

To Vice-Presidents/Deans, Heads of Schools and Research Institutes, HoFAs

From Dr Melanie Taylor

Date 27 August 2010

cc Prof M Case, Prof I Stratford, Dr D Barker, Dr S Bidey, School Safety Advisors,  
Safety Representatives

Reference Safety Circular 7/2010

## Procurement of regulated substances

Action: Senior managers are asked to review their own school's procedures for procuring substances subject to regulation, to ensure all staff and students are clear that in-house procedures must be used at all times.

HOSs will be aware of the burgeoning statutory requirements associated with a wide range of substances that are, or could be, used for illegal purposes. This includes substances with radioactive properties, drugs precursors, chemical and biological weapons precursors, explosives and their precursors, and more. <sup>i</sup>

In March 2010, a research student at this University ordered 30mls of 1% uranyl acetate from Thailand, which was delivered, unlabelled, through the post to a home address. The School already had procurement procedures in place which, if used, would have identified this purchase as requiring approval by the Radiation Protection Supervisor to ensure compliance with our site Registration issued under the Radioactive Substances Act, 1993. In this particular case, no wrong was intended, the health & safety risk was minimal, and the student was shocked to discover the possible consequences of their action. Nevertheless, the outcome could have been much worse.

This School is revising its procurement procedures specifically to prohibit any member of staff or student acquiring substances other than through its formal procedures. These procedures ensure that the School obtains safety data sheets, carries out COSHH assessments, and holds the correct licences, registrations, authorisations and consents. This will be made very clear during induction. Your School may wish to consider doing the same.

Generally speaking, bona fide suppliers of these substances will not supply an order unless they are satisfied that the University has the appropriate paperwork. Enquiries about licences, etc should be directed firstly to your usual University Safety Co-ordinator, and then to the Safety Office.

Dr Melanie Taylor  
University Safety Advisor

<sup>i</sup> Specific guidance on some of these requirements can be found on HSS A-Z of procedures and guidance, at <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/CoPs&Guidance.htm>