

Exposure of Sonographers to Ionising Radiation

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Functional Sub group Personnel/Workforce - Occupational Health & Safety

Summary Directs that where practicable routine ultrasound examinations should not be performed after a patient has been injected with a radiopharmaceutical.

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Applies to Area Health Services/Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporation, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations, Divisions of General Practice, NSW Dept of Health, Public Health Units, Public Hospitals

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Compliance with this policy directive is mandatory.

CIRCULAR

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EXPOSURE OF SONOGRAPHERS TO IONISING RADIATION

It has come to the Department's attention that sonographers may be exposed to unnecessary levels of radiation during routine ultrasound examinations on patients who have been injected with a radiopharmaceutical. The following policy, as recommended by the Radiation Advisory Council, has been endorsed by the Department and should be drawn to the attention of medical imaging services:

In accordance with the ALARA (as low as reasonably achievable) principle of minimising exposure to radiation, where practicable routine ultrasound examinations should not be performed after a patient has been injected with a radiopharmaceutical. In general, rescheduling of other imaging procedures requiring close patient contact should ensure the least unnecessary exposure to the health workers involved, except in those situations where the well-being of the patient necessitates otherwise.

It should be emphasised that prior administration of a radiopharmaceutical is not, in itself, a contraindication to performing an ultrasound examination.

Michael Reid
Director-General

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