

First RAAC project Complete and Sussex Grad is part of the team.

The University of Sussex has successfully completed its inaugural RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete) replacement project. The endeavour focused on removing and replacing RAAC in the Bramber House stairwells, resulting in the reopening of the top floor of the building. The university continues to make progress in removing all RAAC across campus, with the goal of reopening areas and ensuring the future safety of all staff.



Notably, one of the team members involved in this project was Suruchi K Kathane, a Sussex graduate who collaborated with the Estates Capitals team for her MSc Construction Project Management dissertation. Find out more about her experience [here](#).

Jed McDonald - Health and Safety Advisor

Toasters

This short update from our Fire Safety Manager, Graham Gray, is to raise awareness of why toasters in the workplace can be an issue.

When well-maintained, toasters present a relatively low risk, however experience tells me from my 34 years in the fire service that sometimes people don't maintain their toasters effectively!



The problem is debris accumulates in the bottom and if not regularly cleaned could catch fire or produce high volumes of smoke.

Many organisations deal with this by completely banning toasters in the workplace because of the risk and the disruption from related fires and alarm activations. Others change the design - most hotel buffet breakfasts have toasters with a conveyor, specifically designed to prevent the accumulation of debris and reduce the risk of fire as a result. Sadly, it also means a 10 minute wait and 2 rotations for me to get toast I like!



Our University buildings have high quality fire alarm systems with fire detection in each and every room which will be a smoke detector. Only in designated kitchens or specific risk rooms will you find heat detectors. This means that alarm activations can be common where toasters are used and not closely monitored, and cause disruption to the occupiers of our buildings. An average building with 500 student/staff within can result in 500 hours of lost education or working time for each fire evacuation – that's a very expensive toaster!

The temperature required to activate a heat detector is between approximately 55-90°C, and at this point we have a fire and large volumes of smoke being produced. Damage is inevitable as well as disruption to the occupiers through an evacuation and the resulting damage repair. When a toaster malfunctions or is not well cared for and starts a fire the consequences can be devastating.



Please get into a habit at home of removing the crumbs drawers at least weekly and turning the toaster upside down to remove the build-up of debris, and keep an eye on the underside of any kitchen cabinet if the toaster is directly under it as over the years it can have a detrimental effect and start a smouldering fire. Hopefully, this article helps explain why the Health and Safety Team are not fans of toasters in the workplace unless strictly controlled.

Graham Gray - Fire Safety Manager

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Meet The Team

Every edition of the newsletter we will introduce one of our Health and Safety Team and this edition's team member is Mike Young who is the Senior Safety Manager (COSHH and DSEAR).



Tell us a bit about your role?

I joined the University Health & Safety Team in July 2023 with a lead in Chemical Safety and Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres (DSEAR). This area of my role has involved working with, and consulting colleagues, to agree a DSEAR policy for the university and a process for DSEAR risk assessments. A typical day for me can range from delivering training to staff across the university, to calculating whether an explosive atmosphere can be created in a work area. Alongside this, I also lead on our Health and Safety Coordinator programme and our team's communications. Follow us on Viva Engage!! 😊

What do you like most about health and safety at Sussex?

My favourite bit about health and safety at Sussex is the variety of work and the opportunity to work with so many friendly and knowledgeable people across the campus. One day I can be advising on local exhaust ventilation in labs, and the next advising colleagues on personal safety risks and how to address these.

Tell us something we don't know about you?

I have been playing the trombone for 30 years and I am in a local band called Carnival Collective. I'm also a big fan of DragRace!

Personal Safety

Personal Safety can be defined as 'an individual's ability to go about their everyday life free from threat or fear of psychological, emotional or physical harm from others'.

Many staff across the university work in roles which are student facing or involve working directly with the public. This could be in person on a reception desk, in a face to face one to one meeting scenario, online one to one meetings or via social media, email and phone communications.

Staff in these roles have potential risk of violence and aggression at work. This violence and aggression could be in the form of abuse, threat or assault.

The University has a zero tolerance approach to violence and aggression in the workplace.

If you have been involved in an incident of violence or aggression in the workplace, it should be reported on Sussex Direct [Incident Reporting system](#) in the same way as any other incident or near miss to prevent it's reoccurrence.



Personal Safety Training to equip staff in these roles with control measures, including the application of diffusion techniques, to keep them safe is delivered by the Health & Safety Team. This [training](#) is bookable on Sussex Direct, via the Personal Development tab.

Angelina Janus - Health and Safety Advisor

Updated H&S Policy

The Health and Safety policy has been updated and approved by the University Council. Please find the new version on our website here. The changes help clarify individual and management responsibilities for maintaining a positive safety culture at Sussex, and reaffirm the university's commitment to health and safety.

Why is incident reporting important?

Ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone at the University of Sussex is our top priority. We encourage all staff members to promptly report any accidents, incidents, or near misses they experience or witness. By doing so, you contribute to a safer environment and enable thorough investigations to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

Near misses may seem less important when compared to an accident, but you often find multiple near misses have already occurred before someone is involved in an accident leading to injuries and if the near misses had been investigated, we could have prevented the accident.

A near miss is defined as an event or situation that could have resulted in injury, illness, damage, or loss but did not do so due to chance, corrective action, or timely intervention

To report an accident or near miss follow the link here and fill in the form. Once submitted, each incident report is assigned to a member of the university's health and safety team, this could be either a central team member or a local Health and Safety coordinator, who will then investigate the report.

Jed McDonald - Health and Safety Advisor