

**NAS Health and Safety Committee Meeting
27 July 2007 2pm Lord Clerk Register's Room, GRH**

Attendees: Dave Brownlee (Deputy Keeper- Corporate Services), Alex Cochrane (Reader Services Branch), John Fraser (ICT Digital Information Systems), Jimmy Gilmour (Reader Services Branch- West Search Room), Linda Gordon (Court and Legal Records Branch), James McCormack (Government Records Branch), Stuart McIver (ICT Digital Information Systems), John Mitchell (Accommodation Services Branch), Bob Phillips (Accommodation Services Branch), Davie Renton (Accommodation Services Branch), Jenny Cutts (secretary).

Apologies: Tristram Clarke (Outreach Services Branch), John Welsh (ICT Digital Information Systems).

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence from Tristram Clark and John Welsh were noted.

2. Health and Safety Entry on *theOracle*

Plans for revision of Health and Safety information on *theOracle* were discussed. A suggested list of topics for the drop-down menu were circulated and considered. A section on building works was suggested. It was noted that John Mitchell is drafting text for each heading and that Chris Dunne will effect the changes to the intranet once agreed.

3. Rota for H&S Inspections, Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessments

A draft rota for inspections and assessments to be carried out by named Health and Safety Liaison Officers (HSLOs) was circulated and discussed. It was noted that Jimmy Gilmour had completed most of the West Register House inspections/assessments and was therefore able to assist with outstanding inspections/assessments at other buildings, such as Thomas Thomson House. Outstanding areas requiring assessment were thought to be Outreach Services Branch and Thomas Thomson House. It was agreed that the practice of 'hot desking' within Historical Search Room meant that individual workplace assessments were not necessary. It was noted that Iain Moffat is no longer a HSLO and that additional HSLOs might be recruited, specifically for TTH and WRH.

Action Point: Dave Brownlee to issue a request for additional HSLOs.

4. Current H&S issues of concern

4.1 Jimmy Gilmour observed that there are many objects stored in the basement at WRH including furniture and that these items are obstructive. Bob Philips explained that a photographic record of these pieces of furniture had been supplied to Jim Grady but that no decisions had been made on disposal. It was noted that some of these pieces may be antique, some may be saleable and some could be recycled elsewhere. Jimmy Gilmour explained that used toner cartridges accumulate in the loading bay at WRH, thereby restricting the available space. It was explained that these cartridges

had been removed by John Bruce and Helen Bull for recycling on an ad hoc basis. Bob Philips asserted that the NAS sustainability policy would support a policy whereby the supplier of toner cartridges is also responsible for their environmentally sound disposal. It was suggested that Finance and Administration Branch pursue this.

Action Point: Dave Brownlee to follow up these issues with FAB.

4.2 Alex Cochrane noted that trolleys had been left in the store rooms off the upper dome, GRH, in positions which would impede exit through the doors during a fire alarm. It was agreed that this concern be raised with Brian Walker.

4.3 Davie Renton asked about security arrangements for the garden entrance, GRH. It was clarified that a receptionist plus security officer would be stationed in that area and that panic alarms would be provided both at the garden entrance and at GRH front reception area.

4.4 The fire exit adjacent to the garden entrance was discussed. It has been observed that members of the public often attempt to exit the building using this door. It was noted that although use of this doorway is not currently endangered by any scaffolding, the public should be prevented from opening this door and exiting into the building site. It was further explained that a rope barrier had been stationed in front of this door but was sometimes found to have been moved from its position. Bob Philips asserted that as the rope may easily be unhooked in case of fire, it is not an obstacle and should therefore remain in position as a deterrent to customers using this door as an exit.

4.5 Linda Gordon raised the issue of cleanliness at TTH. It was noted that due to the shortage of cleaners, the tea room and kitchen are dirty and the bins are often overflowing. Dave Brownlee explained that discussions have been held regarding the feasibility of employing short term contract cleaners to overcome such problems. Meantime we would be advertising shortly for permanent members of cleaning staff.

4.6 James Thorburn reported that the inspection hatches at TTH are a health and safety risk. It was noted that these hatches must be used twice a year to perform BGM monitoring; there is limited space in which open them and the steel hatches are very heavy with no safe closing mechanism. Bob Philips explained that no members of NAS staff should be accessing these inspection hatches and that contractors doing so would require risk assessment before attempting to do so.

4.7 It was reported that the door to the ladies toilet in TTH reception area does not close. It was explained that this was due to the as yet unresolved structural problem concerning that part of the building which will be rectified during 2007-2008.

4.8 It was noted that the plan cabinets in TTH store room 2C continue to be a health and safety problem. James Thorburn explained that a report concerning damaged plan cabinets in 2C had been prepared 7 or 8 years ago and the difficulty of retrieving plans from these cabinets continues to be a problem. It was noted that a working group to consider this 2C storage had been convened and that feedback from the group was expected. It was further noted that progress in this area was also dependent

upon the business case concerning TTH2 and plans for additional accommodation. It was agreed nonetheless that Conservation must be involved in selection of any replacement plan chests as required.

4.9 It was noted that the door handle to a staff office often becomes loose making it impossible for the room's occupant to leave without assistance. Bob Philips agreed to add all ground floor doors into the programme of checking fire doors.

