From the Director

Welcome to the 6th and final Edition of our Health and Safety Newsletter for 2013! It seems that this year has flown by and it is at this time that we can look back and celebrate our achievements. Together with end of year celebrations and the holiday season upon us, it is important that we remain mindful of our health and safety at work, home and whilst on holidays.

On behalf of the Health and Safety team, we wish you all a happy and safe holiday season.

Nelly Gaasdalen
Director, Health and Safety

If you are organising an ‘end of year work function’, we remind everyone of a few points:

Behaviour at the Party
Ensure your behaviour is in accordance with Curtin’s values and Code of Conduct as well as our Health and Safety and Complaints policies and Procedures (http://policies.curtin.edu.au/policies/). Note that alcohol consumption is no excuse for harassment, bullying or misconduct and is not an acceptable defence.

Drugs and Alcohol
Please drink responsibly, be respectful to others, have plenty to eat and have spacers between alcoholic drinks i.e.: water, juice, soft drink, etc. We remind you that the use of illegal drugs and/or excessive consumption of alcohol is prohibited at all times.

Transport
Naturally we want everyone to enjoy themselves; we also want everyone to arrive home safely....so if you are planning on drinking alcohol, we ask that you plan your transport to and from the function:
- Grab a cab or share one with other work colleagues
- Catch public transport
- Ride with a driver that hasn’t been drinking
- Arrange for a friend or relative to give you a lift and pick you up

Contacts
If you have any concerns about the above mentioned points, become intoxicated, unwell or your transport arrangements fall through unexpectedly, please don’t hesitate to ask for help by contacting your function organiser or line manager. Likewise, if you are concerned about the well-being, safety or behaviour of a colleague let your manager know so that appropriate assistance can be provided.

Managers/Supervisors
Managers and Supervisors should be aware of their duty of care to ensure the safety of your staff at work functions. The following is recommended to meet these requirements:
- Assist/ensure staff have safe transport to and from events
- Ensure activities and the location are suitable and safe for your staff. You should risk assess games, the environment (i.e. location and weather) and ensure activities and the location match the physical capabilities of participants and are inclusive to all.
- Advise staff of appropriate clothing for the activities and any rules or techniques should be explained.
- Be mindful of the effects of alcohol consumption and games/activities
- Set an official end time for the ‘work’ aspect of the function
- Don’t forget your skeleton staff at the office whilst you are away. Touch base with them and ensure they have a contact should anything arise.
- Remember you are still considered a manager/supervisor to your staff whilst at work functions.

We trust everyone will accept this communication in the right spirit by appreciating that Curtin is committed to meet its legal and moral obligations of ensuring your safety and well being, not only in the workplace, but at work functions also. None of the above should prevent us from having a great celebration and we look forward to everyone having a fantastic time!

Stay safe and enjoy the drive

When holidays come around it’s good to think about your safety and that of your family.

So to ensure you get to your destinations safely here are a few tips:
- Prepare your car - have it serviced and check that you’re prepared for emergencies with a blanket, torch and first aid kit.
- Prepare yourself - be rested before a long drive, plan the trip so you share the driving and take regular breaks to avoid fatigue.
- If you plan to have a drink - plan not to drive.
- If you have children in the car ensure they are in the appropriate child restraint.
- If you’re travelling with pets make sure they are restrained - for everybody’s safety.
- Tow check when towing a trailer or caravan.
- Brush up on good driving techniques.

Source: NRMA
Heat Stress

Heat stress is a situation where too much heat is absorbed by a person and is manifested by elevated body temperature, hot, dry skin and lack of sweating. This type of stress can occur with overexertion in hot weather, sun and exercising or working in hot, poorly ventilated or confined areas. By carefully monitoring your own physical condition and that of your co-workers, you are helping lessen the chances of suffering any symptoms brought about by heat stress.

Practice the following where possible:

- Wear loose-fitting, light-colored, breathable clothing such as cotton.
- Start out gradually and build up to your optimum work level.
- Take frequent breaks when working in heavy heat or humidity. A cool, shaded area is best.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Avoid drinks with alcohol, large amounts of sugar, and caffeine.
- Perform heavy work during the coolest part of the day.
- Keep in mind that safety equipment and protective clothing can increase the risk of heat stress.

Source: WorkSafe – Department of Commerce

WorkSafe Awards 2013

Congratulations Glen Lawson (School of Science) on being selected as a top 3 finalist in the 2013 Worksafe Awards in the category of:

“4(a) Best Individual Contribution to Workplace Safety and Health – an employee, such as a Safety and Health Representative (SHR)”.

Glen and WA Attorney General, Michael Mischin

Refer to Newsletter Edition 5 for more information on the nominations.

Safe Festive Feasting

People are reminded to pay close attention to food safety during the summer festive season and avoid food poisoning.

- Wash your hands before preparing food and after handling raw meats, going to the toilet or doing any other activity that may cause contamination.
- Prepare and store raw meat separately from cooked foods such as salad and cooked chicken. Items such as tongs, chopping boards and knives used on raw meats should be washed before being used to handle ready to eat foods.
- Store food at 5°C or below, or at 60°C or above. Refrigerate leftovers immediately after a meal and keep for a maximum of three days. If reheating make sure the food is reheated until steaming hot.
- Have plenty of fridge and freezer space as overloading will reduce cooling efficiency.
- Cool food when outdoors. Use portable car fridges, insulated cool/hot boxes or eskies with plenty of ice.
- Defrost frozen food in the fridge or microwave.
- Be extra careful with seafood. Pack your purchase with ice and place in the fridge immediately.
- Cook raw meats thoroughly. Raw meats such as chicken and minced meat products should be cooked thoroughly, make sure the juices run clear, not pink after cooking.
- Portion food before cooling.

Source: Govt of WA, Dept of Health - Public Health

Workplace Inspections

Curtin University has a legal requirement to provide and maintain, so far as is practicable, a working environment in which employees are not exposed to hazards. Managers (or their delegate) are responsible for conducting or ensuring workplace inspections (WPIs) are conducted. Where a Safety and Health Representative (SHR) is appointed for the work area, the SHR may perform the inspection.

Workplaces should be inspected to:
(a) identify hazards within the work and surrounding areas;
(b) identify changes to work areas which may pose new risks;
(c) monitor health and safety management system performance in a systematic manner; and
(d) monitor effectiveness of previous corrective actions.

WPIs are carried out as per the Workplace Inspection Schedule and following the inspection the person responsible for conducting the inspection must meet with the Manager of the area to discuss findings and assign actions. To find out more about WPIs in your area or about the roles and responsibilities of a SHRs go to the Health & Safety website.

Source: OSH Act 1984 and Curtin University Workplace Inspection Procedure