

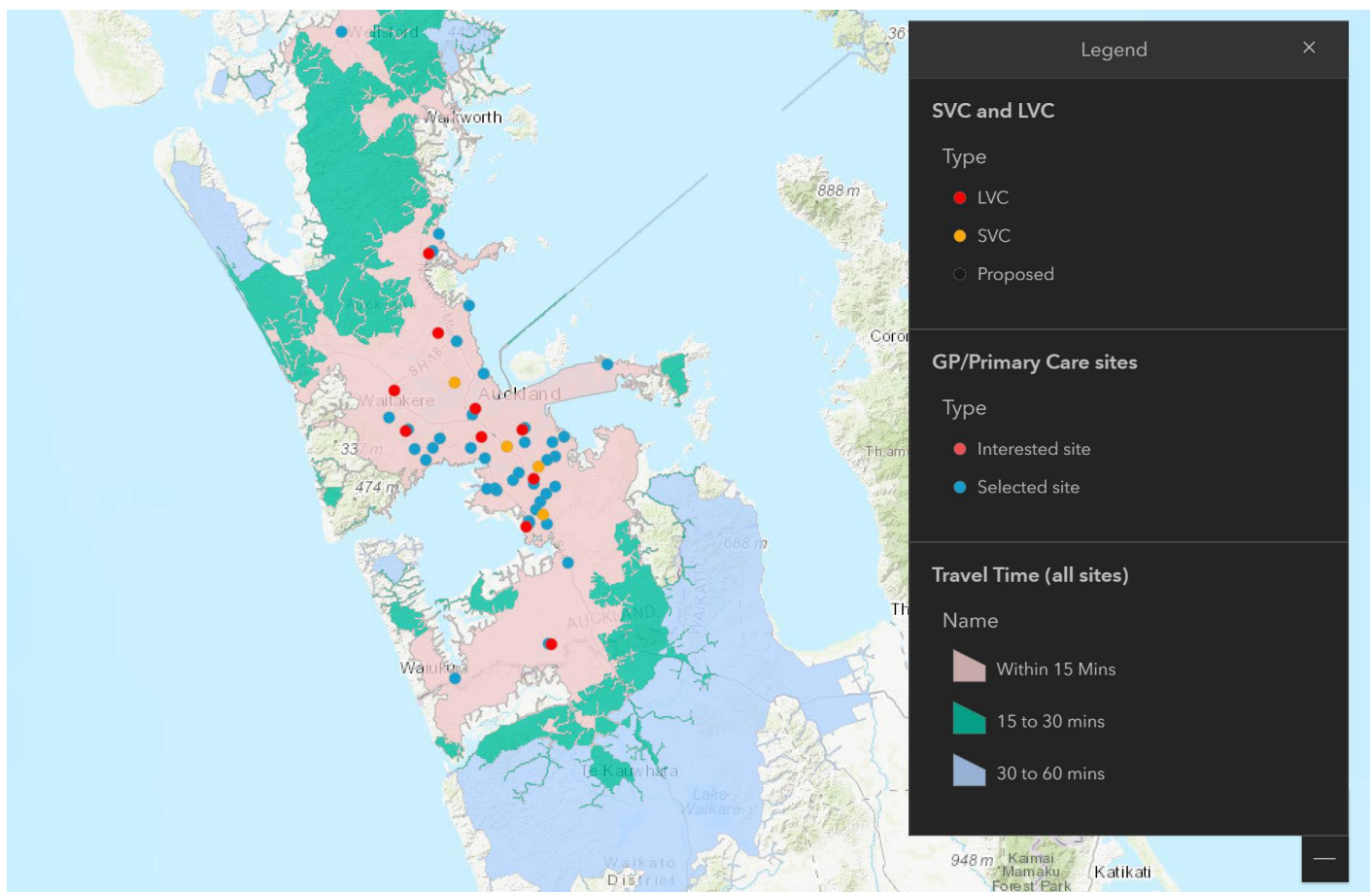
# HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE

August 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the August edition of our e-update.

At the time of writing, the government is considering options and timeframes for the incremental opening of our borders. Amongst the variables is the rate of rollout and uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine. The map below (courtesy of ADHB) shows the current vaccination centres in and around Auckland and their accessibility. We would urge you to be vaccinated when you receive communication of your eligibility.



