module 19 – Advanced Training for Animal Caretakers) or the course fees will be covered by ETH Zurich (LTK modules 1 and 20).

6) Flu Vaccination Review

SSHE also conducted the annual flu vaccination campaign for members of ETH Zurich together with AEH Centre for Occupational Health and Safety in 2018. The mounting demand was confirmed again this year. Around 3,000 members of staff, students and retirees seized the opportunity to be vaccinated against the seasonal flu. By comparison: Last year, this figure was just under 2,500 and in 2016 it was around 2,000 people – an increase of a third in two years. We wish all members of ETH Zurich a cold- and flu-free winter.

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