Health & Safety Policy for The Science Department at St Michael's Catholic School, Aylesbury

September 2026



Model Health and Safety Policy for Science Departments. DL223 May 2022

CONTENTS

Page

Introduction ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Instructions for using this model policy ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Summary guidelines for staff 3
1. The role of this policy 5
2. General aims 5
3. Health and safety roles 5
4. Training 6
5. Risk assessments 7
6 Equipment and resources 8
7 Activities and procedures 10
8. Emergency procedures 11
9. Laboratory rules for students 12
10. Staff roles and emergency contacts 13

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This model policy replaces the version published in Oct 2020.

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Summary guidelines for staff

All teachers, technicians and support staff

1. Teachers and technicians have a general duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves, of other members of staff and of pupils. They have specific duties: to be familiar with this health and safety policy, its updates, the texts to which it refers and any Appendices. They must cooperate with the employer's instructions, observe the requirements of this policy and fulfil any special responsibilities it gives them. They must cooperate with colleagues in their specific health & safety duties. They have a duty to report to local management any failure of equipment that has a health & safety function.
2. Staff practice must set a good example to pupils and be consistent with pupil laboratory rules, eg, over the wearing of eye protection.
3. Staff must be familiar with emergency drills and with the location in each science room of: the escape route; fire-fighting equipment; the eye wash station; the main gas cock; the main electricity switch and the nearest spill kit.
4. Laboratories must be left safe. Special arrangements must be made for equipment which has to be left running overnight and hazardous equipment which has to be left out. In general, all gas taps should be completely turned off and all mains-operated apparatus switched off. After practicals, gas and water should be switched off from the gas guard in each science room by the teacher.
5. Eating, drinking and the application of cosmetics must not take place in laboratories, storage areas or preparation rooms. Pupils must not be allowed to drink from water bottles in the science rooms.
6. When staff are alone in the science department, nothing should be done which could lead to an accident requiring remedial measures. A teacher or technician must assess risks very carefully before conducting any practical operation in such circumstances.
7. Pupils must not be left unsupervised in a laboratory. Staff needing to leave a class briefly must assess the risks of doing so, perhaps arranging for temporary supervision by a neighbouring member of staff. Special arrangements may be needed for senior students doing project work, depending on the hazards involved, eg, an experienced member of staff in an adjacent room.
8. Science laboratories, preparation rooms and stores must be locked by staff when not in use. Pupils must never be allowed into preparation rooms, unless 100% supervision can be guaranteed at all times. Science laboratories must only be used by teachers who are not scientists for teaching or registration after they have received special training or if the laboratories have been specially cleared. Laboratories must be available for teacher-supervised club activities only by special arrangement.

Teachers

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1. At the beginning of each school year, teachers must make sure that their classes have copies of the student laboratory rules [see section 10] and issue them if necessary. They should be stuck into an exercise book, work folder or similar place.
2. Teachers must enforce the student laboratory rules, reminding students of them often enough for them to be familiar. With new students, time should be spent explaining the rules, with appropriate demonstrations.
3. Lesson preparation should be adequate and include checking on risk assessments and, where necessary, the health & safety precautions required. Requisitions must not be handed in at the last minute; technicians must be given adequate time to prepare work safely. Time should be allowed for consulting more-senior colleagues where there is any doubt and to try out practicals, particularly those involving significant hazards. Teachers must only deviate from the scheme of work (for which the activities have been checked against model risk assessments), after considering a further risk assessment, checking with a subject specialist, possibly obtaining a special risk assessment from CLEAPSS. Teachers should explain precautions to students as part of their health & safety education, using the CLEAPSS *Student Safety Sheets*, where appropriate.
4. Open-ended investigations must be organised to allow the teacher to assess any risks and identify precautions before any hazards are met / practical work begins.
5. If, because of large class size or indiscipline, health and safety cannot be maintained during certain practical work, the work should be modified or abandoned. This decision should be reported to the Head of Science.
6. A teacher is responsible for the health and safety of any of his/her classes taken by a trainee teacher. If the normal class teacher is absent, another science teacher must be given this responsibility by the Head of Department.
7. Teachers in charge of courses are responsible for ensuring that technicians are familiar with the appropriate precautions needed to control any hazards which might be encountered in preparing equipment for their lessons and in clearing the equipment away. Class teachers may need to remind technicians of such warnings.

