

Radiation Protection Advice & Guidance no 4

DUTIES OF RADIATION PROTECTION SUPERVISORS (RPS)

RPG 4 Summary

In most cases where ionising radiations (e.g. X-rays, radioactive substances) are used one or more RPS must be appointed for the purpose of supplying compliance with radiation safety regulations.

Principal Duties^a

By law (IRR99^b), departments (*employers*) using ionising radiations (e.g. X-rays, radioactive substances) must appoint one or more suitable RADIATION PROTECTION SUPERVISORS (“RPS) for the purpose of securing compliance with the Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999 (“IRR99”) in respect of work carried out in their department, where LOCAL RULES are required. The names of RPS’s must be set down in the LOCAL RULES for each CONTROLLED AREA, which should make clear for what areas of work the RPS is appointed.

The RPS should

- Know and understand the requirements of IRR99 and local rules relevant to their area
- Command sufficient authority from the people doing the work to allow them to supervise the radiation protection aspects of that work
- Understand the necessary precautions to be taken and the extent to which these precautions will restrict exposures
- Know what to do in an emergency

Heads of department should inform the Radiation Physics Department of the appointment of each individual as an RPS.

The employer must also appoint a RADIATION PROTECTION ADVISER (RPA), who can provide advice to the RPS should be able to contact the RPA for advice when required.

^a Same requirement as to HEY Hospitals Health & Safety at Work Policy CP137 (4/12/09) section 12.2.6

^b Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999 (<http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si1999/19993232.htm>), reg 17(4)

Training^c

Radiation protection supervisors should attend an RPS course prior to appointment, or at the earliest opportunity. The UK Health & Safety Executive Information sheet "*Radiation Protection Supervisors*"^d gives further information on the minimum level of competence and a suggested core of competence for RPS training. (See <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/irp6.pdf>)

Additional Duties

While the role of the RPS in law is limited to that described above, it is not uncommon for the individual appointed as RPS to also be assigned other duties by their employer relating to radiation protection. These may include some or all of the following;

- Day to day management of, and/or assessment of the results of, staff dose monitoring.
- Maintaining staff awareness of exposure levels.
- Ensuring that departmental contamination and environmental monitors are checked and calibrated regularly.
- Ensuring that staff receive such information and training as is necessary for them to carry out their work in accordance with the regulations, and that new employees read and understand the relevant sections of the Local Rules, Regulations, ACOP, and Notes for Guidance and sign an appropriate declaration.
- Responsibility for the provision and maintenance of the Departmental Radiation Safety Documentation (i.e. Local Rules, Policies and Procedures).
- Involvement in the preparation of contingency plans and ensuring that members of staff are able to implement these effectively.
- Investigation of reports of overexposure.
- Acting as custodian for radioactive sources.

However, such duties are additional to the individual's duties as RPS and should be clearly defined by the employer. In some cases it is more appropriate for some or all of these duties to be undertaken by other managerial staff.

Mr John Saunderson,
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Changes since last version (1995)

General revision. Reference to newer regulations. Reference to new radiation section of Hull & East Yorkshire Hospitals Health & Safety at Work Policy. The distinction is clarified between RPS duties under IRR99 and other radiation protection duties which the individual who is RPS may also perform as part of their job.

^c Same requirement as HEY Hospitals Health & Safety at Work Policy CP137 (4/12/09) section 12.15.2.1

^dHSE, Ionising Radiation Protection Series No 6, 8/00, IRIS6, C60,