

**Imperial College
London**

**Issue 7
March 2007**

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Health and Safety Matters

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY NEWSLETTER

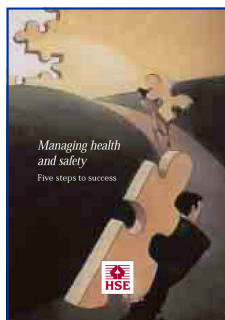


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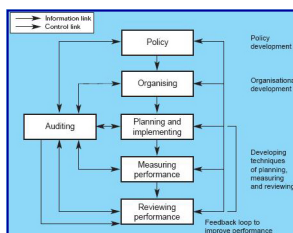
Review of Health and Safety—Update

The last edition of the Newsletter (November 2006), outlined the findings of the health and safety review conducted earlier in the year by Health and Safety Technology and Management Limited (HASTAM).



The Working Group set up to implement the report's recommendations is making good progress and in particular:

- A new 'statement of intent' now heads up the Safety Department website home page:
<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/safety>
- A revised College Health and Safety Policy Statement is currently under consideration. Consultation with the Trade Unions is under way.
- The supporting document outlining the organisation and arrangements for delivering health and safety within the College has also been extensively rewritten and expanded. This too has been submitted for consultation. It is intended that the document will provide sufficient detail on responsibilities and duties (role specifications) to enable inclusion in job descriptions, advertisements, appointment letters and as part of PRDP's.



(and other safety personnel) on competency required for the post. A standard pro-forma letter of appointment will be drafted and made available.

- The Safety Department is also working with Human Resources to conduct a survey into how many different job types exist within the College. This should result in the creation of a number of generic job descriptions that will include basic safety duties and can be linked with training matrices, PRDP's etc.
- Staff Development and the Safety Department are working together on a new development programme for Principal Investigators. This will include basic health and safety management information and a steer towards the more specialised safety courses.

Police Familiarisation Day

Upwards of 30 police inspectors and members of the fire service attended a police familiarisation seminar at the College on 23 February. Included among the speakers was a Government Security Liaison officer who outlined the expectations of the emergency services with regard to emergency response and disaster recovery. College speakers from Property Management, the Safety Department and CBS gave an overview of Imperial and the intrinsic hazards associated with the College and its activities. Following the presentations, the group was invited to tour selected areas on the South Kensington campus including laboratory and CBS facilities.

So You Want to Relocate Your Research Group?

Ian Hackford, Division of Medicine DSO

Ian Hackford, gives us the benefit of his experiences in relation to advising research groups involved in relocating within his Division. A brief but useful summary of a complex and potentially traumatic activity!

Advanced Planning

Organise the entire event to deadlines. Determine a precise date for the move and set your own timetable of actions leading up to this date. Establish with removal companies how long it will take to effect the move, book dates with specialists for re-commissioning of equipment at the new location and keep everyone informed of timings and delays.

Which equipment first?

Give priority to items that are critical to re-establishing the work or are the most complex to re-commission e.g. safety cabinets, mass spectrometers, autoclaves etc.

How?

Determine how the move will be physically carried out. This will depend upon whether the move is within the premises or to a distant location. It may involve any combination of departmental staff, central portering staff or external companies.

Selecting a removal company

Most removal companies will not cater for sensitive or hazardous goods. You may need to select a company to remove 'routine' items and a separate specialist organisation or courier to move hazardous materials (see below). Beware of companies who offer to move laboratory specimens in situ in freezers without enquiring about the nature of the samples. The Safety Department can advise on couriers who have a capability for moving dangerous goods and details are also available on the Purchasing website:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/purchasing/productareas/couriers>

Make sure your chosen companies are insured to do the work that you have asked of them—check any excesses and exclusion clauses. Be wary of using private vehicles—there may be insurance issues and possible implications arising from dangerous goods regulations.

Authorisations to relocate research work

Take account of the implications of moving location on existing risk assessments—they will require updating. Risk assessments for work with genetically modified organisms relocating to a new GM centre will need to be submitted to the local GM Committee and approved *before* the samples arrive at the new centre. Authorisations will need to be in place for work with radioactive material.

