

Occupational Health and Safety Report University Executive September 2010

Purpose

This report outlines the University's OH&S performance for the period 1st January 2010 to 31st August 2010.

The following indicators track the University's OHS performance:

- number of incidents and injuries reported
- number of hazards reported
- number of workers compensation claims lodged
- value of current workers compensation cost
- rehabilitation claims activity

Summary

Incidents

- a total of 334 incidents have been reported in 2010
- this is a 14% increase in incidents reported compared with the same period in 2009
- the majority of incidents (43%) relate to staff
- the majority of incidents (25%) were attributed to *hitting objects with part of the body*
- 47.5% of incidents resulted in an injury
- 20.5% of reported injuries became a Workers Compensation claim

Hazards

- A total of 50 hazards have been reported in 2010
- 96% of the hazards reported have been investigated by the operational area which reported them and strategies implemented to reduce or eliminate the hazard
- 4% of the hazards reported required investigation by the OHS Unit and strategies implemented to reduce or eliminate the hazard

Workers Compensation Claims

- the number of new workers compensation claims for 2010 has *decreased* by 14.58% compared to the same period for 2009
- the total cost of claims is \$1,049,112 compared to \$671,305 for the same period in 2009

OH&S Training

- 46.8% (39.9) of permanent staff have completed the mandatory OH&S training modules
- 32.6% (26.1) of limited term staff have completed the mandatory OH&S training modules
- 8% (6.7) of casual staff have completed the mandatory OH&S training modules
- 9.8% of managers/supervisors have completed module 3 of the Management Essentials training – OHS for managers and supervisors, within the last 3 years.

Incidents

Discussion

The following tables continue to display an upward trend in the number of incidents being reported across the University. The nature of the reports does not present cause for alarm in terms of the seriousness of the report or injury; it does however reflect an improved awareness of the need to report all incidents and hazards.

The number of claims to date for 2010 is down on previous years, reinforcing the fact that the increased number of incident reports is not alarming in terms of injuries resulting from those incidents.

Table 1: Total number of incidents and resulting Workers Compensation Claims

	2007				2008				2009				2010			
	Incidents/				Incidents/				Incidents/				Incidents/			
	Accidents	Claims	Accidents	Claims	Accidents	Claims	Accidents	Claims	Accidents	Claims	Accidents	Claims	Accidents	Claims		
Jan	6	6	2	2	27	27	4	4	20	20	2	2	25	25	1	1
Feb	24	30	10	12	36	63	9	13	33	53	7	9	35	60	6	7
Mar	28	58	5	17	18	81	4	17	40	93	7	16	51	111	5	12
Apr	31	89	2	19	36	117	11	28	45	138	10	26	48	159	2	14
May	30	119	4	23	38	155	4	32	28	166	2	28	56	215	6	20
Jun	25	144	3	26	23	178	6	38	36	202	5	33	40	255	5	25
Jul	8	152	4	30	26	204	2	40	43	245	7	40	39	294	4	29
Aug	48	200	6	36	44	248	5	45	48	293	8	48	40	334	12	41
Sep	25	225	7	43	46	294	9	54	56	349	6	54				
Oct	56	281	4	47	47	341	5	59	49	398	7	61				
Nov	50	331	10	57	32	373	4	63	16	414	4	65				
Dec	14	345	3	60	18	391	4	67	27	441	7	72				
Total	345	60	391	67	441	72										

Numbers in grey italics represent accumulative totals throughout the year

Table 2: Staff related incidents compared to same period for previous years

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total # of incidents reported	123	181	175	334

Table 3: Total number of incidents by person type (complete year figures)

	2008	2009	2010
Staff	268	276	148
Student	135	92	179
Contractor	10	15	11
Visitor	3	1	6

Table 4: Incidents reported by operational area

	Divisions				Colleges			
	Academic & Research	International & Development	Corporate Strategy & Services	PVC Campus Development	Business	Health & Science	Arts	Other
Jan	2	0	10	0	0	11	1	1
Feb	1	1	13	0	0	10	4	6
Mar	3	4	4	0	5	20	2	12
Apr	2	2	2	0	2	21	9	2
May	3	3	2	0	3	21	2	7
Jun	1	6	2	0	3	22	1	5
Jul	5	4	5	0	3	15	1	10
Aug	4	5	5	0	2	17	3	4
Sep								
Oct								
Nov								
Dec								