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ST MICHAEL CATHOLIC SCHOOL
Aylesbury
SCIENCE DEPARTMENT HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

5th September 2026

1. The role of this policy

This *Science Department Health & Safety Policy* should be read in conjunction with the employer's general Health & Safety Policy and the detailed arrangements for implementing that policy in this school. The purpose of this document is to record the arrangements made in the science department to implement the policy in accordance with the *Code of Practice or Guidance* issued by the employer.

This document is maintained by the science department. It is copied to all new members of staff, i.e. teachers, technicians, trainees etc working in the department. Staff are expected to sign the list kept in the science drive to show that they have received a copy. A reference copy, together with various Appendices, is kept in the science prep room available for consultation by staff and for inspection by visiting HSE inspectors or a representative of the employer.

This document recognises the right of any or every trade union in the workplace to elect health & safety representatives for its members and its right to require a health & safety committee to be set up in the school. The science department will cooperate with any union health & safety representative to promote health, safety and welfare and will address any matters raised by or through such a representative in a manner appropriate to the level of risk.

2. General aims

Science teaching has an excellent health & safety record, and this department is keen to promote practical work as an essential component of good science teaching. It is determined that spurious concerns about health and safety should not be allowed to inhibit good teaching. However, it is the duty of all members of the science staff, i.e. teachers, cover staff who work in the department occasionally, teachers of other subjects who are teaching in a science room, technicians, teaching assistants and other support staff (eg, special needs and bilingual staff) and trainees:

- to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions during work;
- to be familiar with this health & safety policy by periodic reference to it;
- to look out for any revisions;
- to follow its provisions;
- to cooperate with other members of staff in promoting health and safety.

3. Health and safety roles

3.1 Duties, functions and tasks

The employer, St Thomas's Academies Trust, has the ultimate duty to ensure the health and safety of employees and others on the site (and hence in this department).

This employer has not currently issued any local instructions specific to science.

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The task of overseeing health and safety on this site has been delegated by the employer to the Head Teacher Rhian Morgan.

Within the science department, this task is further delegated to **the Head of Science** - **Jim Johnson** who has the particular function of maintaining this policy document. See section 10 for the names of the staff members currently with specific H&S functions.

The next major review of this policy will take place in September 2027.

3.2 Communications

Communication of health & safety information is of the greatest importance and is the task of the Head of Science with the assistance of **the Senior Science Technician - Kinga Skrzypie**c.

In this department, all staff are issued with this policy. A reference copy is kept in the prep room together with any appendices.

Any new instructions, restrictions or rescinded (lifted) restrictions made by the employer are communicated to all staff in writing as well as being attached to the reference copy of this policy.

3.3 Monitoring and checking

The employer expects the science department to monitor the implementation of this policy. Records of monitoring are kept by the Head of Science.

Checklists on resources and facilities for weekly / termly / annual use by technicians are customised from those suggested in CLEAPSS Guide L248 *Running a Prep Room*. Records of the checks are kept by the Senior Technician in the *Safety Check File*.

4. Training

The person with the task of seeing that training to staff is provided is **the Head of Science Jim Johnson**.

Generally, this department follows guidance in the CLEAPSS documents G238, *Health and Safety Induction and Training of Science Teachers* and L234, *Induction and Training of Science Technicians,* suitably customised, to identify the training needs of staff.

Particular training functions are delegated as follows: for teachers: by **Head of Department Jim Johnson**; for technicians: by **Senior Science Technician Kinga Skrzypiec**; Induction for new teachers to the departmental requesting process: by **Senior Science Technician Kinga Skrzypiec** (to be read in conjunction with section 10).