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## **AEP ACC annual audit**

The University has recently been audited by ACC under the Accredited Employer Partnership Programme. We retained our Tertiary Accreditation (the highest award achievable), and this has been confirmed by ACC. Whilst this year's audit focused mainly on the important activities needed to manage the care and rehabilitation of staff injured at work, there is a verification of our health and safety management practices (and next year's audit will focus on those systems and processes). The ultimate aim is to continuously improve our health and safety performance in order to continuously reduce the number and severity of workplace injuries.

For more information on the ACC programme and process, please see the link below.

[ACC Partnership Programme](#)

## **Thermal Comfort**

Could workplace temperature be a hot (or cold?) topic at this time of year? Thermal comfort is generally understood to mean that we are not feeling too cold or too warm, and this in turn is affected by other variables such as air movement (draughts) and relative humidity. Our level of comfort clearly has an impact on our sense of wellbeing and our productivity at work. We all have different preferences, so it is unlikely that we will all be satisfied with our thermal environment. The aim is about 80% of people expressing comfort.

WorkSafe has produced some helpful guidance to help manage thermal comfort at work. [Temperature at work](#) is full of practical measures and considerations.

## **Workstation safety**

Many of us sit, or stand, at a workstation for most of the working day. Whether in front of a computer screen, sitting or standing at a retail counter or in a lecture theatre, working in a fixed position throughout the day can cause postural pain. For many of us, we suffer in silence. We

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are not designed to remain in a fixed position all day and there are some simple things that we can do to reduce the chance of postural pain.

## **Postural breaks and rest**

It is important to avoid sitting or standing in the same position for long periods of time.

- Create posture and task variety to allow your muscles time to recover.
- Re-set your posture every 20 minutes by removing your hands from the keyboard or area that you are working and relax your arms by your side.
  - Consider any area of your body where you note tension.
- Take hourly breaks from your workstation, ensuring that you move away from the workstation.
  - You could take a water break or you could incorporate other tasks, such as photocopying, into your break to add variety.
- Try to take meal breaks away from your desk, giving any tense muscles time to recover.

## **At your workstation**

- Keep your elbows at your waist
  - The bottom of your forearm should be approximately level with the surface of your desk in either sitting or standing postures.
  - Have your keyboard close enough to your trunk, to allow your elbows to hang at your waist.
- If standing at your desk, try to keep your weight more towards your heels – this will encourage your core muscles.
  - Build your tolerance gradually for working in a standing position
  - Allow regular sitting breaks – even for short periods.
- Keep your mouse as close as possible to the keyboard. Hands should be soft and cupped when using keyboard.
- Avoid a lot of side to side wrist movement with the mouse - have your mouse pointer speed set to fast.

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- Watch the following video from the UK regulator in relation to computer workstation set up. The video refers to a set up when working from home, however the same would apply to your workspace at work.



If you would like more details on postural pain and discomfort, group sessions will be run within various departments and faculties over the coming months. Please ensure that you book on to one of the sessions, where you will also be able to register an interest in a one-on-one session if you are suffering from pain and discomfort.

More University articles:

[Office and work environment safety](#)

[Flexible ways of working](#)

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## Damstra Safety Risk Assessment Implementation

We are pleased to announce that we are ready to implement a solution to provide much-needed visibility of the capture and management of your health and safety risk assessments.

The team have been developing and testing a solution to ensure that risk assessments across the University can be captured into Damstra Safety (formerly Vault, our health and safety management system). The system will also allow review dates to be set so that the quality and consistency of risk assessments can then be progressively improved over time.

The HSW team will work with each of their portfolio areas to identify and support those people who currently undertake risk assessments to capture and register existing risk assessments into Damstra. They will also work with your HSW Committee and/or Technical or Facilities Services teams to get underway with the plan.

Any questions please let us know.

## First aid

As part of our regular review of our health and safety arrangements, we need to consider the provision of first aid. In doing this we need to consider if first aid provision is adequate for workplace needs. It is also important to know that the consideration of adequate first aid is a legal requirement. So, what is the purpose of first aid? It covers a range of purposes from preserving life, preventing a condition worsening, providing treatment when medical attention is not needed, and promoting recovery

Our assessments need to reflect the level and type of risk in the work area. It is good practice to consider things like – the number of people in an area? are they all from the same Faculty or Service?, are there third parties or visitors in the area?, gender?, age? (particularly very old and infants) language spoken and understood?, the capabilities of people?, their faith or religion?, patterns of work and working times?, geographic location?, are they remote/isolated

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or working alone?, what are the hazards in the area? and what sort of incidents have happened? (another good reason to report both injury and non-injury incidents).