Table 5: Incidents by injury type per month

	Being hit by moving objects	Falls from height	Motor Vehicle Accident	Contact with chemical or substance	Extreme Temp	Falls on a flat surface	Animal/ Insect Bites	Other/ Hazards	Hitting Object with part of body	Psychological	Contact with biological factors	Repetitive Muscular	Muscle stress, - lifting, carrying or putting down
Jan	2	1	0	6	0	2	0	6	5	0	0	0	3
Feb	2	2	2	3	2	8	1	2	4	1	5	2	1
Mar	0	0	0	6	1	5	1	7	19	2	1	5	3
Apr	3	0	2	1	2	4	2	10	12	0	0	1	3
May	7	0	3	1	1	14	0	11	8	2	1	4	4
Jun	2	0	3	0	2	9	0	5	15	0	2	3	0
Jul	6	0	5	1	0	4	0	7	11	0	1	1	2
Aug	3	3	5	2	1	8	2	7	7	1	0	1	0
Sep													
Oct													
Nov													
Dec													

Table 6: Incidents reported by type of injury

	2008	2009	2010
Being hit by moving objects	0*	48	25
Falls from height	0*	19	6
Motor Vehicle Accident	31	29	20
Contact with chemical or substance	25	31	20
Extreme Temp	21	18	9
Falls on a flat surface (<i>Falls on the same height</i>)	87*	65	54
Animal/ Insect Bites	25	9	6
Other/ Hazards	94	40	55
Hitting Object with part of body	84*	61	81
Psychological	4	8	6
Contact with biological factors	0*	11	10
Repetitive Muscular	9	20	17
Muscle stress,-lifting , carrying or putting down	38	34	16

2008 & 2009 data represents total year data, as the data was being recorded differently it is not possible to report by the same reporting period as the 2010 data is shown.

*Data was categorised differently in 2008. Being hit by moving objects was not captured. Falls from height and falls on the same height were grouped as slips/trips/falls. Hitting objects with part of body was captured as striking an object and cuts/sharps. Contact with biological factors was not captured.

Hazards

Discussion

Three new hazard reports have been lodged with the OHS Unit. All reports lodged with the OHS Unit have been investigated and, where necessary, strategies implemented to eliminate or reduce the risk of the hazard.

A summary of all incidents and hazards reported for an area is sent to the relevant OHS Committees at the end of each month where they are discussed and strategies implemented to deal with the issues.

Table 7: Hazard Reports Lodged Summary

Operational Area	2008	2009	2010
Divisional			
Academic & Research	3	1	2
Corporate Strategy & Services	18	8	4
International & Development	2	7	3
Office of the VC	0	0	0
Colleges			
Arts	6	7	2
Business	5	3	4
Health & Science	26	30	35
Other/Entities	2	2	2

2008 & 2009 data represents total year data, as the data was being recorded differently it is not possible to report by the same reporting period as the 2010 data is shown.

Table 7a: Hazard Reports Lodged Detail

Date	Location	Description	Corrective Actions
26/7/10	HAWK.BLD H5 - 1 (School of Nursing)	Student wearing inappropriate footwear on Clinical Practice Unit.	Re-education of student.
9/7/10	PENR.BLD AG - AG.G.11A (Information Technology)	Evacuation of building due to air conditioning leaking water from ceiling onto staff and then an electrical burning smell. Terrible noise coming from ceiling also.	OHS investigation carried out with CWF.
26/7/10	PENR.BLD AD - AD.G.19A (Information Technology)	Staff member with bullying and harassment complaints.	Supervisor has already undertaken staff interviews with representatives from units involved, further investigation underway. Human Resources and Equity & Diversity are also involved.

Biological, Chemical & Radiation

Discussion

There have been 4 biological, chemical or radiation safety risks reported during this reporting period, details of each incident and any corrective actions taken appear below.

Table 8: Biological, chemical or radiation incidents reported

Date	School / Centre	Injury	Mechanism	Description	Corrective Actions
03.08.10	Natural Sciences (PTA North)	None	Smoke	Smoke arising from burnt chicken bones in laboratory furnace. Smoke detector did not activate alarm (possible faulty detector)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation with CW&F and Wormald • Wormald to review working condition of all smoke detectors on Parramatta North campus • Local area to review laboratory procedure using furnace • Concern remains that only 50% of smoke detectors are required to be tested annually
10.08.10	Natural Sciences (Hawkesbury)	None	Contact with chemical	Small splash (<1.5mL of solution containing phosphoric and sulphuric acid) onto throat when emptying eppendorf tube into waste container	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First aid administered (washed with water) • Recommend remove liquid from eppendorf tubes by pasteur pipette before discarding • Recommend discarding whole tube into chemical waste if possible
13.08.10	Natural Sciences (Hawkesbury)	None	Possible contact with biological agent	International PG Masters student mouth pipetting biological agent (<i>E.coli</i> bacteria)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student immediately stopped • Supervisors cannot assume prior learning and competency of 'new' students • Recommend that all students be reminded of UWS Lab Safety Rules (i.e. mouth pipetting prohibited) • Recommend that all PG students undergo formal lab safety induction and training prior to commencing lab work • Recommend all PG students demonstrate competency before commencing lab work • Recommend review and/or upgrade of pipette fillers