Health & safety aspects of the work of newly-qualified teachers and other new teachers	The Head of Science **Jim Johnson**
Health and safety of trainees on teaching practice	The Head of Science **Jim Johnson**
Induction of newly-appointed technicians	The Senior Science Technician **Kinga Skrzypiec**
Immediate remedial measures and other emergency procedures (spills, bench fires, etc)	The Head of Science **Jim Johnson**
Training in the use of specialist equipment, chemicals or procedures (in line with CLEAPSS guides G238 and L234, as customised)	The Head of Science **Jim Johnson** and Senior Science Technician **Kinga Skrzypiec**

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Health & safety training of non-science support staff	The Head of Science **Jim Johnson** and Senior Science Technician **Kinga Skrzypiec**
Health and safety of non-science teachers using laboratories	The Head of Science **Jim Johnson**
Manual handling for all staff using laboratories	The Head of Science **Jim Johnson**
Healthy and safe procedures for laboratory cleaners	The Head of Science **Jim Johnson** / Site team Manager
Regular update training (covering new or changed regulations, new equipment etc)	The Head of Science **Jim Johnson**

5. Risk assessments

Every employer is required under various regulations[1] to supply employees with a risk assessment before any hazardous activity takes place. (Common hazardous activities carried out in science departments are listed in the publications below.) Because it is impracticable for the employer to write risk assessments for each of the many activities in school science, this employer follows the recommendation of the Health and Safety Commission to adopt published 'model' or 'general' risk assessments which school science departments adapt to their local circumstances.

CLEAPSS[2] publications generally

CLEAPSS, *Hazcards*, current edition

CLEAPSS, *Laboratory Handbook*, current edition

CLEAPSS, *Recipe Book,* current edition]

CLEAPSS, L93, *Managing Ionising Radiations and Radioactive Substances*

Whenever a new course is adopted or developed, all activities (including preparation and clearing-up work) are checked against the model risk assessments and significant findings are incorporated into texts in daily use, i.e. the scheme of work / technician notes. See section 10 for the member of staff with the task of overseeing this process[3].

If a model risk assessment for a particular operation involving hazards cannot be found in these texts, a special risk assessment is obtained, following instructions from CLEAPSS. In order to assess the risks adequately, the following information is collected.

- Details of the proposed activity.
- The age and ability of the persons likely to do it.
- Details of the room to be used, i.e. size, availability of services and whether or not the ventilation rate is good or poor.
- Any substance(s) possibly hazardous to health.
- The quantities of substances hazardous to health likely to be used, including the concentrations of any solutions.
- Class size.
- Any other relevant details, eg, high voltages, heavy masses, etc.

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[1] Risk assessments are required by the *Control of Substances Hazardous to Health* (*COSHH) Regulations*), the *Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations*, the *Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR)* and many others.

[2] Current versions of all CLEAPSS publications for secondary schools are available to members on the CLEAPSS website.

[3] See CLEAPSS guide L196, *Managing Risk Assessment in Science* and the guidance leaflet GL90 *Making and recording risk assessments in school science.*

Since the scheme of work has been checked against the model risk assessments, staff should deviate from it only if their proposed activities have been agreed with the Head of Science.

We encourage the development of new practical activities (including on open evenings, at science clubs, etc) but these should be undertaken only after a prior check against model risk assessments and/or a special risk assessment has been obtained.

Where an activity must be restricted to those with special training, that restriction is included in a note on the text.

For technicians' activities in and around the prep room, the assessments in CLEAPSS publication PS25, *Model Risk Assessments for Laboratory Technician Activities* have been customised and form an Appendix to this document, kept with the Health and Safety policy.

6 Equipment and resources

6.1 Fume cupboards

The *COSHH Regulations* require the regular testing of fume cupboards (maximum interval 14 months) with a quick check before use. Testing normally takes place each year in August. The Head of Science **Jim Johnson** and the Site team manager has the function of seeing that this happens. This employer has arranged a contract with Tecomac who will be allowed access to carry out the tests. The records of the tests, if provided to the science technicians, are available for staff reference and for inspection by the employer's representative or an HSE Inspector in the *Fume Cupboard Safety Checks File*.

See section 10 for the names of the staff members currently with these functions.