The Move

Vacating the premises

The vacating group has a duty of care to leave the premises in good order. All items (other than those that have

been agreed can stay), hazardous substances, waste etc. must be removed and the area decontaminated as far as is reasonably practicable. This must be documented and the area secured upon departure. For guidance see:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/safety/formsandchecklists/decontamination>

Disposing of unwanted items

Unwanted equipment will need to be decontaminated and disposed by an appropriate means—this will be dependent on the nature of contamination. Complete decontamination of fixed items such as fume cupboards is impossible but the accessible parts should be cleaned as far as possible. Again, guidance exists on the Safety Department website (see previous link).

Instruction and communication

Communicate closely with the removal company and establish points of contact. Plan routes out of the building, arrange parking / loading spaces, marking and labelling requirements for items and identify any items that may require special treatment.

Manual handling

If your own staff are involved make sure they have had some manual handling instruction. Ensure suitable equipment (trolleys etc.) is available and that goods lifts are working and routes are clear of obstacles or defects.

Transporting equipment

Equipment will need to be suitably decontaminated and packed prior to removal. Decontamination will normally be the responsibility of the research group and packing often the responsibility of the removal company (unless you are moving a short distance within the premises and carrying out the move yourself).

Transporting hazardous material

The regulations governing the transport of dangerous goods are complex and the extent to which they apply will depend upon the nature of materials to be moved (biological substances, radioactive substances hazardous chemicals), quantities, whether refrigeration is required, where they are moving to (within the premises, within the UK or abroad) and the proposed mode of transport. You should seek advice from your Departmental / Divisional Safety Advisor or the Safety Department. There is some guidance available on the Safety Department website:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/safety/guidanceandadvice/dangerousgoods>

Final checks

Inspect the premises that are being vacated and that the clearance procedures have been followed. Ensure clearance documentation has been completed and handed over and the area secured to prevent unauthorised re-entry. Ensure that the space database is updated at Faculty level so that the rental for space no longer occupied is cancelled.

Smoking Cessation

Claire O'Brien, Senior Occupational Health Adviser



Following in the footsteps of Ireland and Scotland, England will become smoke free from July 1st 2007 under the Health Act 2006. The ban covers virtually all enclosed public places including offices, factories, pubs and bars.

It is fact that 70% of smokers want to break the habit; there are 12 million ex-

smokers in the UK. If they can do it so can you! Many smokers make more than one attempt before they stop completely but each time they learn more about themselves and their habit and are better prepared for the next attempt. The message is don't give up giving up.

Smoking cessation aids

There are two proven pharmaceutical aids to stopping smoking: nicotine replacement therapy and Zyban. Nicotine replacement therapies (NRT), such as chewing gum, skin patch, tablet, nasal spray or inhaler, are designed to help the smoker to break the habit while providing a reduced dose of nicotine to overcome withdrawal symptoms such as craving and mood changes. Zyban works by de-sensitising the brain's nicotine receptors and has similar success rates to NRT.

The course of treatment lasts around 8 weeks and is only available on prescription under medical supervision. Zyban is safe for most healthy adults but there are side effects, the most serious of which is the risk of seizures (fits). However, the risk is estimated to be less than 1 in 1000 but other less serious side effects such as insomnia, dry mouth and headaches are more common.

Studies have shown that NRT & Zyban roughly double the chances of a smoker successfully quitting compared to someone using no therapy. Both are available on an NHS prescription which helps reduce the cost of giving up.

A review of alternative therapies found little evidence to support the effectiveness of either acupuncture or hypnosis as a means of stopping smoking but such methods may suit some smokers.

For more information visit:

www.gosmokefree.co.uk/getunhooked/

Top tips for kicking the habit

1. Get ready

- Remember why you first started: what was the trigger
- Wash your clothes to get rid of the smell of smoke
- Think about the health gains and the money you will save
- Don't be afraid to ask for help

2. Make a plan

- Write down reasons why you want to give up
- Make a date to give up and stick to it
- Change your routine and try to avoid danger areas: its tough but pubs and alcohol are real triggers
- Make up a calendar for the first 90 days so that you can cross off each day and make a note of how much money you saved by not smoking
- Tell friends and family that you are quitting as you will be embarrassed if they catch you smoking
- Ask a friend or partner to stop with you and make a contract with each other

3. Go smoke free

- Throw away any cigarettes, matches or lighters that you may have lying around the house
- Understand that withdrawal symptoms are temporary: they are healthy signs that the body is repairing itself from its long exposure to nicotine
- When cravings occur, hold your breath for as long as possible or take a few deep rhythmic breaths

4. Keep going

- Never allow yourself to think 'one won't hurt', it will. It's a slippery slope
- Take one day at a time: each day without a cigarette is good news for your health, family and your bank balance
- Try to avoid alcohol, coffee and other beverages that you associate with cigarette smoking
- Get more active: exercise helps you relax; helps take your mind off smoking and its difficult to smoke whilst exercising.

