



**HSW HAZARD ALERT**

**14 November 2011**

**TO ALL STAFF**

**Waste Skip Bin placement**

**Summary of Incident (14 October 2011)**

At approximately 1.24 am on the morning of 14 October 2011, a construction skip bin positioned outside the Plaza building was set alight by an arsonist.

Fire damage occurred to the external wall, adjacent window and air-conditioning duct system within the Plaza building.

Rooms within the Plaza building and Hub Central became contaminated with smoke when the window adjacent to the skip bin broke. It was only at this point that the fire alarm activated, alerting occupants within the building, Security staff and the Fire Service. The fire was well ablaze at this point with flames extending externally to the height of 3 floors.



This incident impacted on the activities of staff and students and the smoke generated took some time to disperse before occupants were allowed to safely re-enter the building. It was noted that some students who were in the building at the time of the incident did not follow emergency procedures and evacuate the building on hearing the fire alarm signal. This is a breach of the University’s safety procedures and the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Legislation.

**Contributing Factors**

During the incident investigation process it was identified that the skip was placed too close to the building. Once ignited the contents of the skip provided additional fuel which increased the fire load, intensity and risk.

**Actions to mitigate the risk of a recurrence**

- (1) All Heads of School/Branch (or their delegate) to:
  - identify any skip bins on campus which have been arranged by the School/Branch.
  - undertake an assessment as to the risk of fire or other emergency due to the location and take corrective action where appropriate. (i.e. removal or relocation)
- (2) If relocating an existing skip bin or organising a skip bin in the future:
  - Skips must be positioned at least 2 metres from a building and never placed under an eave, stairwell, bridge or breezeway.
  - Skips must not be placed near chemical stores, gas cylinders or designated emergency exits.
  - A clear pathway must be identified (e.g. bunting) if the skip is placed in a pedestrian walkway or where there is vehicle access or the area used as a thoroughfare. A 2 metre clearance is recommended for vehicle access or areas of high pedestrian traffic.

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## Actions to mitigate the risk of a recurrence

- (3) Where an area may be used by students/staff after hours, the area managing the space must either ensure an appropriate induction for all students/staff or provide clear sign posting of after-hours alarm procedures. (A sign in A3 format is attached. It is suggested that this be laminated and displayed where appropriate.)

**GERALD BUTTFIELD**  
**MANAGER, HEALTH SAFETY AND WELLBEING**

## Further information

Should you have any queries, please contact any member of the HSW Team.

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# AFTER HOURS (5.00 pm to 9.00 am)

# EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

## ON HEARING ANY FIRE ALARM

(e.g. beep...beep...whoop...whoop or bell or continuous ring)

- Immediately cease activities.
- Evacuate the building via the nearest safe exit.  
(Follow the green exit signs)
- Assist others if required.
- Do not use lifts.
- Remain outside until given the all clear to return by the Emergency Services or Security.



(If unsure if it is safe to return, contact Security on (830) 35990 or proceed to the Security office for further information.)

## If YOU discover Fire/Smoke

- R**emove people from immediate danger
- A**lert others e.g. ring (0) 000 and Security ext 35444
- C**ontain the emergency if possible (e.g. close door)
- E**vacuate via the nearest safe exit.

Extinguish only if safe and trained to do so.

If the alarm is  
not sounding, hit the  
Break Glass Alarm



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