

Radiation Safety Guidelines - Speech Pathologists/Other Staff - Modified Barium Swallows/Fluoroscopy

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Functional Sub group Population Health - Environmental
Personnel/Workforce - Occupational Health & Safety

Summary Specifies measures to be adopted to ensure people do not receive radiation doses in excess of prescribed limits and exposures received are kept as low as reasonably achievable.

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Applies to Area Health Services/Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporation, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations - Non Declared, Affiliated Health Organisations - Declared, Community Health Centres, Dental Schools and Clinics, NSW Dept of Health, Private Hospitals and Day Procedure Centres, Public Hospitals

Distributed to Public Health System, Community Health Centres, Dental Schools and Clinics, NSW Department of Health, Public Hospitals, Private Hospitals and Day Procedure Centres

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Policy Manual Not applicable

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Director-General

This Policy Directive may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Compliance with this directive is **mandatory** for NSW Health and is a condition of subsidy for public health organisations.

CIRCULAR

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RADIATION SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR SPEECH PATHOLOGISTS AND OTHER STAFF PARTICIPATING IN MODIFIED BARIUM SWALLOWS (MBS) AND ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES USING FLUOROSCOPY**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. Speech pathologists and other staff participating in Modified Barium Swallows (MBS) and associated procedures using fluoroscopy are potentially exposed to radiation. There is a wide variation in potential radiation exposure levels dependant on the equipment used, and the location of staff relative to the x-ray equipment. Proper use of protective clothing and good radiation practice would reduce staff doses to effectively nil amounts.
- 1.2. This circular is relevant to all NSW Health staff whose duties involve the direct use of fluoroscopy or supervision of staff members who use fluoroscopy. The circular should be distributed to all health care facilities with access to fluoroscopy equipment.

2. LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- 2.1. Work involving the use of ionising radiation must comply with the requirements of the NSW Radiation Control Act 1990 as amended, the Radiation Control Regulation 2003 and any conditions imposed on a licence or registration issued under the legislation.
- 2.2. In order to achieve the objective of ensuring all occupationally exposed persons do not receive radiation doses in excess of the prescribed limits, and exposures received are kept as low as reasonably achievable, the measures outlined in part 3 of this circular should be implemented by all facilities with access to fluoroscopy.

Distributed in accordance with circular list(s):

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In accordance with the provisions incorporated in the Accounts and Audit Determination, the Board of Directors, Chief Executive Officers and their equivalents, within a public health organisation, shall be held responsible for ensuring the observance of Departmental policy (including circulars and procedure manuals) as issued by the Minister and the Director-General of the Department of Health.

3. MEASURES TO BE TAKEN BY STAFF

- 3.1. Safe working practices are to be documented for all procedures involving potential exposures to ionising radiation.
- 3.2. These should include any requirements for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and must comply with the policy on xray protective clothing set out in the NSW Department of Environment and Conservation Radiation (EPA) Guideline 6, Part 2, Fluoroscopy and Radiography. For fluoroscopy procedures including MBS studies where speech pathologists, radiologists or other staff such as nurses are present inside the screening room and not behind a protective shield, a properly fitted lead apron and thyroid collar are to be worn.
- 3.3. Speech pathologists and other staff undertaking studies requiring fluoroscopic examination of the patient should receive proper training in all aspects of these studies. This should include training in radiation safety and the proper use of PPE to ensure that doses to themselves and the patient are minimised.
- 3.4. X-ray equipment used for fluoroscopy procedures including MBS shall be maintained in a condition that meets the requirements for registration in NSW, and only operated by persons licensed to carry out the proposed procedure.

4. PERSONAL MONITORING OF RADIATION EXPOSURE

The individual monitoring of speech pathologists for radiation exposure is not mandatory under the NSW Radiation Control Regulation. The recommendations of the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) Publication 75 General Principles for the Radiation Protection of Workers state that persons who are unlikely to receive doses in excess of 1 mSv per year need not undergo individual monitoring. Speech Pathologists and other staff participating in MBS and associated procedures using fluoroscopy would be included in this group. Issuing radiation monitors to these staff should be decided on a workplace-by-workplace basis at the discretion of facility managers.

5. PREGNANT MEMBERS OF STAFF

The accepted limit of exposure to radiation for a pregnant employee is the same as that for a member of the public, and is 1 mSv per year. Pregnant staff may be in the room where fluoroscopy is used for MBS and associated studies provided that a lead apron is properly fitted to protect the abdomen.

Robyn Kruk
Director-General