

To Vice-Presidents/Deans, Heads of Schools and Research Institutes, HoFAs
From Dr Melanie Taylor, Head of Safety Services
Date 5 November 2010
cc Prof M Case, Dr D Barker, School Safety Advisors, Safety Representatives
Reference Safety Circular 10/2010

Ultra violet radiation from transilluminators¹ and PPE

Action: HOSs are asked to draw this circular to the attention of staff and students who use personal protective equipments and transilluminators or other sources of UV light in particular.

The University's Technical Advisor on non-ionising radiation safety has come across examples of where appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) has either not been provided, or has not properly worn or maintained.

PPE must protect all parts of the body that might be exposed to UV radiation and suffer damage. Areas of skin that are often not protected by visors or gloves include the underside of the chin and bare arms above the tops of gloves. Lab coats with long sleeves should be worn. Of course, if the PPE is scratched, dirty or damaged, it will not provide the expected protection. It must be maintained in good condition, and checked before each use.

The specification of visors or helmets is laid down in BS EN 166:2002 and BS EN 170:2002. The relevant BS should be marked clearly and indelibly on the helmet and the visor but also can appear on the safety data sheet.

Further advice about UV hazards and protection against them can be obtained from Katharine Sullivan in the Radiation Safety Unit ext 56985 or email Katharine.sullivan@manchester.ac.uk

For any PPE to be effective and compliant with the Personal Protection at Work Regulations 1992, schools should also note that:

- Suitable warning signs must be displayed.
- The PPE must be comfortable to wear and compatible with other items of PPE clothing.
- It should be stored in such a way that it's effectiveness isn't compromised (ie so that it isn't damaged or contaminated)
- Regular checks should be made to ensure its effectiveness; it should be cleaned, disinfected, tested and repaired where applicable, and replaced as necessary.
- Users should be given information, instructions and training on how to use it, what protection it provides, and crucially, any limitations on the protection it provides.

Further advice on PPE generally can be obtained from the University Safety Co-ordinators or the Head of Safety Services.

Dr Melanie Taylor
Head of Safety Services

¹ In this context, transilluminators are used to shine ultra violet radiation through biological samples, typically DNA, as an aid to visualising them.