All users have been trained to carry out a quick check that a fume cupboard is working before use.

Smoking cigarettes is not permitted in the school. However, **demonstrations of a 'smoking machine' are permitted in fume cupboards in designated laboratories**. The following laboratories fitted with efficient fume cupboards, or in which an efficient mobile fume cupboard could be used, are so designated: S1 and S6.

6.2 Electrical testing

To meet the requirements of the *Electricity at Work Regulations*, this employer requires portable electrical equipment to be inspected and tested regularly. The Head of Science **Jim Johnson** has the function of seeing that this happens within the science department. Testing normally takes place each year in the summer holidays.

This employer has arranged a contract with Scientiaservices.co.uk who must be allowed access to carry out the work. Completed schedules are kept with the site team and are available for staff reference and for inspection by the employer's representative or an HSE Inspector.

See section 10 for the names of the staff members currently with these functions.

All users have been trained to carry out a quick visual inspection before using mains-powered equipment.

6.3 Radioactive sources

This school does not hold any *Radioactive Sources.*

6.4 Pressure vessels

Autoclaves, pressure cookers and model steam engines need periodic inspection under the *Pressure Systems Safety Regulations*. Inspection normally takes place each year in April and it's organised by the head office of the trust with Zurich insurance.

In accordance with this employer's Code of Practice the examination is carried out by the inspector employed by the insurance company who uses a written scheme of examination provided by the company. Records of examinations are kept with the site team.

6.5 Animals, plants and microorganisms in schools

The hazards associated with the use of animals, plants and microorganisms are discussed in the texts listed in section 5 which also give advice on controlling them. This advice will be followed and any queries referred to the subject specialist for biology (see section 10).

6.6 Equipment safety

All staff selecting equipment for purchase will check that it is safe and suitable for the intended purpose (to comply with the *Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations*). Equipment listed by specialist educational equipment suppliers is taken to meet these *Regulations* but all other equipment, especially gifts, is treated with caution and carefully assessed. Advice on safety and suitability is sought from CLEAPSS through publications and directly.

Any user who discovers a hazardous defect in an item of equipment must report it to the Senior Technician **Kinga Skrzypiec** and The Head of Science **Jim Johnson**.

6.7 Personal protective equipment

The employer accepts the duty to provide eye protection, gloves and laboratory coats for employees where the risk assessment requires them (*Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations*). Prescription safety spectacles are to be ordered from optician and the person needing them should inform the employer to meet the extra / full cost of the safety features. Laboratory coats are supplied by the employer / and laundered by the staff with the cost claimed against income tax. The cost of laundering of Student's Lab coats for 6th form is covered by the school and done in the local laundrette.

The employer expects eye protection to be available for students and visitors. Safety spectacles are provided for general use, with a set of goggles and a face shields used whenever the risk assessment requires them. Goggles or face shields to chemical-splash standard are worn whenever there is a risk to the eyes.

The condition of the eye protection is checked regularly (see section 3.3, *Monitoring and checking*).

6.8 Chemicals

Offers of gifts of chemicals are viewed with extreme caution to ensure that stocks are not increased unduly and that no unwanted chemicals are included.

The task of arranging safe storage of chemicals (and, where necessary, disposal), including highly-flammable liquids, in accordance with the requirements of the *Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR)* is given to the Senior Technician **Kinga Skrzypiec** and The Head of Science **Jim Johnson** who will ensure that chemicals are stored securely, the risks of fire, explosion and spillage are minimised, labels are readable and that a spill kit is available and properly replenished.

See section 10 for the name of the staff member currently with this function.

Hazardous activities involving chemicals restricted to those who have received special training (see section 4, *Training*) are identified in the texts in daily use as part of the risk assessment (see section 5, *Risk assessments*).

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6.9 Waste disposal

Waste chemicals and equipment are disposed of in an environmentally-responsible manner in accordance with relevant legislation. Chemical disposal follows guidance on CLEAPSS *Hazcards*. Other disposal follows relevant CLEAPSS guidance.

