The University of Edinburgh
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

Western General Hospital Site
Royal Edinburgh Hospital Site

HEALTH AND SAFETY

First Aid and Incident Reporting
Aim
To describe arrangements for first aid in local areas on the WGH/REH sites, and explain the importance of accident and “near miss” reporting and how to submit an accident report using the on-line reporting system.

Introduction
With the best will in the world, despite fine attention to detail, conscientious training, preventative mechanisms and due diligence, accidents will occasionally happen. It is very important that on each and every occasion, the circumstances and consequences are reported so that management may properly study these, learn from the events and, if appropriate, take steps to prevent a recurrence. “Near miss” occurrences need to be reported too in order that the possibility of a recurrence, possibly with more serious consequences, might be prevented.

Policy
All accidents and near-miss occurrences must be reported. In many cases, this may be a statutory obligation; but, even where it is not, the future safety of staff, students and visitors stands to be enhanced by reviewing the circumstances giving rise to such events and by aiming to ensure that they do not occur again.

Legal Obligations
All accidents, instances of occupational ill health, fires and dangerous occurrences must be reported to the University’s Director of Health & Safety as soon as possible after the incident has occurred, and in any case within seven days, so that the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases
and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations may be met. No accident should be considered too trivial to report. In some cases, the University’s centrally-based Health & Safety Department may be obliged to inform the Health & Safety Executive of the circumstances and consequences of an occurrence.

Notification of Accidents, Occupational Ill Health, Dangerous Occurrences or Incidents
If you have an accident, or if you have a case of suspected occupational ill-health, you must tell your local health and safety coordinator and/or your immediate line manager as soon as possible. This will enable management to take any necessary remedial action as appropriate to ensure the accident does not re-occur. (E.g. revise procedures, repair equipment, etc.).

On-line Accident Reporting
A form is available to complete on-line from the University’s Health & Safety Department web campus at:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/health-safety/accident-reporting

Please complete the form as fully and as accurately as possible. You can use the links to quickly access the relevant section(s) of the accident/incident form. The on-line form can either be completed by the injured person or someone acting on their behalf.

Please provide a clear and comprehensive account of what happened and how? This may include details of:

- The circumstances that led to the accident/incident
- What the injured person was doing at the time
- Any hazards involved (chemicals, materials, physical, etc.)
- Who else was involved
- What personal protective equipment was being worn (where applicable)
- The injury
- Any immediate first aid treatment given
- Any emergency services that were in attendance
- If the injured person was taken to hospital immediately following the accident; or attended hospital at a later date
- Treatment received at hospital
- Action taken by the local area to prevent a reoccurrence

Reports may, under certain circumstances, be used as evidence in dealing with claims arising out of an accident, incident or case of occupational ill health (see Reporting Occupational Ill-Health). Care should, therefore, be taken to ensure that entries are as accurate as possible.

The University’s on-line reporting system does not provide for a copy of the report to be sent automatically to the injured person’s supervisor. The person reporting an injury, dangerous occurrence or “near miss” is, therefore, strongly encouraged to copy the report to his or her supervisor who, in turn, is requested to copy it to the Health and Safety Manager. Only by doing so will line managers be made aware in each case of occurrences that may require to be investigated
and considered with the aim of ensuring that there is no repetition with the potential to affect another person.

**Notification of “Near-Miss” Occurrences**

If you personally experience or observe a near-miss incident, the same form referred to in the previous paragraphs should be completed. Gathering near-miss information is important, as this may direct remedial action that will serve to prevent an actual injury or loss at some future time.

**Accident Investigation**

Where an injury or serious loss has occurred, and in some near-miss situations, laboratory managers and health and safety specialists may convene to review the circumstances, examine evidence, and possibly take statements from people involved, with a view to compiling a report containing recommendations geared to minimising the potential for a reoccurrence.

**Reporting Occupational Ill Health**

Cases of confirmed or suspected occupational ill health must be reported to the Occupational Health Unit. A form is available to complete on-line from the University’s Health & Safety Department web campus at:


**Genetically Modified Organisms**

There is an explicit requirement in the GM Regulations to immediately report to the Health & Safety Executive any accident or incident involving Class 2 or Class 3 GMOs (including genetically modified micro-organisms). Researchers are not however expected, indeed should not, contact the Health and Safety Executive themselves, as any notifications required to the HSE are always to be done by the University’s Health and Safety Department; clearly this requires that the University’s Health and Safety Department be informed as quickly as possible after an accident or incident.

