Welcome to the third newsletter from the Health and Safety Office. We hope that you will find this issue both interesting and useful – we encourage your suggestions for items to be included in future newsletters! Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas & New Year!...........

The Health and Safety Team

Inside This Issue
1 The Reality
2 First Aid News
3 Fire Safety
4 Emergency Management
5 H&S Training Courses
6 Seasonal Safety Tips

Spot the Hazards!!!!!!

The Reality
Don’t believe everything you read!

We want to 'sleigh' the most commonly encountered festive health and safety myth - the myth we hear most often of all is that 'health 'n safety' has ruined Christmas.

We hear of events being cancelled, Santa stopped from parading in his sleigh, and festive displays being banned, all blamed on 'health and safety' reasons.

Health and safety regulations exist to ensure that people do not suffer serious injury at work, not to hamper fun activities. A simple assessment of the risks involved, together with the implementation of practical solutions goes a long way to ensure that everyone goes home safe....including Santa!

So on that note, we'd like to say Bah Humbug to any festive killjoys out there and a very happy Christmas to everyone else!

* Nollaig Shona duibh go léir agus Athbhliant faoi sheán agus faoi mhaise
First Aid News

Early in 2015 the Health & Safety Office will replace the publicly available first aid cabinets across Campus. The new first aid cabinets are easier and quicker to open than the previous ones, and will be located (as previously) in the foyer of most buildings. All first aiders will receive a master key for the new cabinets in the New Year.

Ever wondered what types of injuries/issues our First Aid Team on campus deal with?

The graph below gives an overview of the types of injuries/incidents reported on campus over the last two academic years. In addition, our team deals with staff, students and visitors to the campus who may be taken ill.

Safety Concerns? – Online reporting available

A facility to log a concern in relation to any aspect of safety on campus has been added to the H&S webpage (in addition to the existing ‘Report an Injury/Incident’ facility). Any issue you wish to raise in relation to safety on campus can now be logged with the Health & Safety Office through the safety concern form - click HERE.

Did you know…..?

Two groups of staff beaver away behind the scenes to ensure that, in the midst of all the various activities and footfall on campus, the health and safety of all campus users is prioritised.

The Health and Safety Consultation Group comprises staff from across all areas of the University. Group members consult with their colleagues locally and bring issues/concerns to the table for resolution by the University. For a full listing of current members (feel free to contact any of them!) and to get a feel for what the group does click HERE.

The Health and Safety Steering Group, chaired by our COO Declan Raftery, is a sub group of DCU Executive. For information on the Terms of Reference and activities of the group click HERE.

Reminder:
Defibrillator available from DCU Security – Ext 5999

HO! HO! HO!  
This year’s Christmas Get Together for the DCU Safety Community (Fire Wardens, First Aiders, Consultation and Steering Group Members etc.) was held on Friday 12th Dec in the Helix 70+ people attended and enjoyed the festive atmosphere, mulled wine, finger food and mince pies as well as ‘the raffle’ with 42 (yes 42!) prizes kindly donated by our many generous sponsors across campus and beyond!

We are already looking forward to next year!
Fire Safety Update
Since our last newsletter David Cloney has left DCU to take up a new position with the OPW. In September Honor Rushe replaced David in the Health & Safety Office as the Fire Safety Officer. Here she provides an update on some of the projects she is currently working on...

Individual Building Fire Registers / Local Area Inspections
- Much work has been completed on pulling together a comprehensive register of all aspects of fire safety for each individual building. Records of alarm systems, emergency lighting systems, alarm activations, fire doors, smoke control systems etc. are maintained in such registers. A further vital element of fire safety management is daily/weekly checks on critical issues such as escape routes etc. Local fire safety inspection check sheets are ongoing in many schools and units across campus. Records of inspection are uploaded to google docs and are then inserted into the individual building register.

