



National Health Service in Scotland
Management Executive

St. Andrew's House
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Dear Colleague

**HEALTH SERVICE USE OF IONISING AND
NON-IONISING RADIATION**

Summary

1. This letter reminds employing authorities about their responsibilities regarding ionising and non-ionising radiation.

Action

2. Health Boards and Trusts should:
 - ensure that their use of radiation in diagnosis and therapy complies with relevant legislation and with good practice;
 - note especially the HSC Approved Code of Practice Part 4, the recommendations of the report "Patient Dose Reduction in Diagnostic Radiology" and the publication of the Royal College of Radiologists "Making the best use of a Department of Clinical Radiologists: Guidelines for Doctors";
 - review their arrangements for the management of radiation safety at least once in 5 years;
 - report certain incidents involving radiation to the Health and Safety Executive, to HM Industrial Pollution Inspectorate or to CSA Supplies Division.

3. The Appendix to this letter provides further information: Annex A lists the Circulars and Letters replaced by this letter: Annexes B and C list legislation and guidance currently extant.

4. This letter should be copied to Unit General Managers for information and necessary action

Yours sincerely

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Director of Manpower

M1302609.043

9 June 1993

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COMMON SERVICES AGENCY	
RECEIVED:	
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REFERRED TO	ACTION TAKEN



APPENDIX

HEALTH SERVICE USE OF IONISING AND NON-IONISING RADIATION

1. The use of radiation in diagnosis and therapy brings considerable benefits to patients but also has the potential, in the absence of proper precautions, adversely to affect staff (including staff in training and students), patients and the public. Health Boards and Trusts should ensure that their use of ionising and non-ionising radiation in diagnosis and therapy complies with the requirements of legislation and of good practice for the protection of staff, patients and the public.

2. Legislation and Approved Codes of Practice, together with the recommendations of the International Commission on Radiological Protection, the National Radiological Protection Board, the Royal College of Radiologists and the Institute of Physical Services in Medicine, provide a framework for protection which consistently emphasises the need to restrict exposure to radiation. The attention of Boards and Trusts is drawn specifically to that part of the HSC Approved Code of Practice Part 4 headed 'Keeping doses as low as reasonably practicable', to those recommendations immediately relevant to them of the report 'Patient Dose Reduction in Diagnostic Radiology' and to the publication of the Royal College of Radiologists "Making the best use of a Department of Clinical Radiology: Guidelines for Doctors".

3. In particular, Boards and Trusts should, at least once in five years, review their management of radiation safety including -

1. the preparation or revision of a written statement of safety policy for the use of ionising and non-ionising radiation in diagnosis and therapy;
2. the arrangements, including the preparation of local rules and the provision of training, for carrying that policy into effect;
3. the arrangements for provision of radiation protection advice to managers and to those using or otherwise interested in the effects of radiation;

4. the arrangements for the appropriate notification of incidents;
and

5. arrangements for the on-going assessment by management of radiation protection practice and for response to regulatory bodies.

4. Safety policies and the arrangements for carrying safety policies into effect should of course take full account of the requirements of legislation and of good practice for the protection of staff, patients and the public. Statements of the arrangements should make clear the responsibilities of management at all levels for the aspects of equipment management (including specification, installation, operation, maintenance and replacement) and staff management (including training and supervision) relevant to radiation safety.

5. Ready access to professional advice on radiation protection is needed by

- management
- staff working with radiation
- staff with responsibility for emergency planning and response
- public health doctors.

For example, management will need advice on arrangements to restrict radiation exposure to staff, patients and the public, on the implications of changes in legislation and on NHS tasks in response to radiation incidents. Staff need parallel advice on matters described in the HSC Approved Code of Practice, on patient protection, on radioactive waste disposal, on the transport of radioactive materials and on emergency response. Public health doctors may wish radiation protection advice on emergency planning and exercises and on the implications for health of radioactivity in the environment.

6. The appointment of a Radiation Protection Adviser is required by the Ionising Radiations Regulations 1985 and is, for matters outwith the scope of those Regulations, a matter of good practice.

7. Arrangements for the ongoing assessment by Boards and Trusts of their performance in radiation protection will also involve the need for radiation protection advice, as will the response of Boards and Trusts to inspections made by officers of the Health and Safety Executive, the Medicines Inspectorate, HM Industrial Pollution Inspectorate and the Scottish Office Home and Health Department.