An accident is defined as any incident involving a significant or unintended release (outside of primary containment) of a GMO which presents a hazard, immediate or delayed, direct or indirect, to either human health and safety, or the environment. This therefore includes any occasion when a person is exposed, or potentially exposed, to a Class 2 or 3 GMO, or a significant spillage within the lab.

The immediate priority following any accident or incident is appropriate first aid treatment and, where necessary, additional medical treatment. The area should also be made safe and decontaminated as necessary to prevent any further exposures. Following these actions the University’s Health & Safety Department should be contacted by telephone as soon as possible. Completion of an electronic University accident report should not be regarded as an alternative to phoning as the reporting system is not monitored at all times, although an electronic report should also be prepared and sent as soon as possible after the occurrence.

In all cases where an individual may have been exposed to a Class 2 or 3 GMM, irrespective of the availability of immediate prophylactic treatment or likelihood of infection, the person must make contact with a NHS medical practitioner (for example, a general practitioner or via the Regional
Infectious Disease Unit at the Western General Hospital or the Royal Infirmary’s Accident & Emergency department) and obtain independent medical advice on immediate action to be taken and for any follow-up. Whilst researchers may instinctively seek advice from colleagues with specialist expertise in the particular organism involved, this should not be regarded as an alternative to contacting a local independent medical practitioner working within the NHS system.

Details of the accident notification requirements outlined above are described in guidance at:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/health-safety/biosafety/accident-reporting/overview

First Aid
First aid is the skilled provision of treatment for a casualty or any person suddenly taken ill, using the facilities and materials available, to save life and prevent deterioration in the condition of that person while awaiting the arrival of qualified medical assistance (usually an ambulance).

The proximity of University buildings and local areas on the WGH site to the WGH’s Minor Injuries Clinic, as well as the presence of numerous qualified medical and nursing personnel working within the REH and local areas at the WGH will be of considerable benefit in the event of injuries having been sustained.

Injuries tending towards the trivial end of the spectrum should be well within the capabilities of trained First Aiders normally based in the local areas, using the equipment that is available.

The Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 sets out various requirements for the provision of suitably trained First Aiders in the workplace.

Report all accidents (and all near-miss incidents) using the on-line available at the University’s Health & Safety Department website:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/health-safety/biosafety/accident-reporting

Needle-stick Injuries
In the event of sustaining an accident resulting in a wound:

- Immediately, liberally wash the wound using soap and water but without scrubbing
- Gently encourage free bleeding of puncture wound
- Dry the area and apply a waterproof dressing
- Do not use antiseptics and skin washes - there is no evidence of their efficacy, and their effect on local defences is unknown.

In the event of skin, conjunctivae or mucous membranes being contaminated:

- Immediately irrigate the area copiously with water
- In the case of eye contamination, irrigate both eyes before and after removing any contact lenses.
It is important that medical personnel assess the possibility that prophylactic treatment or health surveillance may be necessary; this will be done on a case-by-case basis. The casualty should, therefore, attend the Minor Injuries Clinic as soon as possible after sustaining a needle-stick injury, and a copy of all relevant COSHH risk assessments should be sent together with the casualty.

Immediately after the casualty has received first aid, the University’s Occupational Health Unit should be informed (Location: Drummond Street Annexe, Drummond Street, Edinburgh, EH8 9XP; Tel: 0131 650 8190; Fax: 0131 651 9149; Email: Occupational.Health@ed.ac.uk). All needle-stick injuries should also be reported using the on-line form referenced in Paragraph 11.12.11.

Further information on accident procedures related to needle-stick injuries can be accessed at:

http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/Safety/includes/guidance/prevent_injuries_sharps.pdf

http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/Safety/health/sharps.pdf

Training
First aid training courses are available through the University. Further information may be found at:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/health-safety/training/timetable

Further information
General information on procedures for accident reporting appears on the University’s Health and Safety web campus:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/health-safety/biosafety/accident-reporting/overview

Further information regarding first aid is available at:

http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/Safety/Policy/Part2.pdf (Paragraphs 3.1 to 3.11)

ANNEX A Template for First Aid Signage
In the event of illness or injury, call a First Aider

INSERT NAME(S), OFFICE/LAB LOCATION, AND TELEPHONE NUMBER(S)

or an Emergency First Aider

INSERT NAME(S), OFFICE/LAB LOCATION, AND TELEPHONE NUMBER(S)

The nearest First Aid box is located at:

INSERT LOCATION

To call an Ambulance, dial (9)999 from any extension at a safe location and report the precise location of the casualty (INSERT BUILDING NAME AND FULL POSTAL ADDRESS), and send someone to Reception to guide attending Paramedics to the casualty.

Report all accidents using the on-line form at http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/health-safety/accident-reporting/reporting-form/form