NHS Smoking Helpline: 0800 169 0 169

Quitline: 0800 00 22 00

Safety Department Guidance Update

Off Site Working—Launch of Policy & Guidance

The launch of the Policy, Guidance and supporting Risk Assessment tools took place on 26 January at 170 Queens Gate and included an address by Professor Steve Smith, Principal of the Faculty of Medicine. The Policy is now in force and those engaged in off site work are encouraged to use the templates—feedback is welcome during the course of the coming months, which will serve as consultation period. Risk assessments will be reviewed by the Safety Department / OH during the first six months.



Further details may be found on the Off Site Working web pages:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/safety/guidanceandadvice/offsiteworking1>

Sourcing Safe Blood Supplies A short guidance note has been posted on the Safety Department web-site outlining details of obtaining blood supplies from the National Blood Service:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/safety/guidanceandadvice/biosafety/safeblood>

ACGM Compendium of Guidance The Scientific Advisory Committee for Genetic Modification (SACGM) has recently updated the ACGM Compendium of Guidance to incorporate new technological developments and legislative changes. The Compendium covers work with genetically modified micro organisms (GMMs) and transgenic animals and plants. The revised Compendium was launched on the 1st of February 2007 and can be accessed on the HSE website:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/gmo/acgm/acgmcomp/index.htm>

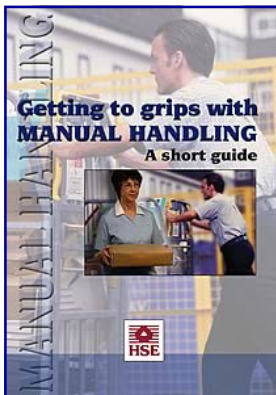
GM Committees have been duly notified.

Laser Safety New web pages are in the process of being developed on this subject:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/safety/guidanceandadvice/lasersafety>

Manual Handling Risk Assessment Guidance

Dougie Mason, Audit and Information Officer



Manual handling involves any activity that requires the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move or hold an object.

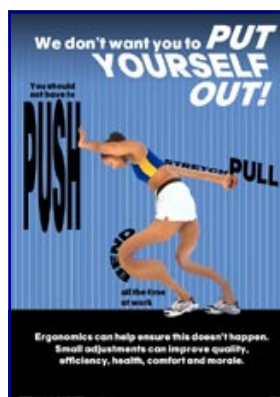
The Regulations specify that all manual handling activities should be avoided whenever possible and assessed if they are unavoidable, thereby reducing the risk of an injury, such as a muscle strain or back injury.

Manual handling activities are prevalent in every department within the College and range from lifting boxes of printing paper or water bottles in the office to moving large items of equipment and materials in a workshop or laboratory. The majority of manual handling tasks that have the greatest potential to cause an injury are carried out by trained employees, specifically technicians.

However, following the manual handling survey carried out last year, it was evident that there was a need to publish relevant guidance material relating to manual handling. It was found that many departments carried out activities that required some form of assessment before undertaking the task. Some of these tasks may only require a 'stop and think' process whilst others may require a full detailed assessment of the operation.

Occupational Health are currently working on guidance notes for manual handling risk assessments, which will include general information on risk assessments, for example, situations that may or may not require an assessment, the process of carrying out an assessment and risk assessment forms.

The guidance will also include information on the safe manual handling of loads and general guidance on lifting techniques for a number of tasks common in departments across the College.



In the meantime, there are videos on manual handling available to loan from the department. These videos can be borrowed for one week, subject to availability. For more information, see the Occupational Health web pages at:

www.imperial.ac.uk/occhealth/guidanceandadvice/manualhandling

If you are concerned about any activities in your department that you think require a manual handling assessment then speak to the departmental safety officer or manual handling assessor

Health Checks for Overseas Fieldwork

Dr Alan Swann, Occupational Health Direc-



With the implementation of the new College Offsite Working Policy, both staff and students going on fieldwork or expeditions to very remote locations will now have to have a health check-up with the College Occupational Health Service as part of their preparation for their trip. Check-ups will also be required before trips lasting longer than three months or if the work requires a high standard of physical fitness. The aim of the check-ups is to make sure that, for anyone with a pre-existing health problem that could flare-up when away, the problem is well-managed before the person goes.

