

December 2019

Workplace Wellbeing e-Newsletter

McMaster's Workplace Wellbeing Newsletter focuses on the promotion of health, safety and wellness. Inquiries and feedback about any of the information in this newsletter may be sent to eohts@mcmaster.ca. This newsletter can also be provided in an accessible format upon request.



Environmental and Occupational Health Support Services (EOHSS)

A team of health, safety & risk management specialists committed to supporting the University's commitment to creativity, innovation and excellence, and strives to achieve these standards in the areas of environmental and occupational health, safety, loss prevention and mitigation.

Employee Health Support Services (EHS)

A team that provides programs & services to help employees lead healthier lives, in and out of the workplace. We are committed to supporting employees in a healthy & safe return to work following an injury or illness, facilitating workplace accommodations & fostering healthy work environments.

Organizational Development

A team that offers a supportive working environment through strong employee engagement, employee recognition & wellness. We also encourage individuals to enhance their personal and professional growth by recognizing that our employees and partners are our most valuable assets.

Health and Safety Training – Changes to Training Frequency

Updates have been made to the Health and Safety Training Matrices

As part of McMaster's commitment to provide and maintain healthy and safe working and learning environments we have updated the health and safety training frequency requirements. The appendix of [RMM 300 Health and Safety Training Program](#) (Training Matrices) have been approved by Senior Management.

Regulatory Training



Health and Safety, AODA, Privacy, and Regulatory training

Of the 7 mandatory health and safety training sessions 3 are affected by the update: **Asbestos Awareness, Slips, Trips and Falls and Ergonomics** of which are now required to be updated **every 5 years**. Depending on your position there could be site specific training that has also been updated. Please review the appropriate training [matrix](#) for your area.

What does this mean for you?

All workers and supervisors are required to update their training according to the recently approved training matrices. Your training will appear in [Avenue to Learn](#) within one business day once registered in Mosaic.

Not sure when you last completed training?

Check your training summary in Mosaic. To access your training summary click on the Regulatory Training tile in Mosaic and select the Training Summary link.

Supervisors

As a reminder, Managers/Supervisors are responsible for ensuring their employee's safety training is up to date.

For **Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) employees**, please visit the [FHS Safety Office](#) to learn which training you are required to complete, as it depends on your employee type, building and work environment.

More information regarding the updated training matrices and health and safety training can be found on our [training webpage](#).

For further information or inquiries please contact ehss@mcmaster.ca.

Things to Know While We Let It Snow

As the winter weather approaches, it's time for us to start thinking about the slippery conditions that come with it. Simple tips such as wearing appropriate footwear, planning your route and reporting hazards will go a long way in helping to ensure that you remain upright and unharmed this winter.

A slip occurs when there is too little friction or traction between our footwear and the walking surface. Shoes or boots with good treads in the wintertime are an important preventative measure in slippery conditions. Consider wearing appropriate footwear when travelling to and from work or while walking on campus and leave an indoor pair of shoes in your office or other work location.

Planning your route. Consider adjusting your route on campus in winter conditions. If possible, schedule phone meetings, travel through buildings and avoid travel outdoors if the conditions are not ideal. If you do need to walk outdoors, stay on cleared pathways and avoid taking shortcuts.

Reporting hazards is an essential responsibility of everyone in the workplace. If you notice a sidewalk, pathway or a parking lot that has not been cleared of snow or salted for ice, please report it as quickly as possible to McMaster Facility Services Customer Service at extension 24740 or use the McMaster Safety App to report an issue. Water can accumulate inside building entrances during winter weather conditions. This should also be reported as quickly as possible.

By following these simple tips, you can help keep yourself and our campus community healthy and safe this winter.



Holiday Safety Tips

With the holidays quickly approaching it is important that we take care of ourselves so we can be healthy and safe and enjoy the season. Here are a few quick tips to help.

- Sprains/strains - When shopping, do not carry more than what is comfortable, ask for help or take multiple trips.



- Falls - If hanging festive lights ensure proper height of ladder is used or consider using laser lights and eliminate the ladder altogether.