7 Activities and procedures

7.1 Outdoor activities

When planning any field trips etc, staff consult one or more of the following: the employer's code of practice, CLEAPSS *Laboratory Handbook,* schools' trips policy.

7.2 Manual handling and working at height

All regular operations involving lifting or carrying equipment, pushing trolleys, etc will be assessed to see if any may give rise to risks of injury (*Manual Handling Operations Regulations*) by a team consisting of the Head of Science / Site team manager and the technical staff.

As it is sometimes necessary to carry chemicals or equipment through heavy fire doors, we have assessed risks under both the *Manual Handling Operations Regulations* and under the *Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order* and will either use two people, one to hold open the door, the other to carry the items or will use special door closures to minimise risks. Considering that the risk of manual handling injury is greater than the risk of fire injury, therefore, we will prop open the fire door using wedges when necessary. We will endeavour to keep the fire door closed as much as possible by removing the prop as soon as practicable.

Occasional (i.e., one-off) manual-handling operations will be assessed by the staff members before attempting them. Problems will be reported to the Head of Science **Jim Johnson** / Senior Science Technician **Kinga Skrzypiec**.

See section 10 for the names of the staff members currently with these functions.

Nothing heavy is stored or displayed above head height in any of the science rooms, prep room and the storage rooms.

Following risk assessments under the *Work at Height Regulations*, when it is impossible to avoid storage or display above head height due to limited storage availability in this science department, glass or other fragile items are never stored above head height and only light-weight and rarely-used items are stored there. When displaying items at high level or fetching or replacing items stored at high level, step ladder or step up stool is used; staff never climb onto laboratory stools or benches. For certain items which are stored at height, it needs 2 people to collect and put back

7.3 Security

Access to laboratories and preparation rooms will be controlled to comply with the *Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations*. The storerooms are to be kept always locked except when in use. It is the task of the staff member leaving such a room to see that the room is empty and that the door is locked. All laboratories which are left open are cleared of all hazards, including shutting-off water and gas services by the science teacher at the end of the lesson. No class is allowed to be in a laboratory without adequate supervision.

Any non-science staff who have to supervise any class in a laboratory will refer to **"The Guidance for non-teaching staff teaching lessons in science laboratories"** which is stack on the teacher's desk in each science room. Non-teaching staff will receive brief training in laboratory rules by The Head of Science and will refer to the Laboratory rules signs in each science room.

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The guidance for such staff is filed as an Appendix to this policy in the reference copy kept in the prep room Health and safety folder.

As science rooms S1, S2, S3, S4 and S5 provide a fire exit, these cannot be locked. Technicians will therefore give priority to clearing items from, and delay delivering items to, this room so that risks are minimised.

7.4 Concern for others

All science areas are made safe for cleaners or contractors to work in before these persons are allowed to proceed.

8. Emergency procedures

8.1 Fire

Science staff will follow the normal school procedures in case of major fires. All science staff are trained to deal with minor bench fires, clothing fires and hair fires. This training is supported by regular refreshment drills arranged by the Head of Science Raminder Kaur Robson. See section 10 for the name of the staff member currently with this function. Sand for small fires is kept in all the science rooms and in the prep room and the science store. Advice on fire-fighting is given in sections 4 of the CLEAPSS *Laboratory Handbook*].

8.2 Spills

Trivial spills are dealt with using damp cloths, blue roll, mop or paper towels. Spills of any amount which do not give rise to significant quantities of toxic or highly-flammable fumes (‘minor spills’) are dealt with by teachers or technical staff using a ‘spill kit’ prepared for this purpose [in accordance with section 7 of the CLEAPSS *Laboratory Handbook*]. Spill kits are kept in each of the science room, the prep room and the science store.

Major spills are those involving the escape of toxic gases and vapours or of flammable gases and vapours in significant concentrations. (Small amounts can be ‘major spills’ if spilt in small rooms.) Staff are trained in the appropriate procedures which may involve calling the Fire and Rescue Service. This training is supported by regular drills arranged by the Head of Science Raminder Kaur Robson. See section 4 for the name of the staff member currently with this function.