31.08.10	Biomedical & Health Sciences	Steam burn	Contact with steam from steam bath	Burn to wrist because protective rings on steam bath were not in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review first aid treatment (ice rather than running water was applied) • Review training for students i.e. use tongs to access samples on steam bath • Replace lost steam bath rings
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Other matters:

1. Fire Extinguisher audit in laboratories

An audit of the type and number of fire extinguishers in laboratories by Wormald was commenced in August through CW&F. Initial recommendation was that ABE dry chemical fire extinguishers and a fire blanket be installed in laboratory areas (CO₂ extinguishers are acceptable, but have limitations. Water fire extinguishers should not be located in laboratory areas). Wormald will continue to assess laboratory facilities on all UWS campuses in conjunction with Technical Coordinators/Managers.

During the initial audit at Parramatta North campus it was noted that a number of fire hose reels did not have a CO₂ or dry powder extinguisher situated nearby, as is required. Wormald recommended that all fire hose reels be checked to ensure that a CO₂ or dry powder extinguisher is located in close proximity or within the fire hose reel enclosure – this information was forwarded to CW&F for action. At the time of preparing this report CW&F had only received this information recently, a follow-up to this will be included in subsequent reports.

2. Upgrade of UWS online Chemical Management System (ChemWatch)

ChemWatch upgrade from ChemGold II to ChemGold III upgrade occurred on 17 August. UWS manifest of hazardous substances and dangerous goods to be reconfigured in consultation with manifest owners (Schools and Centres). The UWS manifest is used to determine reporting requirements to WorkCover NSW.

Workers Compensation

Discussion

There has been movement in the cost of claims for the following areas:

Academic & Research: Slight increase in cost of claims due to medical and treatment expenses incurred.

Corporate Strategy and Services: Slight decrease in cost of claims due to the closure of two claims.

International and Development: Significant increase in cost of claims within the area of IT. One psychological claim has had significant wages estimate applied to it as worker is currently unfit to work. The claim is under investigation to determine liability; a “reasonable excuse” has been applied to the claim by the insurer. Payments for medical and treatment expenses relating to other claims are also responsible for the rise in costs.

College of Arts: Slight decrease in costs of claims due to the closure of one claim.

College of Business: Increase in cost of claims due to one claimant working reduced hours and requiring rehabilitation, payment of medical and treatment expenses relating to other claims.

College of Health & Science: Significant increase in wage estimates relating to two claims. One claim has been investigated and declined; claimant has sought legal advice regarding the declination and continues to be certified unfit to work. UWS has encouraged claimant to undergo counselling through the EAP and has sought assistance from the treating doctor to develop a Mental Health Care Plan. Treating doctor is aware that UWS can provide suitable duties to the worker despite the claim having been declined by the insurer. Another claimant is working reduced hours and has legal representation to seek pain and suffering benefits. A recent meeting was held between Equity and Diversity, OHS and claimant to provide assistance and advice in relation to ongoing management of claimant's injury and work practices. Another claimant underwent surgery and is currently undergoing rehabilitation and is working full hours.

Table 9: Total cost of claims (YTD) by operational area

Operational Area Divisional	New Claims	Gender		Cost of Claims		% change
		M	F	Last Report	This Report	
Academic & Research	3	1	2	\$42,844	\$48,889	14.11
Corporate Strategy & Services	4	4	-	\$125,747	\$124,876	-0.69
International & Development	4	3	1	\$51,180	\$214,647	319.4
Office of the VC	-	-	-	-	-	-
Colleges						
Arts	2	1	1	\$96,910	\$96,294	-0.63
Business	2	-	2	\$135,765	\$163,589	20.5
Health & Science	1	-	1	\$269,792	\$400,817	48.5
University Total	16	9	7	\$722,238	\$1,049,112	45.25

The % change represents the change from the cost of claims from the last report.

Benchmarking

Discussion

The number of workers compensation claims is down compared to previous years as is the average lost time per injury. These are positive indicators of OHS performance.

The incident rate, which is a measure of the number of serious injuries or illnesses per 100 employees, indicates UWS is performing well on this measure also, particularly as compared to the New Generation Universities in the recent Queensland University of Technology benchmarking exercise.

The frequency rate, which is a measure of the number of injuries that resulted in lost time or those requiring medical treatment per million hours worked, is also tracking lower than for previous years which again is a positive performance indicator.

