Safe Storage – Basic Principles

- Store large, bulky, heavy and frequently used items within easy reach in the ideal zone between shoulder and mid-thigh.
- Store smaller, lightweight and infrequently used items in lower or higher areas when space in the ideal zone in occupied by higher risk and frequently accessed items.
- Ensure a sturdy step or stepladder is easily available to access items stored above shoulder height. Industrially rated steps and ladders are required in workplaces (i.e. not domestic rated).
- Ensure storage units are fit for purpose, to suit the size, shape, weight and nature of what is being stored. For example, storing heavy boxes of photocopier paper on lightweight shelving systems is a hazard
- Ensure storage units are in good operating condition and free from damage, deformation, sagging and missing components. If you identify hazardous storage conditions, inform your Academic Unit's management team and report it in MySAFETY.
- Ensure free-standing storage units are structurally attached to a wall if there is the possibility of the unit toppling over.
- Ensure wall-mounted shelves are structurally mounted (e.g. into studs behind the plasterboard) and not used to support heavy loads (check manufacturer's guidelines).
- Log a work request with ISD to assist in the installation and fixing of shelving where required. Also consider the asbestos status of your facility before disturbing any wall and ceiling materials (review the University asbestos register, and again consult with ISD for further advice).
- No storage units, shelving, supports or stored items should come into contact with light fittings, smoke detectors or fire systems, nor should they impede room heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems
- Maintain good housekeeping with no storage or clutter on floors in front of storage systems
- Ensure all access, egress and walk ways are maintained free of hazards.
- Ensure storage areas allow access and safe use of any required mechanical aids like trolleys and access equipment such as ladders and steps.
- Ensure all hazardous materials are stored appropriately. Consult with the local experts in your College, and more information is available on the Chemical Management webpage.
- Get LEAN - Organise cupboards and storage areas to remove clutter, maximise usable space and allow easy access to the things you use regularly. Plan for regular audits of storage areas and assign responsibility within a work group for maintenance of storage areas.
- Where applicable, keep a clear bench for delivery of goods to avoid lifting from ground level
- Know the safety and compliance requirements of racking systems to ensure they are used, inspected and maintained as per standards. Ensure safe working limit (SWL) are displayed and adhered to. Ensure weights of stored items are known so to not exceed SWL. More information is available here.