8.3 Injury

Science staff will follow the normal school procedures in cases that require first aid. Science staff are trained to carry out immediate remedial measures (eg, eye rinsing), while waiting for first aiders, after accidents which occur in science. See the most recent edition of the CLEAPSS *Emergency Hazcards (cards E2A and E2b).* A copy of these should be readily available to all staff in science rooms and prep room and by having a membership access with CLEAPSS and by having a copy of the cards displayed on a wall.

See section 4 for the name of the person responsible for coordinating training in immediate remedial measures.

8.4 Reporting procedures

Injuries or suspected injuries to a pupil or a member of staff, dangerous occurrences and instances of damage or theft will be reported using the standard school procedures. Following an injury, so that the Regulations (*RIDDOR*) can be complied with, the accident must be reported to Head of Science and SLT as quickly as possible.

Dangerous situations and incidents which might have resulted in injury (‘near-misses’) should be reported to the head of department in writing and recorded in the Accidents book kept in the science prep room. These will be analysed and discussed at departmental meetings.

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9 Laboratory rules for students

The rules for students during science lessons are as follows.

Laboratory Rules

The biggest danger in the lab is ***YOU!*** You are at risk when you don't understand the hazards or you are careless, or both. The person most likely to suffer from your mistakes is ***YOU!*** Report any accident or breakage to your teacher.

1. Only enter a lab when told to do so by a teacher. Never rush about or throw things in the lab. Keep your bench and floor area clear, with bags and coats well out of the way.
2. Follow instructions precisely; check bottle labels carefully and keep tops on bottles except when pouring liquids from them; only touch or use equipment and materials when told to do so by a teacher; never remove anything from the lab without permission.
3. Wear eye protection when told to do so and keep it on from the very start until all practical work is finished and cleared away.
4. When using naked flames (eg, Bunsen or spirit burners or candles), make sure that ties, hair, baggy clothing etc are tied back or tucked away.
5. Always stand up when working with hazardous substances or when heating things so you can quickly move out of the way if you need to.
6. Never taste anything or put anything in your mouth in the laboratory. If you get something in your mouth, spit it out at once and wash your mouth out with lots of water. Tell your teacher.
7. Always wash your hands carefully after handling chemicals, microbes or animal and plant material.
8. If you are burnt or a chemical splashes on your skin, wash the affected part at once with lots of water. Tell your teacher.
9. Never put waste solids in the sink. Put them in the bin unless your teacher instructs you otherwise.
10. Wipe up all small spills and report bigger ones to your teacher.

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10. Staff roles and Emergency contacts

Staff roles

Staff roles and/or emergency contacts updated on 06 November 2026:	
Advice on health & safety and all aspects of practical science generally	*CLEAPSS **Helpline** 01895 251496. Email: science@cleapss.org.uk*
Overseeing health and safety in this school	*Head Teacher Adam Palmer*
Overseeing health and safety in the science department	*Head of Science Jim Johnson*
Senior technician	*Kinga Skrzypiec*
Various training functions	*See table in section 4.*
Overseeing the checking of activities against the model risk assessments and recording significant findings	*Head of Science Jim Johnson*
Company contracted to test fume cupboards	*Techomac*
Company contracted to electrical inspection and testing	*Scientia Services*
Company contracted to examine pressure vessels	*Zurich Insurance*
The person in charge of chemical storage and disposal	*Head of Science* Jim Johnson *and Senior Science Technician Kinga Skrzypiec*

Emergency contacts

Emergency advice CLEAPSS can provide support and guidance with all of these situations.	*CLEAPSS **Helpline** 01895 251496*
Serious accident: Ambulance service	*999*
Serious accident: School first-aiders	*216/ 5800*
Serious accident: School health & safety officer	
Serious chemical theft: Police or Police anti-terrorist hotline	*999 or 0800 789 321*
[Serious accident: Employer's health & safety officer]	
Major chemical spill: Fire & Rescue Service Chemical Incident Unit	*999*
Gas leak: Gas company	*Site team to contact Techomac and if mains gas call 0800 111 999*

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