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To Vice-President/Deans, Heads of Schools and equivalents  
From Dr Melanie Taylor, University Safety Advisor  
Date 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007  
cc Prof M Case, Dr J Brider, Dr S A Robson, Prof M Hebbert, T Graham, Dr D Barker, School Safety Advisors & Safety Representatives  
Reference Circular 3/2007

## Fire Safety

### (1) Fire Safety Order 2005 - Fire risk assessments update

As you know, the University carried out fire risk assessments last year, with Estates' surveyors focusing on building and structural issues, and Health & Safety Services reporting on the occupiers' arrangements. Estates staff have assembled the data and will maintain the records, and we are currently working through the recommendations.

For building occupiers, several common themes have emerged. These are:

- patchy appointment of emergency evacuation marshals. Over 200 new emergency evacuation marshals attended the STDU training course in 2006, so there has been significant progress. However, when this number is placed in the context of the entire University estate, it is clear that there is more to do. For example, during the recent high winds when a number of buildings were evacuated, the absence of marshals for Schuster, Roscoe and Williamson Buildings was noted.
- inconsistent use of the University's induction process and checklists. These are available at <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/CoPs&Guidance/induction.doc>, and cover basic fire safety. All new staff and students should receive this information from their school or line manager.
- mixed reports on how portable appliance testing is being kept up-to-date.
- reports of poor housekeeping, including storage of combustible materials on fire escape corridors and routes and in risers; propping open of fire doors; storage of flammable solvents in containers left without stoppers, etc

Please draw this circular to the attention of your local health & safety committees, and consider these points in relation to your own areas of management responsibility. Your school / directorate health and safety planning and monitoring processes should be used to identify shortcomings, and address them. Your University Safety Co-ordinators will advise further, and communicate any fire safety recommendations specific to your school / directorate.

## (2) Evacuations

One of the outcomes of the repeated evacuations due to gas leaks last year has been the development of a new code dealing with alarms that result in prolonged evacuations whilst investigations are in progress. This has now been approved by the University Health & Safety Committee, and is on our webpages at

[http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/CoPs&Guidance/emergency\\_%20evacuation\\_managment.pdf](http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/CoPs&Guidance/emergency_%20evacuation_managment.pdf)

The Code sets down the procedure for appointment by Security of the attending senior security officer as “Evacuation Control”. This person will be clearly identifiable, and on or near the assembly point (or in radio contact with others, if there is more than one assembly point for the larger buildings). S/he will receive, co-ordinate and disseminate information about the emergency. Their main role is in maintaining the evacuation and security of the building for as long as necessary, preventing re-entry unless authorised, and liaising with the various other key players, including the University’s Emergency Incident Manager if alerted. They will also be involved in directing any secondary evacuation further from the building, if this becomes necessary. From experience, we know that during these events, a great deal of inaccurate information is broadcast, and this is an attempt to ensure that everyone knows how to obtain the most authoritative information available about the building status. That information will be made available at the officially recognised assembly point(s).

## (3) Assembly points

The University’s Fire Safety Advisory Group has considered draft plans prepared by the Fire Safety Officer Terry Graham, to rationalise assembly points across the campus. Due to the capital works programme and other works, local difficulties have been experienced, and a number of ‘traditional’ assembly points are no longer available. Enquiries or concerns about assembly points should be directed to Terry Graham, tel x552267, or email [terence.e.graham@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:terence.e.graham@manchester.ac.uk)

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