

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE



June 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the June 2021 edition of our e-update. As usual, this update attempts to inform readers of developments across the University and regular events in our “business as usual” calendar, as well as exploring some topical health, safety and wellbeing subjects. Please distribute this e-update widely within your teams.

COVID-19

We have been very lucky living in a country that has not been as affected by the COVID-19 virus as the rest of the world, and it is easy to become complacent. With the vaccine programme well under way and the borders opening up, the risk of COVID-19 re-entering our community is still very real – as evidenced by the recent alert in Wellington and lockdowns in Australia. We would take the opportunity to remind you of the importance of staying at home if you feel unwell and to use the COVID Tracer App whenever you are entering a building on campus (and elsewhere).

Please click on [Unite against COVID-19](#) to keep up to date on the virus. Thank you for doing your bit to help keep New Zealand COVID-free.

Te Tumu Herenga - Libraries and Learning Services preparing for fire evacuation

The wonderful people at Te Tumu Herenga – Libraries and Learning Services – have been trying a different approach to fire emergency evacuations. They recognised that some of the impacts of COVID-19 and changing ways of working had made a formal fire warden system challenging to maintain and have started to experiment with a new

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approach: empowering people to lead in the moment. This means that whoever is in the main library knows what to do when the alarm sounds and is confident to act. The recently managed drill and an additional evacuation a couple of days later were very well observed, and those participating reported being very comfortable with the new approach. Awesome work.

What is Tech Neck?

Tech neck is the term used to describe the neck pain and damage sustained from looking down at your cell phone, tablet, or other wireless devices too frequently and for too long. Using a mobile device can often lead to poor posture and symptoms of tech neck, and it is becoming increasingly common. A human head weights approx. 5kg when upright, and is balanced by a thin bone which weighs much less than your head.

When we use mobile phones, we bend our heads by up to 45 degree. In that position our head puts a force the equivalent of 22kg. When we bend further to approach 60 degrees, this force increases to 27 Kg. Symptoms of tech neck include common complaints such as headaches, stiff necks, neck spasms, and pain between your shoulder blades – and often the root cause is overlooked. Others report they have a hard time lifting their head and looking up after looking down for such a long time.

To prevent tech neck, be mindful of correct posture when using mobile devices.



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Lone working

Whilst lone working isn't in and of itself a hazard, there are certain hazards and issues that are exacerbated by virtue of working alone. A lone worker is someone who works by him/herself without close or direct Supervision and can include:

- Driving for work
- Security Staff
- Working from home (or other remote work)
- Maintenance contractors
- Staff carrying out site visits
- Working alone after hours

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Someone working alone can be more vulnerable and at increased risk of targeted violence and aggression. In the event of an incident or injury, the lone worker may find it more difficult to get the help or treatment required in a timely manner.

Working alone should be considered as part of a risk assessment for any activity, and where it has been identified that there is a requirement for lone working there should be effective means of communication with the lone worker. Ideally, a supervisor or manager should check in with the lone worker before, during and after working. Where possible, lone working should be avoided, and where high risk work is being carried out or the work is in a hazardous area, then lone working must be avoided.

The ACC AEP audit – what are the standards and what’s it all about?

It is all about better outcomes for people. The University is an Accredited Member of the ACC Accredited Employers Programme (AEP). We are audited annually, and any part of the University can be selected for audit against a set of audit standards. The university has a very well-documented system that meets the base standard requirements; however, to maintain our status at tertiary level (the highest level) we need to demonstrate that the system is alive and engages people in contributing towards a continuous improvement approach. In essence, this means visible health and safety leadership, involving everyone and making sure everyone knows the basics of a health and safety risk assessment. Identifying improvements can be very simple and practical, for example addressing the way we do things or the equipment we use. Examples can include buying less noisy power tools; swapping a chemical, material or process for something less dangerous; or using a lower voltage electricity supply for charging devices. If you have ideas on how to improve health and safety, please share

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them. If you prefer, you can even log them in our incident reporting system under “observation”.

The standards the University adheres to are explained here: [Accredited Employers Programme](#)

Upcoming HSW workshops

For new staff and those who missed out last year, several useful workshops are coming up in the next few months.

Workshop	Date	Time	Location
Building and Fire Warden Training	Friday, 09 July 2021	10.00 – 11.30am	Room 501, Level 5, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus
Role of a Leader and Manager	Wednesday, 21 July 2021	09.00 – 12.00noon	Room 501, Level 5, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus
Chemical safety management in laboratories (HSNO Exempt Laboratory Managers Workshop)	Friday, 20 August 2021	9.30am-12.30pm	Room 501, Level 5, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus
SciTrack training for Designated Laboratory Persons (DLPs)	Wednesday, 11 Aug 2021	9.00 – 11.00am	Room 305, Level 3, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus
DLP Containment workshop	Wednesday, 10 Nov 2021	9.00am – 12.00noon	Room 501, Level 5, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus

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How to undertake a Risk Assessment	Wednesday, 30 June 2021	9.00 – 11.00am	Room 501, Level 5, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus
Signing off on Risk Assessments	Thursday, 05 August 2021	9.00 – 11.00am	Room 501, Level 5, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus
Risk Assessment for Field Activities	Thursday, 29 July 2021	2.00 – 4.00pm	Room 501, Level 5, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus
Health and safety representative training stage two	Thursday, 29 July and Friday, 30 July 2021	9.00am - 4.30pm	Room 301, Level 3, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus

Bookings should be made via the [Career Tools](#) platform on the staff intranet. Please send a request through to od@auckland.ac.nz only if you do not have access to the Career Tools.

This and previous issues of the HSW e-update are available [here](#).

As usual, if you have any query on anything related to health, safety or wellbeing, please do not hesitate to contact us on hsw@auckland.ac.nz.

Similarly, if you have any suggestions as to topics you would like us to cover in future e-updates, please get in touch.



Angus Clark

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