4.10 Stuart McIver explained concerns that certain microfilm equipment may be producing too much ammonia and that the room where it is situated is not sufficiently ventilated. Following discussion, it was noted that this machine is a sealed unit containing an internal ammonia absorber and ventilation system but that this equipment has twice been stopped due to the smell of noxious gas. It was also noted that one member of staff using this machine has no sense of smell and would not therefore notice if it was malfunctioning in this respect. It was agreed that a ventilation check should be included the next time this equipment is serviced.

4.11 It was noted that paper supplies may be stored in a designated room at WRH and that contracts should enable minimal stock to be stored in-house.

4.12 Chemical storage and disposal within the microfilm unit was discussed. It was noted that contracts should include the environmental disposal of all chemicals as well as their supply. Bob Philips reported that one ROSPA recommendation was that a COSHH assessment be undertaken for every chemical used by NAS. Such assessments include appropriate disposal. It was noted that all chemicals should be stored within suitable cabinets and that each may only be stored with other chemicals as long as it is safe to do so. If chemicals may not be stored together, two or more chemical storage cabinets must be utilised. COSHH assessments must be displayed as appropriate and also be made available to first aiders. A COSHH book for all chemicals used by CSB is held at TTH and a similar COSHH book should be produced for all operational areas where chemicals are used, including the Digital Imaging Unit.

Action Point: Stuart McIver and John Fraser to follow up these issues with DIU Manager, taking advice from John Mitchell as necessary.

4.13 It was noted that the configuration of digital cameras work stations within GRH may cause health problems for their operators with regards to the need to repeatedly twist to one side. It was also noted that it was easy to bang your head on this equipment and that such a collision can cause cuts. The importance of accident reporting was reiterated as was the need to undertake risk assessments of these work stations. It was agreed that relevant safety equipment should be obtained from ICAM, the manufacturer.

Action Point: Stuart McIver and John Fraser to arrange risk assessments of DIU workstations as required and liaise with DIU Manager on obtaining any necessary safety equipment.

4.14 The issue of daylight breaks for reprographic staff was considered. It was clarified that there was no operational requirement for the blinds to remain closed all

day in the DIU digital camera room and that camera operators were entitled to daylight breaks. It was reported that it was possible for micrographic staff to spend all day inside a dark room with no access to daylight. Line managers must support regular daylight breaks as an essential health and safety requirement.

4.15 It was reported that three large ladders stored in room 17 posed health and safety risks as this room is also used as an office. It was agreed that more suitable locations for storing these ladders should be sought and noted that use of them may be shared throughout the office.

Action Point: Bob Phillips to arrange re-siting of ladders

4.16 James McCormack raised the issue that the practice of leaving the buildings at break times may cause problems in case of fire evacuation. He explained that the mechanism whereby the flexi clock automatically keys users out for a full half hour between certain times of the day may cause staff who will only spend a couple of minutes outside to go to a shop or take a smoking break to avoid keying out so that they will not lose 30 minutes. It was suggested that this practice of not keying out would cease if the rules of the flexi clock in respect of debiting 30 minutes were changed. It was agreed that staff also signing the in/out book would provide a method for tracking occupants of the building in case of fire.

4.17 John Mitchell reported that disabled toilets for WRH had been designed but that resource requirements prevent these plans being implemented until possibly after the autumn budget revision. It was noted that NAS must accept the risk with regard to Disability Equality meantime.

4.18 Bob Philips stated that regulations had changed with regard to GRH substation in that no one may now enter the building without prior approval this being recorded.

5. Accident reporting since last meeting

It was noted that reported accidents included only minor cuts and grazes. It was further noted that the redesign of the Oracle Health and Safety section will make it easier for members of staff to find accident reporting forms and guidance.

6. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising not already covered

The action points from the last meeting's minutes were discussed as follows:

[4.3] Dave Brownlee reported that health and safety objectives had been added into the NAS Corporate Plan and invited suggestions for amendments.

[5.7] A storage area in WRH had been duly made available.

[5.8] Bob Philips explained that Linda Ramsay had been consulted regarding the cardboard crusher and that it was agreed to assess the GROS crusher. It was noted that such equipment deals with cardboard and not paper.

[5.9] It was noted that contacting the digital camera manufacturer regarding additional safety features remained outstanding and that the issue of leaking oil should also be

addressed. It was noted that relevant safety notices had been posted by the digital cameras. It was considered whether the operation of a shift system may cause the cameras to leak oil and that solutions to this problem are also required.

[5.11] It was confirmed that a risk assessment of the box making machine had been undertaken and that ear defenders and gloves had been supplied to the operators. It was noted that a more suitable desk should be found. The storage of box making card was discussed and it was thought the present system whereby sheets are brought into the box making room a few at a time, as required, was an adequate system. Consideration was given to other areas which may accommodate the production of larger boxes. It was noted that the sorting area at TTH was not suitable as it is occupied by the 'summer weeders'.

[6] It was noted that the continued requirement for a washing machine for use in TTH had been underlined by the recent involvement of CSB staff with Edinburgh City Archives flood incident as it would have been useful for washing the protective garments worn.

[7] It was reported that the problem with ladders in the Historical Search Room had been resolved immediately subsequent to the previous Health and Safety Committee meeting.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Appreciation for the SHAW information circulated by Linda Gordon was offered. It was noted that GRH SHAW representatives had been identified (Leanne Swallow and Jenny Cutts).

7.2 Queries were raised with regard to the operation of the paper storage area within WRH. It was considered whether TTH orders for paper to be supplied from WRH store need to be placed via reprographics.

8. Date of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to take place in October 2007. Jenny Cutts will canvass for dates nearer the time.

Jenny Cutts
7 August 2007