- Pre Fire Planning with Dublin Fire Brigade
A 55 acre campus with over 30 buildings of various levels of complexity (from straightforward office accommodation to higher risk chemical/biological laboratories to sleeping accommodation for 1,200 students) will always be challenging in terms of appropriate fire brigade response. A major project is currently underway to provide Dublin Fire Brigade with detailed, easily understood information on ‘what hazards lie behind each closed door’. This critical information is being plotted on floor plans for each building, to ensure that, no matter what time of day/night the fire brigade is called, they have up to date information to allow them to respond appropriately without putting their own safety at risk.

- Fire Safety Refresher Course
Almost 2,000 staff and postgrads completed classroom based Fire Safety Awareness Training over the past 3 yrs. The benefits of the training are clear in the level of attention being paid to the issue of fire prevention/fire response across all of our buildings on campus.

Fire News Snippets
There are 200 trained Fire Wardens on Campus who volunteer their time and expertise to help make our campus a safe place to work/study/live.

Fire Wardens take a bow! In our Semester 1 evacuation drills the average time taken to evacuate teaching/administration/research buildings on campus was 2mins 35 sec – an excellent performance.

There were 10 minor fires reported on campus over the past two years. The majority of the fires happened in kitchen areas in Campus Residences and were ably responded to and managed by our Campus Security Team.

One fire however, was attributable to an arson attack. While the damage caused was minimal, the value of properly fitted fire doors, a monitored fire alarm system and a swift response from Campus Security cannot be underestimated in ensuring that there was no loss of life or significant damage to the building.

Major Emergency Management Project Update
Larry Sweetman (a student on the DCUBS Masters in Major Emergency Management programme) is currently working with the Health and Safety Office on a 6 month scholarship to deliver Phase 1 of the DCU Major Emergency Management Project. This phase involves gathering information from across all areas of the University to establish an overall picture of the various response mechanisms currently in place and the significant risks with the potential to trigger a major emergency. On completion of this phase, the Emergency Management Project Team (chaired by Declan Raftery) will work to deliver a comprehensive plan covering all aspects of emergency response here in DCU.
Health & Safety Training Courses
The Health & Safety Office will host a number of training courses in January

- **Fire Safety Awareness** training is mandatory for all staff members, so if you have not yet completed this sign up by clicking on [THIS LINK](#).

- **Office Ergonomics** - if you use a Visual Display Unit (Computer screen) for more than 1 x hour per day then this course is for you! - Following the course you will be able to;
  - adjust your chair, monitor and desk layout to suit your own body frame
  - understand how poor posture can affect your overall well being
  - organise your daily tasks to lessen fatigue and keep the blood circulating!
  For registration details for the above course please click on [THIS LINK](#)

- **Manual Handling** Lighten the Load. This course is designed to provide you with the skills, advice and information necessary to ensure that you can organise your manual handling tasks (lifting /pushing/pulling) so as to avoid the strains, sprains and more serious injuries that can be associated with these activities. Following this course you will
  - Understand the structure and function of your back.
  - Understand the principles of safe manual handling
  - Have practiced lifting and handling loads safely
  For registration details for the above course please click on [THIS LINK](#)

And Finally......Seasonal Safety Tips

Fire Safety at Christmas

It’s that time of the year again – when fairy lights and other colourful Christmas illuminations are taken down from dusty shelves or crowded attics to decorate our offices / labs / homes. Unfortunately, every year in Ireland at least one home is destroyed by fire as a result of faulty lighting. Poorly maintained lights and overloaded sockets may create an unnecessary fire hazard.

The following links provide a timely reminder of what can go wrong [Christmas Tree Fire](#) and, from the UK Department for Communities and Local Government, a timely reminder of steps to take to protect yourself and your loved ones over the course of the festivities [12 Days Of Safety](#)

Be Winter Ready!

Here in Ireland we faced some daunting challenges over the past few years as a result of severe weather. Activities that we took for granted became difficult or even hazardous when severe weather occurred. However, by taking some simple steps you can reduce the impact of such events. The Office of Emergency Planning (OEP) published excellent advice covering home, motoring, business safety etc. [Be Winter Ready](#)

The main message is simple - be prepared, stay safe and know where to find help should you need it!