8. Certain incidents involving ionising or non-ionising radiation must be reported without delay to the Health and Safety Executive, to HM Industrial Pollution Inspectorate or to CSA Supplies Division: the reporting requirements - under the Ionising Radiations Regulations 1985, under a condition of registration under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960 or under NHS Circular No 1991(GEN)24 - are distinct and, where necessary, separate reports should be made. Boards and Trusts should have in place arrangements for timeous notification to those bodies.

ANNEX A

Extension of hospital radio-diagnostic facilities to General Practitioners
RHB(S)(49)22

Supply of radium, radon and radioactive isotopes RHB(S)(53)4

Code of practice for the protection of persons against ionising radiations
arising from medical and dental use SHM 34 1972

Chest radiography for ante-natal patients SHM 39 1972

Handbook for nurses on the safe use of ionising radiations SHM1 1974

Radioisotope powered pacemakers NHS 1974(GEN)40

National Health Service: SI Units for Radiation NHS 1981(GEN)23

Guidance on the safe use of lasers NHS 1984(GEN)25

Application of the Radioactive Substances Act 1960 in NHS Hospitals NHS
1985(GEN)2

The Ionising Radiations Regulations 1985 NHS 1985(GEN)28

Carriage of radioactive substances by road SHHD DS(75)41

Radiological protection in dental practice SHHD DS(75)54

Use of facilities of institutions outwith the NHS for radioisotope and
related services SHHD/DS(77)11

Transport of radioactive substances by road SHHD/DS(1977)43

Transport of radioactive substances by road SHHD/DS(1978)20

Radio-diagnostic facilities in health centres SHHD/DS(1978)33

Guidance on the safe use of lasers in medical practice SHHD/DS(83)28

The Radioactive Substances (Substances of Low Activity) Exemption Order
1986 SHHD/DGM(87)5

Guidance Notes for the protection of persons against ionising radiations
arising from medical and dental use SHHD/DGM(1988)22

Additional guidance by the Health and Safety Commission on radiation
dose limitation SOHHD/DGM(1991)83

ANNEX B: LEGISLATION

1. Radioactive Substances Act 1948

Radioactive Material (Road Transport) Act 1991

The Radioactive Substances (Carriage by Road) (Great Britain) Regulations 1974. 1974 No 1735

The Radioactive Substances (Carriage by Road) (Great Britain) (Amendment) Regulations 1985. 1985 No 1729

2. Radioactive Substances Act 1960

Environmental Protection Act 1990

The Radioactive Substances (Lead) Exemption (Scotland) Order 1962
1962 No 2762 (S.122)

The Radioactive Substances (Storage in Transit) Exemption (Scotland) Order 1962
1962 No 2765 (S.125)

The Radioactive Substances (Uranium and Thorium) Exemption (Scotland) Order 1962
1962 No 2766 (S.126)

The Radioactive Substances (Exhibitions) Exemption (Scotland) Order 1962
1962 No 2768 (S.128)

The Radioactive Substances (Phosphatic Substances, Rare Earths etc) Exemption (Scotland) Order 1962
1962 No 2769 (S.129)

The Radioactive Substances (Geological Specimens) Exemption (Scotland) Order 1962
1962 No 2771 (S.131)

The Radioactive Substances (Prepared Uranium and Thorium
Compounds) Exemption (Scotland) Order 1962
1962 No 2772 (S.132)

The Radioactive Substances (Waste Closed Sources) Exemption
(Scotland) Order 1963
1963 No 1877 (S.94)

The Radioactive Substances (Schools) Exemption (Scotland) Order
1963
1963 No 1878 (S.95)

The Radioactive Substances (Precipitated Phosphate) Exemption
(Scotland) Order 1963
1963 No 1882 (S.99)

The Radioactive Substances (Electronic Valves) Exemption (Scotland)
Order 1967
1967 No 1803 (S.166)

The Radioactive Substances (Smoke Detectors) Exemption (Scotland)
Order 1980
1980 No 1599 (S.126)

The Radioactive Substances (Gaseous Tritium Light Devices)
Exemption Order 1985
1985 No 1047

The Radioactive Substances (Luminous Articles) Exemption Order
1985
1985 No 1048

The Radioactive Substances (Testing Instruments) Exemption Order
1985
1985 No 1049

