Safety Inspections Guidance

1 Introduction

Regular safety inspections are an important part of an organizations system for managing health and safety. The University health and safety policy recognizes this and requires Schools, Departments and Professional Service to carry out workplace inspections, at least annually. The actual frequency will depend upon geographical considerations, numbers employed and the degree of hazard based on the activities in the relevant School etc. A record of the inspection must be kept available on request.

1.1 It is a fundamental requirement of the policy that Heads of Schools and Professional Services set a local health and safety policy in order to assist in effectively managing health and safety. It follows that safety inspections and audits are part of the management structure. (See Section 3.6 of the University health and safety policy). The University policy statement also sets out the basic requirements of departmental health and safety inspections.

2 Purpose of regular inspections

Regular inspections provide a means for the department to measure safety performance against standards such as University safety policy or local safety procedures. They also serve to identify unsafe procedures and unsafe conditions and rectify them before an accident happens. They provide an opportunity to ensure that other, more specific checks and tests have been made at the appropriate intervals (e.g. on fume cupboards, LEV's, microbiological safety cabinets, fire extinguishers, electrical equipment, pressure systems). They facilitate compliance with the University's policy on risk assessment by identifying where risk assessments need to be completed.

3 Inspection arrangements

Departments may find it convenient to spread the inspection effort required over a year, rather than attempting to deal with all areas of activity in one inspection.

Inspection may be carried out by only one person (usually the School or Departmental Safety Officer (SSO / DSO)), or by a small team (which can usefully include someone with specialist knowledge e.g. Radiation Safety Advisor or Laser Safety Officer). Team size should be restricted to three or four if the operation is not to become too unwieldy. There is no reason why members of departments should not be notified of inspection dates and times; they are more likely to be cooperative if they do not feel an attempt is being made to catch them out.

3.1 Schools and Services should monitor their own health and safety performance and highlight potential hazards by undertaking regular audits and inspections. The UH&SS will attend these inspections when requested but will undertake independent health, safety & environmental audits in line with a programme agreed by the Health, Safety & Environmental Committee.

4 Inspection report

A written report should be prepared which includes the date and scope of the inspection and the name(s) of those carrying it out. It should include details of any problems identified (their nature, location and severity), the action required to remedy those problems, with an indication of the priority attached to the task, the timescale and the person(s) responsible for remedial action. The report must also detail the arrangements for ensuring that recommendations for remedial action are acted upon.

A report of the inspection should go to the local safety committee who should make a point of discussing these reports at its meetings and ensuring that its recommendations have been acted upon.

5 Inspection checklists

Checklists can be valuable aids to inspection and many departments will already be successfully using one. Those who have not yet made their own may find the check list at Appendix 1 useful as a starting point. It is not intended to be comprehensive and each department should aim to prepare a checklist specific for its own premises and activities. It is important to use any checklist only as an aid, over reliance on it may constrain the inspection and lead to problems being missed.

All health and safety policies and guidance can be found on the Universities web pages on www.lboro.ac.uk/admin/hse/policies/index.html.

6 Action

All Schools, Professional Service are required to carry out safety inspections regularly, (e.g. annually). Heads of Schools etc should decide who should carry out the inspection. Safety Officers should ensure inspections are carried out at appropriate intervals and appropriate to the work activities undertaken, that the reports are discussed at the relevant safety committee and that they are forwarded to the Head of School, Professional Service.

Appendix 1; Example Checklist

1.Safety Policy and General		
a. University safety policy and local safety policy:		
i. Available to staff?	ii. Update required?	
b. School / Prof. Service Safety Committee:		
i. Minutes published?	ii. Attended by who?	iii. Minutes sent to UH&SS?
c. Previous Inspection reports: Are findings reported to and discussed at School / Prof. Service Safety Committee?		
d. Risk assessments of significant hazards: Up to date?		
e. Rolling programmes of improvements: Are outstanding matters actioned and if not, is progress discussed?		
ii. Are works on schedule?		
f. Accidents, Incidents and Ill Health:		
i. Accident record up to date?	ii. Reported to UH&SS using University procedure? iii. Incidents discussed at safety committee?	
g. Induction and safety training of employees and students carried out? Records kept?		
h. Safe System of Work:		
i. Are those in existence followed?	ii. Are more needed? iii. Are they documented?	
i. The health, safety and control of contractors: i Is there sufficient control (permit to work systems)?		
j. First Aid		
i. Sufficient first aiders?	ii. Sufficient boxes and facilities?	iii. Information posted? iv. First aiders trained?
k. Fire Precautions:		
i. Emergency lighting?	ii. Alarm system tested?	iii. Means of escape unobstructed?
iv. Smoke detectors tested?	v. Extinguishers, appropriate type? Unobstructed? Maintained?	vi. Training of fire wardens?
vii. Are there special hazards?	viii. Dates of fire drill	ix. Correct storage of highly flammable liquids, explosives?
2. Premises		
a. Statutory/other notices and signs		

b. Lighting; Sufficient?		
c. Heating: Reasonable temperatures? Thermometer(s)?		
d. General Ventilation: Adequate?		
e. Housekeeping:		
i. Cleanliness	ii. Storage of waste?	
f. Toilet and washing facilities: Cleanliness, heating, lighting, hot/cold water at wash basin?		
g. Means of access:		
i. Floors: slips, trips, trailing cables, holes?	ii. Passages unobstructed?	
iii. Stairs: handrail, unobstructed?	iv. Ladders/scaffolds: Is WAH planned and assessed	
h. Maintenance of premises		
3. Health		
a. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH):		
i. COSHH Assessments & Safety Data sheets available?	ii. Substitution practicable?	iii. Use of control measures practicable? Is RPE used? Are face fit tests done?
iv. Inspections, examinations and tests of engineering controls and PPE?	v. Health surveillance where required?	vi. Training and information available?
b. Biological hazards (Ref to Bio Safety Officer)		
c. Ionising and non-ionising radiations: (Ref to Radiation Protection Officer)		
d. Noise and vibration: Noisy areas identified? Noise levels measured? HAV action levels breached? Action taken? Who by?		
e. DSE: DSE assessor(s) appointed? Workstation assessments done? Home workers assessed?		
f. Manual Handling: Have manual handling activities been assessed? Training given?		
g. Control and disposal of hazardous waste: Asbestos survey?		
4. Machinery, plant and equipment		
a. Guarding dangerous parts: Hazards identified? Control measures established?		
b. Maintenance of plant & equipment: e.g. Legionella sampling, risk assessment, inspection, disinfection, records?		
c. Electrical equipment:		
i. Inspection and PAT testing?	ii. Live working?	iii. Workshop repair and facilities?
d. Plant examinations and records:		
i. Pressure systems? ii. Autoclaves? iii. iii LEV systems	iv. Safe working loads marked on lifting equipment?	
e. Special risks in a particular department: Lasers, working in enclosed spaces, roof work, roof voids?		