SSHE Newsletter 3/2013

1 Workshops on stalking in January 2014

Once again, SSHE has managed to recruit prominent international experts to conduct two workshops on the topic of “Stalking” in 2014: On Monday, 20 January, you will have the opportunity to obtain information from Dr Reid Meloy and Dr Jens Hoffmann on applied research and best practices to assess and deal with stalkers. The day after, on Tuesday, 21 January, Dr Hoffmann will be holding a workshop entitled "Stalking – Begleitung und Beratung von Betroffenen".

Members of ETH Zurich can attend these workshops for free. You can find the registration form and further information on the SSHE Course Calendar. For questions concerning threats, mobbing, sexual harassment and discrimination at ETH Zurich, please consult the website http://www.respekt.ethz.ch/.

2 Maternity protection

You are pregnant and work in a lab or workshop – can you go on working without putting your child at risk? During pregnancy, a woman is more sensitive to certain physical influences (e.g. X-rays, heat, cold and noise), chemical substances (such as carcinogenic or mutagenic substances) or microorganisms (e.g. rubella viruses). If a pregnant woman exposes herself to such influences, it can affect the development of her unborn child. Towards the end of the pregnancy, strenuous tasks (e.g. heavy lifting) are also problematic.

In order to find out what tasks you can still perform, a risk analysis must be conducted. Pregnant and breast-feeding women are only allowed to carry out potentially dangerous or strenuous tasks if the risk assessment determines that there is no health threat to mother and child, or if the risk can be neutralised by appropriate safety measures. This risk assessment also determines which tasks are to be avoided and/or how risks can be minimised. For an assessment of your workstation, please contact SSHE as soon as possible (cabs@ethz.ch). As the risk for the child is greatest in the first trimester of a pregnancy, organising a risk assessment as early as possible is in your own interest. You should also inform your superior / traineeship supervisor. If requested, however, the risk assessment can also be conducted confidentially. In January 2014 SSHE will be holding a course on maternity protection in English (information on the exact date to follow). Further information is available on our leaflet "Maternity Protection" (cf. index --> "safety at work").

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3 A look back at this year's fire safety courses

A fire is put out more quickly by cooperation

The annual SSHE fire safety courses were held for four weeks from the end of September. They are geared towards staff and students at ETH Zurich and cover the basics of how fires start, correct conduct in the event of fire and how to handle extinguishing agents. As part of the course units, the role of the Emergency Desk and how to contact it via internal telephone number 888 or via external number 044 342 11 88 was also pointed out to the participants. Moreover, under the watchful eye of a professional, almost all the roughly 1,400 participants had the opportunity to put out a fire with both a portable fire extinguisher and a fire blanket. The courses were well-received by the participants, who especially noted the wide range of topics. The fire safety courses will be held in English and German again in 2014.

In a two-day course, the members of the fire alarm team also received special training and were confronted with the following questions: How do you put out a metal blaze? What dangers can occur in labs and workshops? How can I spot them and what countermeasures can I take? In addition, the procedure for an evacuation was explained before being put to the test in a drill conducted in the HIT-building. The main focus was the proper use of the resources available. Here, too, the feedback was positive across the board.

4 Maintenance of gas detection systems

In 2012 worried members of ETH Zurich approached SSHE to draw its attention to the inconsistent handling of gas detection system maintenance at ETH Zurich. As the maintenance of lab- and workshop-specific safety-relevant systems is essentially the responsibility of the users, sometimes it might be that gas detection systems are serviced irregularly or even not at all. A faulty gas monitoring device, however, lulls the lab- or workshop-staff into a false sense of safety. What would happen if gas leaked in the lab and the gas detector malfunctioned? In order to guard against this scenario, SSHE launched a project at the end of 2012 to standardise the maintenance process.

A year on, we have almost reached our goal: The users have listed the majority of the gas detection systems available in labs or workshops, a process regarding the responsibilities for the lifecycle of gas detection systems has been established and framework agreements with maintenance companies are in the pipeline. As of 1 January 2014, the coordination of basic maintenance for all gas detection systems is to be transferred to the Facility Management unit, which also took over the project management at the end of August 2013 with a view to paving the way for the implementation of the new process at the beginning of next year. We wish the Facility Management unit a successful conclusion to the project and look forward to the forthcoming change – not least because it was the users who got the ball rolling. The organisation

and financing of repairs in the event of a defect and the maintenance responsibility for other safety-relevant devices in labs and workshops remain up to the users.

5 Greenhouse gas emissions and refrigerants

Since 2008 ETH Zurich has recorded its greenhouse gas emissions in the form of CO_2-equivalents (CO_{2eq}.). In future, direct emissions will be radically reduced – primarily through the new energy supply concept (dynamic underground storage system or anergy network). In total, ETH Zurich emits approx. 25,000t of CO_{2eq}. a year equalling 120 to 150 million kilometres by car – 3,000 laps of the world. Around two thirds of this are indirect emissions, which are caused by business trips, for instance.

Comparatively speaking, the influence of refrigerants, which are used in cooling devices, is small. However, they are still responsible for 62t of CO_{2eq}.-emissions at ETH Zurich (seven and a half times around the world by car). The frequently used HFC R-404A, for instance, contributes around 3,900 times more to the greenhouse effect than CO_2! Swiss legislation (Chemical Risk Reduction Ordinance ORRChem, Appendix 2.10, 18 May 2005, SR 814.81) clearly regulates the use of refrigerants. From 2015 only chlorine-free or natural refrigerants will be permitted in new plants, or may be refilled in existing ones. From then on, refilling with chlorinated, halogenated refrigerants (R11/R12/R502/R13B1 etc.) or partly chlorinated refrigerants (R22/R401A/R402A etc.) will no longer be permitted. Existing plants can continue to be operated.

We recommend you convert plants with chlorinated refrigerants to another refrigerant immediately or even replace the entire system. Key information on refrigerants is provided in the "Übersicht über die wichtigsten Kältemittel" taken from the guidelines issued by the former Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL; now the Federal Office for the Environment FOEN) in 2004.

As members of ETH Zurich, hopefully we all know the emergency numbers 888 (internal ETH-Zurich connections) and 044 342 11 88 (external connections) to contact the **Emergency Desk** (ED) in case of an incident. The number 22056, however, on which the ED could also be reached in the past, is no longer in service. If you come across any emergency signs with this number on it, it is an old sign and you are free to remove it.

In recent months, ETH Zurich has seen an increasing number of **accidents involving people** who hesitated to go straight to the doctor's or hospital. Especially in the event of contamination with a hazardous substance – cuts or puncture wounds with potentially contaminated sharps, the inhalation of gases or chemical spatter in the eye – there is no time to lose. Contact the First Aid Team via the Emergency Desk, since you never know if you might need assistance for the transfer to the hospital. The ETH first responders might even decide to call the ambulance. Seek medical treatment immediately and give your health priority – your safety comes first!