The Radioactive Substances (Substances of Low Activity) Exemption
Order 1986

1986 No 1002

The Radioactive Substances (Appeals) Regulations 1990

1990 No 2504

The Radioactive Substances (Hospitals) Exemption Order 1990

1990 No 2512

The Radioactive Substances (Smoke Detectors) Exemption (Scotland)
Amendment Order 1991

1991 No 563 (S.48)

3. Medicines Act 1968

The Medicines (Radioactive Substances) Order 1978

1978 No 1004

The Medicines (Administration of Radioactive Substances) Regulations
1978

1978 No 1006

4. European Communities Act 1972

The Ionising Radiation (Protection of Persons Undergoing Medical
Examination or Treatment) Regulations 1988

1988 No 778

5. Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

The Ionising Radiations Regulations 1985

1985 No 1333

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences
Regulations 1985.

1985 No 2023

The Road Traffic (Training of Drivers of Vehicles Carrying
Dangerous Goods) Regulations 1992.

1992 No 744

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992

1992 No 2051

ANNEX C: GUIDANCE

1. NRPB Documents

Guidance notes for the protection of persons against ionising radiations arising from medical or dental use

NRPB 1988 0 85951 299 1

Published jointly by NRPB, HSE and UK Health Departments

Patient Dose Reduction in Diagnostic Radiology

Documents of the NRPB Volume 1 No 3 1990

ISBN 0 85951 327 0

Board Statement on Clinical Magnetic Resonance Diagnostic Procedures

Documents of the NRPB Volume 2 No 1 1991

ISBN 0 85951 339 4

Protection of the Patient in X-ray Computed Tomography

Documents of the NRPB Volume 3 No 4 1992

ISBN 0 85951 354 8

Occupational, Public and Medical Exposure

Documents of the NRPB Volume 4 No 2 1993

ISBN 0 85951 361 0

2. HSC AND HSE Documents

Approved Code of Practice. The protection of persons against ionising radiation arising from any work activity

Parts 1 and 2 The Ionising Radiations Regulations 1985

HMSO 1985

ISBN 0 11 883838 5

Part 3 Exposure to Radon: The Ionising Radiations Regulations 1985

HMSO 1988

ISBN 0 11 883978 0

Part 4 Dose limitation - restriction of exposure: additional guidance on regulation 6 of The Ionising Radiations Regulations 1985

HMSO 1991

ISBN 0 11 885605 7

Approved Code of Practice. Management of Health and Safety at Work

HMSO 1992

ISB 0 11 886330 4

Guidance Note PM77 Fitness of equipment used for medical exposure to ionising radiation

HMSO 1992

ISBN 0 11 886313 4

A framework for the restriction of occupational exposure to ionising radiation HS(G)91

HMSO 1992

ISBN 0 11 886324 X

3. Health Department Documents

Guidance on the safe use of lasers in medical practice

HMSO 1984

ISBN 0 11 320857 X

Radiation protection in dental practice

Printed by HMSO

Notes for Guidance on the administration of radioactive substances to persons for purposes of diagnosis, treatment or research. Administration of Radioactive Substances Advisory Committee. January 1993.

A strategic guide to environment policy for General Managers and Chief Executives

UK Health Departments 1992

Guidelines for magnetic resonance diagnostic equipment in clinical use

Medical Devices Directorate 1993

4. SHHD and SOHHD Documents

1. NHS 1979 (GEN)44

The administration of radioactive substances to persons

2. NHS 1988 (GEN)21

The Ionising Radiation (Protection of Persons Undergoing Medical Examination or Treatment) Regulations 1988

3. DGM(1989)61

Guidance Notes for the Protection of Persons against Ionising Radiations arising from Medical or Dental Use. Calibration of radiotherapy equipment

4. DGM(1990)30

Emergency Planning Guidance: Health Service arrangements for dealing with incidents involving radioactivity

5. DGM(1990)73

Emergency Planning Guidance to the National Health Service in Scotland

6. NHS 1991(GEN)24

Reporting of hazards and potential hazards

7. MEL(1992)1

Emergency Planning Guidance to the NHS in Scotland

8. MEL(1992)26

Purchasing radiology equipment - patient dose reduction

9. NHS 1992(GEN)32

Planning Guidance for the NHS and Scotland. Incidents involving ionising radiation.

10. NHS GEN(1992)33

Patients who die in hospital

5. Publications of the Royal College of Radiologists

Making the best use of a Department of Clinical Radiology: Guidelines for Doctors Second edition 1993.

ISBN 1 872599 02 8