The University of Edinburgh

College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

Western General Hospital Site

Royal Edinburgh Hospital Site

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Safety Audits and Inspections
SAFETY AUDITS, ENFORCEMENT AND INSPECTIONS BY REGULATORY AGENCIES

Aim
To describe the purpose of safety audits and inspections, including those led by regulatory agencies, and responsibilities of staff with regard to these.

Safety Audits and Inspections
Safety audits and inspections are tools used to assess how effectively health and safety is being managed in any given area.

An audit covers the overall management of health and safety, and typically involves looking at risk assessments, CoSHH assessments, accident and incident records, appointment of First Aiders and Fire Stewards, etc.

A local inspection focuses on the implementation of health safety; such as whether procedures are being properly followed, standards of housekeeping etc.

Each local area will be audited at least on an annual basis in conjunction with the College’s Health and Safety Manager. Reports are considered by local Health and Safety Committees.

The frequency and level of audits and local inspections is partly determined also by the WGH/REH sites Health and Safety Committee.

Model checklists for self-inspection are available on the University’s Health and Safety web site at:
http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/health-safety/risk-assessments-checklists/checklists

A record of audits and local inspections, and subsequent action points, should be kept by the local Health and Safety coordinator for each area that has been subject to such review, and should be available for scrutiny by the University’s Director of Health and Safety, Trade Union safety representatives, and inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive as required.

Inspections by Regulatory Agencies
All areas of each University building on the WGH/REH sites may be subject to external inspection by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), Police Scotland, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, and the University’s insurers and their risk management consultants. The HSE, SEPA, Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service are under no obligation to provide advance notice of a formal visit, but the University’s Health and Safety Department do usually receive advance notice of visits by inspectors from these
organisations. Staff from the University’s Health and Safety Department should always be involved in visits by regulatory authorities to University buildings on the WGH/REH sites, as well as the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine’s Health and Safety Manager.

Occasionally, staff may be contacted directly by one of the above organisations; this may be in the form of a letter or by telephone. In all such cases, the person contacted should consult either with the College’s Health and Safety Manager, or the most appropriate adviser from the University’s Health and Safety Department, before responding.

Rarely, the HSE or SEPA may arrive in a University building on the WGH/REH sites unannounced. They have a legal right to inspect premises and to request information. In all such cases, be polite, be helpful, and let the College’s Health and Safety Manager, or the most appropriate adviser from the University’s Health and Safety Department, know immediately.

Recommendations arising from these visits are generally received in the form of a letter sent to the University’s Director of Corporate Services. There are a range of improvement and prohibition notices that may be served on the University, employees and other persons, and which can be used to secure the termination (immediately, if necessary) of an activity that an Inspector has considered to be dangerous.

An Inspector from the Health and Safety Executive may initiate criminal proceedings against the University, or any individual, for a breach of any duty under health and safety legislation. Penalties include fines and, in the most serious cases, imprisonment.

Further Information
Further information concerning monitoring of health and safety policy can be found at:


Further information regarding enforcement of health and safety legislation can be found at:

http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/Safety/Policy/Part1.pdf  (Paragraph 4.21)

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