

# Safety Newsletter

December 2022

As we approach the end of another year, it is a good time to celebrate achievements and accomplishments and look back on lessons learned during the year. Achievements such as the 100th meeting of the Chemical Engineering Level 3 Safety Committee! Not to mention the fantastic commitment of our contractor, Growthbuilt, to the physical and mental health of its workers. It's also party time, and so it's a good time to re-acquaint ourselves with University requirements around work celebrations.

To everyone who has worked hard this year to create a safe and productive campus for your colleagues and students, thank you! Have a safe and wonderful holiday season and we'll see you next year to do it all again!

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## Chemical Engineering's 100th Safety Committee Meeting

On the 28th October, Chemical Engineering conducted its 100th L3 Safety Committee Meeting! The first meeting was conducted on 6 November 1998. Topics included safety noticeboards, fire extinguisher and breathing equipment training, emergency posters, waste containers, risk assessments and clean ups. In the October 2022 meeting, the topics included PPE in labs, noncompliant SafeSys documents, gas training, chemical/gas audit procedures and chemicals of security concerns.

Thanks to the members of Chemical Engineering for all their wor

- Have a designated driver.

For further information, email [safety@unsw.edu.au](mailto:safety@unsw.edu.au)

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## Star Contractor

One of our building contractors, Growthbuilt, has included site safety talks for three months in a row - R U OK? Day, SafeWork NSW SafeTea Day, and Movember. These talks open discussions around common risks in the workplace and the simple controls that can be used to eliminate them, as well as site specific risks and hazards that may arise as we work towards the conclusion of the project.

For all three of the safety talks, the continuing dialogue included mental health in the workplace and what can be done to be part of that conversation. Lunch has been provided, and for Movember, the aim of raising money for men's mental health services has been included on the agenda!

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## UNSW is a Smoke -Free and Vape -Free Environment

Health authorities advise that tobacco smoking is a leading cause of preventable death and disease in Australia and also warn that the use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), also known as 'vapes', can contain hazardous chemicals that can increase the risk of lung and heart disease as well as increase the risk of cancers.

UNSW recognises that non-smoking staff, students and visitors have the right to an environment that is not polluted by these chemicals. To this effect, all University workplaces, including campuses, accommodation, properties, buildings, vehicles, boats or other areas owned, controlled or leased by the University, including grounds, have been made smoke and vape free, in line with legislative requirements and as per the UNSW Smoke-Free Environment Policy.

For further information, email [safety@unsw.edu.au](mailto:safety@unsw.edu.au)

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## Vacuum Filtration Failure

In a recent incident, a piece of vacuum filtration glassware lost containment while being filtered under vacuum. This resulted in two persons being splashed with chemicals. It had been observed that a precipitate formed during the reaction, which was unexpected.

The most likely causes were:

- small cracks in glassware causing it to fail;
- a contaminated frit (filter) causing an unexpected chemical reaction to occur; or,
- the frit being clogged by the precipitate causing pressure to build up.

Always ensure that glassware is clean and undamaged prior to use, always wear eye protection when around vacuum setups, and if you are working in a fume hood, remember to lower the sash.

Read the [Safety Alert](#) for further information, or email [safety@unsw.edu.au](mailto:safety@unsw.edu.au)

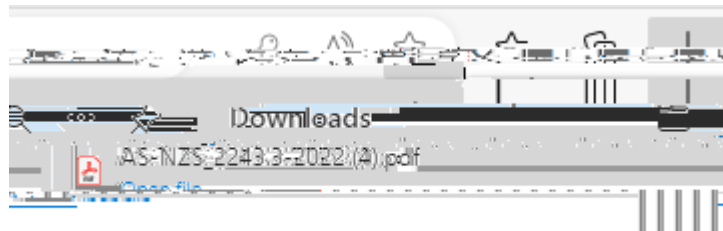
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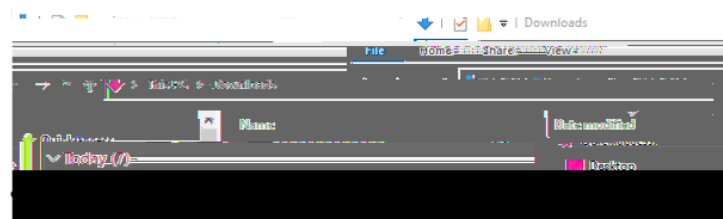
## Accessing Australian/New Zealand Standards

UNSW has a subscription to allow us to access Standards for our work. You either must be on campus or, if you're at home, you need to add "/library" to the UNSW VPN address.

Using [this link](#), type in the Standard's number, select the one you want and then select 'download' the document or 'view online'. You will need to be registered and from then on you will need to use this registration information for every Standard you want to view. You may be prompted to install a plugin in order to open the document. Try this, and then try to open the document from the Downloads (top right of screen).



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