

NHS Orkney IR(ME)R compliance for doctors and dentists .

This document should be read by all doctors/dentists requiring use of Medical Imaging facilities at the Balfour Hospital.

1. Background

The Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2000 (IR(ME)R) seek to protect the patient from excessive and unjustified exposures to ionising radiation. The regulations define a number of duty holders known as referrers, practitioners and operators.

2. Definitions

Referrers request medical exposures,

Practitioners justify and are responsible for the exposure,

Operators are anyone who carries out any practical aspect of the exposure.

The employer is responsible for entitling duty holders and for clearly stating what their duties are in a scope of entitlement. For practitioners and operators the scope of entitlement must be supported by training records that demonstrate that the duty holder is competent to carry out those duties.

3. Entitlement as a Referrer

When requesting an X-ray you will be acting as a referrer under IR(ME)R and will require to be appropriately entitled by NHS Orkney. This entitlement is conferred by the Chair of the Radiation Committee by NHSO IR(ME)R Procedure EP2. Table 1 summarises the scope of entitlement for doctors and dentists as referrers. You may not refer for procedures that do not appear under your staff group.

Table 1 Scope of Entitlement for categories of referrers

Staff Group	Scope of referral entitlement
Hospital Consultants Visiting Consultants	For all exposure procedures.
General Practitioners and GPST's	For all exposure procedures except: Barium examinations
Dental practitioners (GDP) and Salaried Dental Officers.	Intra-oral, cephalostats, OPT radiographs, chest radiographs for foreign body inhalation, facial views, TMJts and sialograms

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3.1. Referral Guidelines

Guidelines on appropriate criteria for referral are described in the RCR booklet 'Making best use of a radiology department' (6th edition) and 'Selection Criteria for Dental Radiography' (published by the Faculty of General Dental Practitioners) The RCR booklet is available online at <http://mbur.nhs.uk/>. and on the Blog under Radiology.

3.2. Responsibilities of the Referrer

Referrers are legally obliged to supply the information listed below:-

- Accurate, unique identification of the patient, including name, date of birth and address
- Accurate clinical information sufficient to allow justification to take place
- Where relevant, information on pregnancy/LMP
- Unique identification of the referrer; you should print your name as well as signing the request.
- If the referral is for an exposure as part of a research study or medico-legal exposure then sufficient details should be included on the referral to allow justification to take place.
- The referrer should check available records to ensure there have been no recent examinations which may satisfy the requirements of the request.

By signing the request the referrer is taking responsibility for the information on the request. Any referral which does not fulfil the above criteria will be returned to the referrer to complete. Any referral that has been 'pp'd' or signed by a proxy will be rejected and returned to the referring clinic.

The use of abbreviations in referral forms can lead to the wrong examination being performed and therefore the practice is generally discouraged. We have been specifically advised not to accept referrals for spine radiography written in abbreviated form. Thus the use of C, T and L spine is not acceptable and the anatomical area must be written/typed in long hand.

4. Entitlement as an Operator for clinical evaluation

IR (ME) R requires that a clinical evaluation of each exposure is made and recorded. Making a clinical evaluation is an operator function and as you may be required to make a clinical evaluation from an X-ray image you must be entitled as an operator, with a defined scope of entitlement (as described in table 2). This entitlement is conferred by the Chair of the Radiation Safety Committee by Procedure EP1 and summarised in table 2 below.

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Table 2 Scope of Entitlement for categories of Operator to clinically evaluate X-ray images

Category of Doctor	Entitlement to evaluate/act on images
Pre-registration doctors	All plain film radiographs.
Post registration doctors	As above, plus fluoroscopic images confined to the speciality in which they practice.
Consultants	All images relevant to specialty.
Dentists	Intra-oral, cephalostats, OPT radiographs, chest radiographs for foreign body inhalation, facial views, TMJts and sialograms

4.1. Operator Responsibilities

Each entitled operator shall satisfy him/herself that the implied duties meet the requirements of the General Medical Council for registration. Specifically, the General Medical Council states that the duty of a GMC registered doctor includes the requirement that '*as a doctor you must recognise the limits of your own professional competence.*' In this context, entitled operators must be aware that any doubts about interpretation of an image should be referred to an appropriate colleague for advice.

When you make a clinical evaluation as an operator you must make a record of the evaluation in the patient records even if a formal Radiologists report is subsequently issued.

Sample Signature

The sample signature form provided in Appendix 2 of this information sheet, must be completed and returned to the Medical Imaging Department. Receipt of the sample signature confirms to the Medical Imaging staff that entitlement has occurred.

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Appendix 2

THE IONISING RADIATION (MEDICAL EXPOSURE) REGULATIONS 2000
Specimen signatures of referrers

Name (please Print)	Signature	GMC/GDC NO

Access to View images required

Yes

No

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