



Radiation Health and Safety in Saskatchewan Dental Offices

Radiation safety has long been a priority in Saskatchewan. This province, the first in Canada to have radiation safety legislation, passed *The Radiological Health Act* on March 15, 1961. The Act underwent a major revision in 1985 at which time it was renamed *The Radiation Health and Safety Act, 1985*. As well as protecting operators of radiation equipment, the Act was designed to protect patients and the general public from excessive radiation exposure.

Regulations under the Act were first introduced in 1970. Amendments to *The Radiation Health and Safety Act, 1985* in 1996 dates to internationally accepted standards, and the federal government's 2001 *Nuclear Safety Control Act* have all combined to make this new version of the regulations necessary. The new regulations, *The Radiation Health and Safety Regulations, 2005*, took effect March 10th and are the result of collaborative work by the provincial Radiation Health and Safety Committee, owners and users of radiation equipment, and stakeholders and the public.

To assist dentists in keeping radiation exposure to staff, patients and the public low as reasonably achievable, the Act and regulations require the following from dental x-ray equipment owners, operators, and vendors:

- **Approval:** An accurate plan of the proposed installation or alteration must be submitted and approval obtained from the Radiation Safety Unit prior to installation or alterations.
- **Certification:** Prior to turning the x-ray equipment over to the owner, the vendor or installer of the equipment must complete an electrical and mechanical inspection of the x-ray unit and perform a calibration of the x-ray

equipment to certify that the unit meets all specifications. A copy of the report must be submitted to the owner and the Unit within thirty days of the installation. This applies to the installation of both new and used x-ray units

- **Registration:** The x-ray unit(s) must be registered with the department using the prescribed form, within one month of the installation or its alteration. It must subsequently be re-registered each year.
- **Qualifications:** Only those persons adequately trained qualify to operate dental x-ray equipment.
- **Quality Assurance:** The owner must establish a quality assurance program to ensure the safe operation of the equipment and diagnostic quality of the images. As part of the quality assurance program, the dental office must participate in the Radiation Safety Unit's Postal Quality Assurance Program as requested.
- **Inspections:** The owner must arrange for each x-ray unit to receive a Safety Preventive Maintenance (SPM) inspection by a qualified service person at least once every three years.
- **Safety:** The owner and/or operator must make sure that adequate safety precautions are taken to

ensure that patients, general public and staff are not unnecessarily exposed to ionizing radiation.

To help dentists to achieve these required elements, the Radiation Safety Unit has hired an additional person. With this additional staff, the Radiation Safety Unit will be better equipped to work with the College of Dental Surgeons in developing a generic quality assurance program, provide more on site audits, provide prompt follow-up to the SPM inspections and postal quality assurance test results. We look forward to being at the Annual Scientific Session in Regina in September and hope that you will stop by our booth to discuss these issues.

If you wish more detailed information on *The Radiation Health and Safety Act, 1985* and *The Radiation Health and Safety Regulations, 2005* prior to the Annual Scientific Session these can be obtained by contacting any member of the Radiation Safety Unit.

Wayne Tiefenbach, Manager,
Radiation Safety Unit,
Regina(306) 787-4538
Megan Hunt, Regina(306) 787-4006
Steve Webster,
Saskatoon(306) 933-7775
Bill Ruskin, Saskatoon ... (306) 933-5052

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. FRANK HOHN ON HIS ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2005:

June 2005	Appointed to Executive Council, Canadian Association of Oral and maxillofacial Surgeons
January 2005	Appointed Member, Bone Graft Substitute Review Committee, Surgical Operations Committee, Saskatoon Health Region
2005	Fellow, Anesthesiology, American Dental Society of Anesthesiology
2005	Diplomate, National Dental Board of Anesthesiology
2005	Fellow, Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Canada