

# HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE



January 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back! At the beginning of 2020, we were all coming back from our summer breaks and looking forward to Semester 1 with high hopes of a successful year ahead. Let's hope this year is at least more predictable! I hope you had a good break and I wish you a safe and successful year ahead.

Please circulate this e-update widely amongst your colleagues.

As we start the new year, we welcome two new members of staff to the HSW Team:

- Dr Pooja Yadav joined us on 18 January as Radiation Safety Advisor in the Hazards and Containment Team. Pooja has been at UoA since 2012 as a Research Fellow, Technician and Technologist, with previous research experience in UK, Sweden and India. She brings a strong background in radiation safety, radical chemistry and laser safety.
- Paul Brown joins the University as HSW Manager from Woolworths New Zealand, with previous HSW experience in the property management, local government, construction, hygiene and transport industries – in New Zealand and the UK. Paul joins the team on 9 February.

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Now, on a “housekeeping” note, can I please ask you to spend a few minutes reviewing this checklist?

- Do you have enough fire wardens and first aiders, and is their training up-to-date? Please check out [Health, Safety and Wellbeing training](#) and get registered via [Career Tools](#)
- Are the first aid kits accessible, fully stocked and in-date?
- Where is the nearest defibrillator (AED) located?
- Are the fire exits always kept clear?
- Do you have arrangements in place for evacuating people with disabilities?
  - Consider sight and hearing impairment as well as mobility
  - Consider also potential recruitment or injuries throughout the year
- Have all staff and students been inducted?
  - Does everyone know the actions to take in case of fire? Please check out [Emergency information](#)
  - Has all necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) been issued? [PPE](#) webpage contains some more info
  - Does everyone know what should we do if we have an accident on campus?
    - [Report concerns, incidents, and hazards](#)
    - [Injury management](#)

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## Familiarisation on hazards and risk in the workplace when returning from vacation.



We are all slowly returning to work following a well-earned rest, hopefully having enjoyed some long lazy summer days.

Some of us may not even remember our passwords, let alone work routines.

For those working in workshops, laboratories, or out in the field, please take some time to re-familiarise yourself with the hazards and risks in your work environment, and how to keep yourself safe.

Please check out our [Health and safety topics](#).

## Legislative Changes: Early childhood centre amended food guidelines

The Ministry of Education has issued amended food guidelines to early childhood education centres after a 2016 incident in which a 22-month-old boy choked on raw apple, leaving him starved of oxygen for 30 minutes and causing WorkSafe to investigate.

[Regulatory change to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children in early learning services](#)

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## From the Regulator: All work involving gas must be done by the book – WorkSafe 15 December 2020

A gas explosion in Christchurch which left six people seriously injured and several properties uninhabitable serves as a warning to all gasfitters, says WorkSafe.

All work with gas must be done by the book - because when things go wrong, the consequences can be grave.

In July 2019, certifying gasfitter Gregory John Smith was repairing a fireplace at a home in Christchurch. As part of the repairs he removed a gas valve, which is used to control the flow of gas. He advised he would return the next day to complete the repairs.

“However, Smith had not disconnected the gas supply to the heater (by capping the open pipe) before leaving and did not instruct residents of the property not to turn the gas supply back on,” said WorkSafe’s Manager Energy Safety Mark Wogan.

Mr Wogan said these errors went on to have extraordinary consequences.

“Later that evening the gas supply was turned on to make dinner, which allowed gas to flow freely through the open pipe into the house. The following morning a thermostat in the hot water cylinder cycled, generating a spark, igniting the gas and creating the explosion.”

As a result the property was completely destroyed and its five occupants at the time were left with burns, some serious. One victim was placed into an induced coma for one month after suffering burns to his airways and another spent five weeks in a hospital burns unit after sustaining burns to 32 per cent of his body.

Five neighbouring houses were left uninhabitable and damage was caused to various other properties nearby.

Mr Wogan said WorkSafe’s investigation found that Smith had failed to disconnect the gas supply and had not advised residents to leave the gas supply off.

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“He also did not place any warning or notices on the gas mains advising not to turn it on, or take any other preventative measures such as a lock to ensure the gas supply could not be turned back on”.

“As a certifying gasfitter, Smith was aware that a failure to disconnect the gas supply to the heater was likely to cause serious harm or significant property damage. As an experienced gasfitter he would have been very familiar with the dangers involved.”

**“WorkSafe’s message to all gasfitters today is you must do things by the book. This is why there are such stringent regulations. Even the most experienced gasfitters can make mistakes, and the smallest mistakes can have catastrophic consequences.**

**“It is a profession in which customers have a lot of reliance and trust. That trust needs to be honoured through the activities undertaken, and the processes in place to keep people safe.”**

Gregory John Smith was sentenced to 325 hours community work at the Christchurch District Court today. Smith’s company Gas Unlimited Limited was also sentenced today and ordered to pay a fine of \$82,500. Both parties were sentenced to pay a total amount of \$134,300 in reparation. At this stage, the judge did not identify how reparation would be split between both parties.

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## Upcoming HSW workshops

For new staff and those who missed out last year, several useful workshops are coming up in the next few months.

Workshop	Date	Time	Location
Building and Fire Warden Training	Tuesday, 09 February	10.00-11.30am	Room 321, Level 3, Building 260 (OGGB), 12 Grafton road
Role of a Leader and Manager	Wednesday, 17 March	09.00-11.30am	Room 501, Level 4, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus
HSNO Exempt Laboratory Managers Workshop	Thursday, 11 March	9.30am-12.30pm	Room 501, Level 4, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus
DLP Containment workshop	Thursday, 18 February	9.00am – 12.00pm	Room 501, Level 5, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus
How to Undertake a Risk Assessment	Friday, 05 February	09.00-11.00am	Room 501, Level 4, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus
Signing Off on Risk Assessments	Thursday, 18 February	2.00-4.00pm	Room 501, Level 4, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus
Risk Assessment for Field Activities	Thursday, 18 February	9.00-11.00am	Room 301, Level 4, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus

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Health and safety representative training stage one	Thursday, 20 May and Friday, 21 May	8.30am-4.30pm	TBA
Health and safety representative training stage two	Thursday, 29 July and Friday, 30 July	8.30am-4.30pm	TBA

Bookings can be made via the Career Tools platform on the Staff Intranet, or through emails to OD at [od@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:od@auckland.ac.nz) For the Health and Safety representative training stage one and two, please book through [hsw@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:hsw@auckland.ac.nz).

This and previous issues of the HSW E-update are available [here](#).

If you have any queries on anything related to health, safety or wellbeing, please do not hesitate to contact us on [hsw@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:hsw@auckland.ac.nz).



Angus Clark

Associate Director – HSW