Health clearance is required for:

- Work more than 24 hours travel distance away from medical facilities

Or

- Work activities that require a high standard of fitness e.g. technical climbing, diving, caving, altitude >3000m

Or

- Overseas trips longer than 3 months

We will also advise on any specific support measures that could help the person stay well when they are away or deal with a flare-up should one occur.

As this could take some time to sort out, check-ups should be arranged well in advance of travel. We suggest about two months before travelling: around about the same time as people should be sorting out travel vaccinations.

Health checks can be arranged by downloading the Health Clearance questionnaire from the Occupational Health Services [Travel Pages](#) on Spectrum, completing it and sending it to the College Occupational Health Service at South Kensington. If further information is needed, an Occupational Health Adviser will contact the person and if necessary arrange to see them in clinic. The outcome will be notified to the individual and the person-in-charge of the fieldwork. No medical information provided will be disclosed, although where a person may need support from others should they fall ill, then the person-in-charge of the trip will need to be given information on the support required.

If someone has a problem that might pose significant risk to them while abroad, or could endanger others, then it may be necessary to restrict their involvement in some activities or, if a more general risk, to not pass them as fit. This would only occur when the risk was judged substantial and where it could not be reduced through specific support. The primary objective of the health checks is to eliminate risk through support, not exclusion.

In addition to these formal check-ups, anyone planning a trip abroad who has an existing health problem needs to consider how they will manage this while away. The College travel insurance provides cover for any emergency treatment, but doesn't cover routine care or prescriptions. There is advice on the Occupational Health web pages at the following address:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/occhealth/guidanceandadvice/traveladviceandvaccination/pehealthproblems>

Beat the Congestion Charge



The congestion charge has now been extended to include South Kensington and will be in operation between the hours of 7.00am and 6.00pm. So why not get a tax free bike through the cycle to work scheme and beat the charge?

Bicycles are great for improving your health, getting past traffic jams and can halve your journey time to work.

The cycle to work scheme at Imperial College enables you to save up to 41% on the cost of a bicycle and cycling equipment by saving money on national insurance and tax deductions.

For more information see:

www.imperial.ac.uk/occhealth/guidanceandadvice/cycletoworkscheme

Occupational Health Information

Staff Changes

Our Administrative Officer (IT), Aggie Schikora, has left the department after two and a half years. Aggie has now moved on to work for a housing association as a Business IT Officer. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Aggie for all her hard work and wish her all the best in her new role.



FREEPHONE: 0800 174319

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Employee Assistance Solutions

Accidents

Rohini Gowtham, Accident Investigation Officer

Changes to Accident Categorisation

As a result of last years external audit of the College Safety Management systems, the categorisation of accidents has now been amended to more accurately reflect the definitions given in the Health and Safety Executive publication HSG65 *Successful health and safety management*.

The new categories and definitions, which have been in use since 1 January 2007, are as follows:

- **Accident:** Undesired event giving rise to injury, ill-health, damage or other loss.
- **Near Miss:** Undesired event or condition where no injury, ill-health, damage or other loss occurs.

Dangerous Occurrences are now restricted to those events listed under Schedule 2 of the *Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)*:

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/SI/si1995/Uksi19953163_en4.htm#sdiv2

As non-injury (or damage only) accidents are now included within the 'accident' definition, we will see an increase in the number of accidents recorded in our statistics, whilst we anticipate that the number of dangerous occurrences will dwindle to virtually zero, since historically, incidents reportable under Schedule 2 are very rare within the College. Some incidents previously designated as dangerous occurrences will now fall within the 'near miss' category.

DSO's were notified of the changes before they came into force and accident forms and supporting guidance has been amended:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/safety/guidanceandadvice/reportingaccidents>

The 2006 graph (opposite) has been amended to include data from the Faculty of Natural Sciences formed by the merger of the Faculties of Life Sciences and Physical Sciences on 1 November 2005. The 2006 figures from Natural Sciences are similar to the combined 2005 figures from Life Sciences and Physical Sciences.