- Fire safety - live Christmas trees need to be watered regularly to prevent them from drying out, also check that outlets are not overloaded.



- Slips and falls - Always wear appropriate footwear, keep your winter boots handy when the weather gets snowy and stay on maintained pathways...no short cuts.



- Be responsible - Overindulging can be tempting during the holidays, treat yourself but try to incorporate some healthy eating and exercise into your daily routine and always drink responsibly.



Designated Substances



Mercury, lead, benzene, arsenic... these are just four of the eleven Designated Substances listed in Ontario Regulation 490/09 under the Occupational Health & Safety Act. If you have any of these substances, complete an assessment and you must have a plan in place to ensure the safety of the people handling these chemicals as well as the impact to the environment.

The complete list of Designated Substances include:

- Acrylonitrile
- Arsenic
- Asbestos
- Benzene
- Coke Oven Emissions
- Ethylene Oxide
- Isocyanates
- Lead
- Mercury
- Silica
- Vinyl Chloride

For more information, see [RMM# 500 - Designated Substances Control Program](#). A template is offered in the appendix of the program to assist with filling out the Designated Substance Assessment Report. You must fill out a report for each designated substance present in your area.

The assessment will include proper storage, handling, and waste procedures. It will include what to do if a spill occurs and/or accidental exposure. This assessment will then be reviewed and approved by your Joint Health & Safety Committee before use of the substance.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Leah Allan, Lab Safety Specialist with EOHSS.

Electric Portable Space Heater Safety



As winter is upon us, we recognize that some building occupants may temporarily use space heaters to make their offices more comfortable from time to time. Before this consideration contact Facility Services Customer Service to report any areas that are unusually cool. There may be an adjustment with the heating system that can easily be rectified.

McMaster does not recommend the use of electric space heaters, however we want to highlight important safety features and operations for these devices.

- Only use heaters certified by a regulatory agency like the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or the Underwriters Laboratories of Canada (ULC).
- Ensure at least 3 feet of clearance from anything that can burn.
- Heaters should be plugged directly into wall outlets. Do not use with an extension cord.
- Keep space heaters away from aisles and paths of travel.
- Space heaters should have safety features like tip over protection, which will ensure the heater turns off automatically.
- Never leave a space heater unattended. Always turn off and unplug.

Preferred Types of Space Heaters

Ceramic Heater - air is warmed over positive temperature coefficient (PTC) ceramic

Fan Forced Heater - uses a fan to pass air over a heating element

Infrared Heaters - heat is created by infrared bulbs

COMING SOON - New and Exciting Changes to the Ergonomics Program

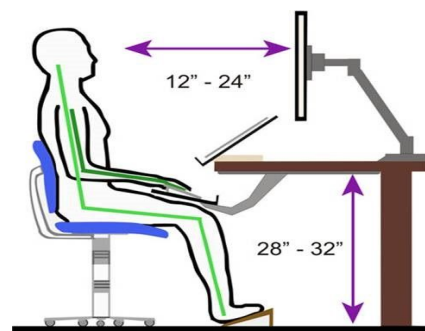
The purpose of the ergonomics program is to promote supervisor and employee awareness of the risks associated with poor ergonomic design in the workplace. For some, continuous standing or sitting at an office workstation is a source of discomfort and fatigue. An effective ergonomics programs can increase overall well-being and performance, whereas inattention to ergonomics can lead to musculoskeletal disorders (injuries or pain in the human musculoskeletal system, including the joints, ligaments, muscles, nerves, tendons, and structures that support limbs, neck and back).

All McMaster employees are required to complete online ergonomics training that outlines best practices regarding body positions, workstation design, taking rest breaks, and stretching to help avoid health problems. This training must be completed every five years.

Recently EOHSS has made available new ergonomic resources online – Ergonomics Self-Assessment Checklist and Office Ergonomics Video. The checklist and video will allow you to identify ergonomic issues at your own workstations in a short period of time and make immediate ergonomic improvements. As ergonomists are in general agreement with respect to ideal ergonomic workstation set-up, these resources will empower everyone to take action and adjust their own workstations.

