



# University of Toronto

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OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES & EQUITY

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AGENDA ITEM: **5(a)**

## **ITEM IDENTIFICATION: Health and Safety Annual Report, 2006**

### **JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:**

Business Board is responsible for reviewing the annual report on environmental health and safety and for ensuring that the University is in compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

### **PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:**

This is an annual report

### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

There is increasing focus on health and safety issues at the University as a result of increasing awareness and knowledge within our community and because of ever increasing regulatory provisions and oversight. This report summarizes the major activities and progress made in addressing health and safety issues at the University during 2006. Highlights include the following:

1. The EHS strategy is to foster a strong sense of ownership for safety by managers, supervisors, academic heads and principal investigators. The Office of EHS will be working with the Senior Management Health and Safety Committee to revise the EHS management system, more clearly setting out expectations and ensuring that managers, supervisors and academic administrators have the advice, guidance and support they need to carry out these responsibilities.
2. We continue to place a strong emphasis on training. A dedicated EHS training facility has been established and much effort is being dedicated to developing high quality on-line training programs, including EHS orientation training, WHMIS, asbestos etc. An introductory module on health and safety is now included in the new employee orientation sessions launched in 2006. EHS also

works with academic units to provide orientation programs, especially related to laboratory safety, for graduate and summer students and for new principle investigators. In collaboration with relevant divisions, we intend to place a stronger emphasis on training for students

Over 1500 members of the University community received training on aspects of health and safety from the Office of EH&S in 2006.

3. The effective functioning of Joint Health and Safety Committees, in compliance with legislative requirements, remains a concern. EHS conducted a survey of Joint Health and Safety Committees in the fall of 2006 to obtain feedback from both employee and management members on how to improve the functioning of these committees. Survey participants identified a need for greater management support and participation, more frequent training for committee members, better information sharing among JHSC's and more recognition of member participation. During 2007 EHS will work with committee members and accountable line managers to implement the recommendations and to ensure improved compliance.
4. Accident frequency was similar to last year's with 54 lost time accidents. There was a slight increase in the amount of time lost due to accidents. The main causes of accidents are strains and sprains and falls. In 2006 the University returned to the favourable position of receiving a rebate from the Workplace Accident Insurance Board, reflecting a performance by the University that was better than the average in our rate group.
5. The University continues to remove asbestos when renovations are undertaken. New asbestos surveys of buildings on campus have been conducted through Facilities and Services. These will be available electronically and will be valuable in ensuring that the presence of any asbestos is factored in to any building work plans. Extensive tracking of asbestos incidents by Facilities and Services has increased awareness and corrective action taken to address these incidents has contributed to a reduction in the number of incidents in 2006.
6. The University's compliance record remained favourable in 2006. Ministry of Labour orders were give on two occasions; one respecting management of hazardous chemicals (vinyl chloride) and the other concerning contractor responsibilities during asbestos removal. Both orders have been complied with.

#### **FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:**

While there are no specific financial or planning implications at this time, we do note that there are ever increasing provincial and federal compliance expectations for which the University receives no additional funding.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the Business Board receive the report.