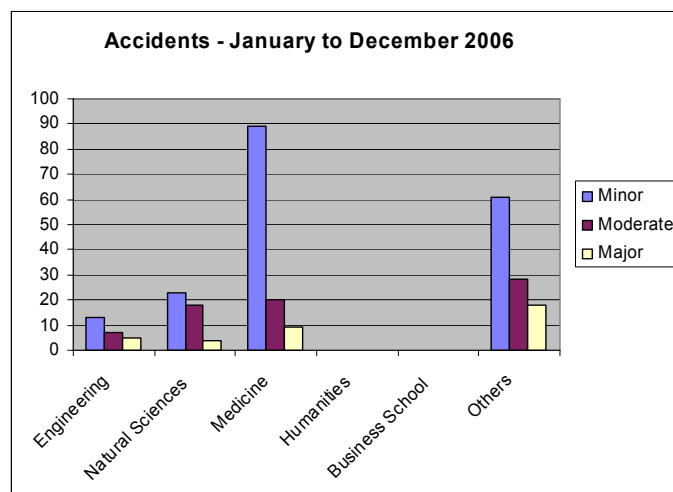
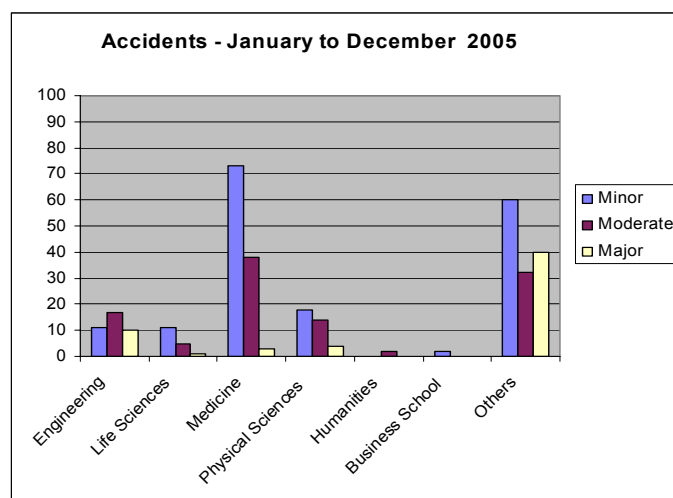
Overall, the number of accidents reported to the Safety Department have dropped for the second year running. The fall between 2004 and 2005 can possibly be explained by the change in reporting criteria i.e. from mid-2004 only accidents attributable to College activities or the condition of the premises have been recorded (rather than other miscellaneous accidents that cannot be attributed as such). This does not necessarily explain the fall between 2005 and 2006—possibly the level of reporting has dropped or possibly we are getting safer!

Accident Statistics

	Jan-Dec 2005	Jan-Dec 2006
Total accidents reported to the Safety Department	341	295
Total accidents reported to the Health and Safety Executive in accordance with RIDDOR 1995	23	9

Comparison Graphs

January to December 2005 vs. 2006



Accident rating:

Minor: No treatment required / First Aid.

Moderate: Visit to Occupational Health / GP / Health Centre or A&E.

Major: HSE reportable / Lost time (up to 3 days) / member of public taken to hospital for treatment.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What travel services are available at Imperial College?

The College Occupational Health Service can provide you with, where necessary, a wide range of travel vaccinations, advice on travel health and malaria prophylaxis. All staff and students who are travelling abroad through their work are eligible to receive travel vaccinations free of charge.

If I am travelling outside the UK do I need any travel vaccinations?

If you are travelling to countries other than Northern & Central Europe, North America, or Australia vaccinations are usually recommended. Your need for travel vaccinations will depend on many factors including where you are travelling to, how long you are going for, and what your trip will involve whilst you are abroad.

Staff and students are advised to access the Occupational Health website as soon as they know where they are likely to be travelling to; the website provides details as to what vaccinations and malaria prophylaxis maybe required together with infection risks that the destination may pose. To find out recommendations for countries you are visiting, check www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

If you are unsure as to what vaccinations and/or malaria prophylaxis you require please contact the Occupational Health department to discuss.

How do I arrange an appointment?

Further details of where travel clinics are situated can be found on the Occupational Health website. We advise that travel vaccinations are given approximately 6-8 weeks before travelling; this is to allow time to complete all vaccine schedules. To arrange an appointment for vaccinations; either email or telephone the Occupational Health Department. Don't forget to complete a travel health questionnaire and bring to your appointment together with details of any vaccinations previously received.

What happens if I am required to travel at the last minute?