NEW – Want to learn about office ergonomics? Become an ERGONOMICS CHAMPION!

EOHSS is searching for departmental ergonomics champions to assist with proactive office workstation ergonomic assessments. The ergonomics champions will receive additional training with the goal of being able to assist their colleagues with organizing their office workstations to improve comfort and reduce the likelihood of musculoskeletal disorders. More information to come in the new year. Contact eoHSS@mcmaster.ca for further information.



Field Trips, Research Activities and Student Placements

Travelling as part of a field trip, student placement or research activity?

The purpose of RMM 801 Field Trips, Student Placements and Research Activity Planning and Approval Program is to ensure the safety of all people participating in these activities.

The RMM includes:

- Timeframes defined for submission
- Definition of low, significant and extreme risk
- Approval steps for low, significant and extreme risk activities including steps for L3 and L4 country approvals
- Checklists for field trips and research activities (including Participant Waiver)
- Checklist for out of country student placements

The document includes detailed checklists that need to be completed as part of the risk management package. If you have completed a risk assessment for a course or activity before 2017, please update this risk assessment using the template on our [webpage](#).

Please note that if the field trip, student placement or research activity is considered low risk the process documents do not need to be submitted to the EOHSS office for approval. Please review the RMM paying special attention to the definitions of risk, Global Affairs Canada ratings and timeframe deadlines for submission of process documents.

For more information please visit our [website](#). A guideline document is also available to assist in completing the process documents.

Risk Management Manual Programs

The following RMM Programs have been updated and approved by Senior Management:

- RMM 316 Electrical Safety Program**
- RMM 322 Health and Safety Training Needs Program**
- RMM 301 Standard Operating Procedures Program**
- RMM 300 Health and Safety Training Program Appendix**

For a full listing of RMMs, please visit our [website](#).

Flu Prevention

Did you know that washing your hands correctly (or using an alcohol-based hand rub) is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself against a number of infectious diseases, such as influenza (the “flu”) and the common cold? Not only will it help keep you healthy, it will help prevent the spread of infectious diseases to others.



Some additional tips to avoid getting and spreading the flu:

- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough
- Don't touch your face
- Stay at home when you're sick
- Clean (and disinfect) surfaces and shared items.

For information about the **influenza vaccine**, please visit the [Ontario flu website](#).

'Tis the Season

It's that time of year when departments celebrate the holidays. When departments are planning their holiday celebrations, please keep in mind that if you would like your festivities to include the consumption of alcohol it must be served in compliance with the University's liquor license.

On campus establishments licensed to serve alcohol include: The Phoenix, 1280 Campus Pub and the University Club. Events organized through McMaster Hospitality Services may also be licensed to serve alcohol. Everyone in the McMaster community should familiarize themselves with and respect the University's [Alcohol Policy](#). The policy is consistent with the requirements of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, the Liquor License Act of Ontario and the University's liquor license.

With this information in mind, wishing you a happy and safe holiday season.

Health Safety and Risk Management Announcements

Kyle Wood, joined McMaster University on September 16th in the role of Fire Safety Emergency Preparedness Specialist. Kyle can assist with your questions and planning related to fire safety and emergency planning. He can be reached at woodk12@mcmaster.ca or ext 24183.

Monica Poulin, effective October 18th has accepted the Lead role for the Employee Health Services team. Monica is the primary contact for the University's return to work programming. Monica can be reached at mpoulin@mcmaster.ca or ext 23564.

Thrive Week

January 20 - January 24, 2020

Thrive Week is a **week-long series of events** focused on helping students, faculty and staff at McMaster explore their path to Psychological Wellness. McMaster Healthy Workplace is pleased to partner with the Student Wellness Centre to offer programming for Thrive week.

Although this is McMaster's first Thrive week, the initiative is not new. Schools across Canada have been hosting annual Thrive weeks as a means of educating, promoting and advocating for mental health on campus. Thrive began in 2009 as an idea between colleagues at the University of British Columbia.

More information will be made available on the [Healthy Workplace Website](#) by December 20, 2019.