Table 10: University OHS Benchmark Measures

Benchmark Measure	2007	2008	2009	2010 (YTD)
Number of Workers Compensation claims	60	67	72	26
Incident Rate (per 100 employees) ¹	0.89%	0.74%	0.83%	0.55%
Frequency Rate (per million hours worked) ²	9.54	9.59	9.95	9.04
Average lost time (hours/injury)	15.12	14.44	13.81	9.46

¹ Definition as per Australian Standard 4801

² Definition as per Australian Standard 4801

OHS Training & Injury Prevention

Discussion

Table 11: Mandatory Training module completion by staff category

Employee Type	Hazard Identification	Hazardous Substances	Manual Handling	Office Safety	Workplace Induction
Permanent	36.7 (30.3)	16.7 (9.5)	38 (31.2)	40.5 (33.3)	45.3 (38.1)
Fixed Term	24.7 (19.4)	14.2 (8.5)	25.7 (19.2)	28 (20.6)	31.7 (23.6)
Casual Staff	5.2 (3.2)	3.5 (1.8)	6.3 (4.2)	6.8 (5.5)	7.6 (20.6)
Academic	13.8 (9.9)	8 (4.6)	14.3 (10.3)	15.2 (11)	19.3 (13.4)
General	44.9 (33.7)	18.2 (10.4)	48.4 (35.7)	53.4 (40.2)	61.4 (46.3)
Senior	42.1 (28.1)	17.1 (7.4)	42.9 (27.4)	47.9 (30.4)	53.6 (36.3)
Executive	30.8 (33.3)	7.7 (8.3)	30.8 (33.3)	30.8 (33.3)	53.8 (41.7)

*numbers in brackets indicate values as of the last report

Overall the percentage of staff that has completed the mandatory has greatly improved since the last report. The actions taken as a result of the last executive meeting are proving to be effective.

NOTE: The Hazardous Substances module is not required to be completed by all staff; it is designed for those who are likely to have to deal with chemicals and the like during the normal course of the work. It is likely that the percentage complete for this module will always remain low.

Table 12: Workplace Ergonomic Assessments by Operational Area

Operational Area	# of Assessments YTD	# of Assessments this period
Divisional		
Academic & Research	63	39
Corporate Strategy & Services	29	4
International & Development	42	4
Office of the VC	0	0
Colleges		
Arts	36	8
Business	19	3
Health & Science	29	9

The large number of assessments completed within the Academic and Research Division were part of a program of assessment for staff within the Libraries. This is a proactive program where staff are able to be assessed to ensure that their existing set up is optimal.

The Occupation Health and Safety unit are developing a proposal for University Executive endorsement that will allow for the OHS Unit to mandate the immediate removal of broken furniture and the immediate replacement of ill-fitting furniture following an ergonomic assessment.

The OHS unit will also commence discussions with Capital Works & Facilities with regards to the types of chairs provided when refurbishing a workplace.

Other Issues

Discussion

OHS incident / accident / hazard management system

The current system used to capture and record incidents / injuries and hazards at UWS is a paper based systems which has become impractical and inefficient over the years. Currently anytime an injury / incident / hazard is notified a slow manual process of escalation through levels of management (before finally reaching the OHS unit for recording) takes place. This can expose the University to increased risk through delays in actioning potential risks.

The OHS unit has been looking at possible web-based solutions which will automate a significant amount of the workflow and better position the University to act on risks as they are identified. Current online systems, as are increasingly being used at other universities, would allow the University to build in its own work flows, such that, if an incident was recorded with property damage, an email could be fired off to CW&F immediately for actioning. Another example would be if a staff member was injured, the system could fire off an email to OHS so that the OHS unit could contact the person immediately to start their injury management.

Two of the systems the OHS Unit has looked at so far can be completely integrated with the staff and student databases so that anyone in the University community can access and record incidents / injuries and hazards.

Online Ergonomic Assessment tool

The OHS unit has successfully applied for access to funding available through the Workers Compensation Claims & Injury Initiative program. The program is a pool of funds created by the insurers for members to access to improve claims and injury management outcomes in their workplace. To be eligible to access the funding the University was required to demonstrate that what we were intending to introduce was not something that would normally be required of an employer and would reasonably lead to an overall improvement in the management or reduction of workplace injuries.

The proposal submitted by the University was for the introduction, for a trial period of 1 year, of an online ergonomic self assessment tool. The way this tool works is that the University defines certain criteria which all employees could respond to, delivered as an interactive survey, the tool will then analyse the responses from staff and rate them in particular risk categories. Those risk categories are then available to OHS staff so that they can contact those in the higher risk profiles and address their particular issue pro-actively. The total funding successfully achieved through this submission was \$17k.