We advise that you still follow the above procedure; certain travel vaccinations can be given as boosters and therefore will provide you with protection when abroad. As above, contact the Occupational Health Department to discuss with an adviser.

Wild Weather Hits College

College maintenance teams and the Safety Department experienced a busy day on 18 January when high winds and heavy downpours swept across London and the South-East. A number of incidents were reported across College, with a particular busy period around lunchtime:

10.30 Cyclotron Building, MRC-CSC, Hammersmith Campus. High winds smashed a window that had been left open.

13.00 Reynolds Building, Charing Cross Campus. A tree in the car park area snapped from its base and fell, crashing into the building. The building was evacuated and the tree removed. There was some discussion between the College and the Trust as to who 'owned' the tree! The remaining adjacent trees received a severe pruning to reduce the risk of a repeat.



13.00 Electrical & Electronic Engineering, South Kensington Campus. Window damaged.

13.00 Cyclotron Building, Hammersmith Campus. A pane of glass dislodged from an upper floor and landed in the road approximately 100 yards away.

13.00 Electrical & Electronic Engineering, South Kensington Campus. Tiles falling from Sherfield Building broke side windows.

13.15 Bessemer Building, South Kensington Campus. Window shattered by a flying piece of metal.

13.30 Chemistry Building, South Kensington Campus. A piece of metal cladding on one of the exhaust stacks came loose and was flapping dangerously in the high winds.



14.25 Roderick Hill Building, South Kensington Campus. Window was shattered by high winds.

Contact Details

Occupational Health

Temporary Address:
Rear of Ace Extension
South Kensington
London SW7 2AZ

PHONE:

0207 594 9401

FAX:

0207 594 9407

E-MAIL:

occhealth@imperial.ac.uk

WEBSITE:

www.imperial.ac.uk/occhealth/

Safety Department

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South Kensington
London SW7 2AZ

PHONE:

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WEBSITE:

www3.imperial.ac.uk/safety

If you have any comments or suggestions for inclusion in future Newsletters please contact the editors:

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or

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Safety Department
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Training

Christine Wright, Assistant Safety Director

Safety Training Booking System

You may have noticed confirmation bookings and joining instructions being sent via the Oracle Learning Management System (OLMS) since August 2006 by the training team. OLMS has been developed in co-operation with Staff Development, Centre for Educational Development and we were able to identify common training needs.

OLMS is a sub section of the ICIS system and is already a feature in Finance. By building on an existing package we were able to benefit from ongoing ICT support and take advantage of College funding. This will also mean that we shall be able to build on more features in future phases.

OLMS is linked to HR Management System and Students records which should help match enrolments against the database. It is also dependent on HR / Student records and bookings that cannot be identified have to be placed under an External Delegate list. It is therefore important that Safety Officers and Supervisors continue using the online bookings system so that the correct delegate is booked. e.g. CID, Name and Department.

OLMS will send notifications to delegates when a booking has been made and it

will also send joining instructions with attachments seven days before the course starts. In an ideal world this would be fourteen days but we have found that bookings cannot always be finalised until closer to the course.

OLMS can record training information on:

- Attendance
- Non- attendance
- Absences
- Cancellations
- Course evaluations

However, the system is admin-heavy and we have occasionally had to rely on joining instructions sent via e-mail. We will be able to produce reports once all the information has been entered. So far, we have entered data from September to December 2006.



Learn how to do it properly.....

.....for Ladder Safety Training see below

Training Schedule & Events

Below is a selection of forthcoming courses. The complete list for this term is too comprehensive to include here—please consult the training programme link for the entire range:
<https://www3.imperial.ac.uk/safety/training/coursesindex.htm>

March 2007

Ladders / Tower Scaffold (SK)	14th
Personal First Aid: Off Site Working (SK)	20th
Fieldwork First Aid (SK)	21st / 22nd
Vacuum Pumps (SK)	28th

April 2007

Food Hygiene (SK) <i>Occ. Health</i>	24th
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April 2007 (Cont)

Ensuring Laser Safety (SK)	25th
Personal Safety and Crime Awareness (Silwood) (Security)	27th

May 2007

Co-ordinator Updates (Hammersmith) <i>with Occ. Health</i>	1st
Manual Handling: Users and Assessors (SK) <i>Occ. Health</i>	10th
Health and Safety Responsibilities for Academic Supervisors (Hammersmith)	30th