One group which relies heavily on first aid analysis is the staff in Event Services and the Event Owners around Campus (governed by the work of the Event Coordination Group – ECG). First aid and broader emergency preparedness are just one of many considerations they deal with as they put the events we go to together. Great work: the care and attention to detail in your work is not unnoticed.

WorkSafe also provide guidance on [First aid at work](#).

## **Hazard and Containment team**

A new team has been now fully established as part of the HSW service: the Hazard and Containment team. In the past year, Francesca Casu Hazard and Containment Manager has recruited three expert advisors internally from around the University:

- Dr. Jordi Boix-I-Coll - Biological Safety Advisor
- Dr. Pooja Yadav – Radiation Safety Advisor
- Dr. Emily Boyd – Chemical Safety Advisor (including SciTrack)

The team works across the University in partnership with the Faculties and Institutes. The team goal is to support and empower research and teaching, providing expert advice to maintain the University’s high standards of safety and compliance with New Zealand and international regulations.

The HSW service is delighted and proud to have found these specialist experts within the University.

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## Do you work with lasers, or are you looking for a career development opportunity? Read on!

You can gain a qualification that enables you to supervise the use of lasers at the University of Auckland by participating in a 1-day course, in December, here at the University. The course is endorsed by the University Laser Safety Committee. This is not normally available in New Zealand, so do not miss this opportunity! This is a Level 2 Laser Safety Course and you will receive:

- Certificate of Attendance on successful completion
- Level 2 Laser Safety Officer qualification

Who can attend:

- Staff working with or supervising the use of lasers or laser equipment
- Students working with lasers (please check with your supervisor)

Please contact Pooja Yadav at [pooja.yadav@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:pooja.yadav@auckland.ac.nz) .

## Influenza vaccination

As we look forward to Spring and warmer weather, we cannot forget we are still in the midst of flu season. If you're on a permanent or fixed term contract, you're eligible for a free vaccine at the University until October. Find out more in [2021 staff flu vaccination](#) page.

Staff can obtain the flu vaccination from UniChem campus pharmacy with no upfront cost.

Bookings are not required, although if you would like to secure a specific booking time, or for any other queries:

- Call 09-377-1991 or
- Email [campus.pharm@xtra.co.nz](mailto:campus.pharm@xtra.co.nz).

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If you have a COVID-19 vaccine booked or have had your first and waiting for your second vaccine then it is recommended that you have your 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> COVID-19 vaccines first and then your Flu vaccine 2 weeks after your 2nd COVID-19 vaccine.

If you have not yet booked your COVID-19 vaccine, then it is recommended that you have your flu vaccine as soon as possible.

## 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  | Wednesday,<br>01 Sept<br>2021 | 10.00 – 11.30am      | Room 501, Level 5, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus |
| HSW: Role of a Leader and Manager  | Thursday,<br>23 Sept<br>2021  | 09.00 –<br>12.00noon | Room 501, Level 5, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus |
| Chemical safety management in laboratories<br>(HSNO Exempt Laboratory Managers Workshop) | Friday, 20<br>Aug<br>2021     | 9.30am-12.30pm       | Room 501, Level 5, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus |
| SciTrack training for Designated Laboratory Persons (DLPs)                               | Friday, 27<br>Aug 2021        | 10.00 – 12.00am      | Room 124, Building 503, M&HS building, Grafton Campus           |
| DLP Containment workshop   | Wednesday,<br>10 Nov<br>2021  | 9.00 – 12.00noon     | Room 501, Level 5, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus |



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|                                      |                        |                |   |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|---|
| How to undertake a Risk Assessment   | Friday, 1 Oct 2021     | 9.00 – 11.00am | Room 501, Level 5, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus |
| Signing off on Risk Assessments      | Wednesday, 27 Oct 2021 | 9.00 – 11.00am | Room 501, Level 5, Building 620, 49 Symonds Street, City Campus |
| Risk Assessment for Field Activities | Friday, 27 Aug 2021    | 9.00 – 11.00am | Room 501, Level 5, 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](mailto: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](mailto: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

Associate Director – HSW