

Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Policy

The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002 and Equipment and Protective Systems Intended for Use in Potentially Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 1996 set minimum requirements for the protection of workers from fire and explosion risks related to dangerous substances and potentially explosive atmospheres. General fire safety requirements in the workplace are applied through the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The Regulations apply to all workplaces, where a dangerous substance is present or could be present.

This DSEAR Policy applies to and within all buildings across the University's campuses, including Gibbet Hill, Westwood and Wellesbourne. The Policy also applies to all activities managed by the University at off-campus accommodation properties. This Policy is supported by arrangements, instructions, and guidance on the management of DSEAR, which are available on the University's Health and Safety web pages.

Under the provisions of Regulation 26, Safety Regulations and associated University Health and Safety Policy document, it is the duty of all staff, students and others working in the University to comply with this Policy, together with any other instructions, rules and guidance that may apply.

Core Principles

1. The University will ensure that suitable and sufficient DSEAR risk assessments are made of any dangerous substances used or present that could, if not properly controlled, cause harm to people as a result of a fire or explosion. Dangerous substances include such things as solvents; paints; flammable gases, such as liquid petroleum gas (LPG); dusts from machining and sanding operations; pressurised gases and substances corrosive to metal. The assessments will evaluate the adequacy of the existing precautions and will identify any additional precautions required.
2. The University shall classify places in the workplace where an explosive atmosphere may occur into hazardous or non-hazardous workplaces.
3. Control measures will include, but not be limited to: Managing potential sources of ignition; introducing appropriate ATmosphere EXplosive (ATEX) rated safety equipment; reducing sources of oxygen; minimising the potential for explosion; operating Permits for 'Hot Work'; general fire precautions, appropriate information; and personal protective equipment.
4. All ATEX rated safety measures, equipment, devices and components will be maintained in effective working order and appropriate checks/maintenance/test programmes will be implemented for:
 - fire alarm systems
 - emergency lighting
 - radio transmitting equipment
 - other safety measures or equipment.

5. Records will be kept of all DSEAR risk assessments undertaken; information and training provided; and, all checks and maintenance carried out on safety measures and equipment.

6. Appropriate information, training and instruction should be given to contractors, staff and students on the dangerous substances present together with information on the hazards, risks, precautions and actions necessary for them to remain safe.

Responsibilities

Heads of Departments are responsible for the implementation of this Policy with regard to hazardous area classification, which should be carried out as part of the risk assessment to identify places (or areas) where controls over ignition sources are needed; managing a register of DSEAR hazardous areas; selection and maintenance of work equipment; training; personal protective equipment and local access permits for Laboratories/Workshops. The local permit shall be issued by departmental staff to maintenance staff or contractors requiring access to 'high hazard' spaces, or spaces which could impact the safe operation of such spaces, and for its communication to their staff as appropriate.

All staff within departments must comply with this Policy and the associated arrangements, instructions and guidance.

The University Fire Safety Adviser is responsible for coordinating all DSEAR risk assessments and advice on explosive atmosphere locations; providing advice on arrangements to deal with accidents, incidents and emergencies, including the evacuation, escape or rescue of people; and auditing of fire safety standards and procedures.

The Director of Health and Safety is responsible for advising on the standards and regulations that must be achieved in order to meet legal requirements; for keeping the University's Health and Safety website up to date with the related policy documents; and for ensuring that spot checks and audits are carried out to provide assurance that activities are being carried out in compliance with this Policy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed when any legal requirements change or at least once every three years.

Document Control			
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