



The University of Sheffield

Safety Services



Legislation & Codes of Practice

Work with ionising radiations is now covered by three main Acts of Parliament and their accompanying regulations. These are:-

(a) Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 - Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999 - <http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si1999/19993232.htm>;

(b) Radioactive Substances Act 1993; and

(c) Radioactive Material (Road Transport) Act 1991-

- Radioactive Material (Road Transport)(Great Britain) Regulations 2002 - <http://www.hmso.gov.uk/si/si2002/20021093.htm>.

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act introduced a new concept into safety legislation, in that for the first time, employees as well as the employer have responsibilities to themselves and to others who may be affected, not only by the work they perform, but also by any failure to perform their duties. The detailed requirements for work with ionising radiations under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act are provided by the Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999 and the Approved Code of Practice for the protection of persons against ionising radiations arising from any work activity.

The Radioactive Substances Act 1993 is designed to control the use of radioactive materials, and all University buildings where radioactive materials are used hold Registration Certificates, issued to them by the Environment Agency. These spell out the radioisotopes which are allowed to be used and the amounts which can be held in store at any one time. The Environment Agency also issue Authorisation Certificates for the disposal of radioactive waste, which place limits on the amounts which can be disposed of at any one time, and also specify the permitted means of disposal.

All departments using radioisotopes should have notices prominently displayed within their departments, indicating the various limits and conditions of the Certificates as they affect them. It is important that all departments keep within the limits of their Environment Agency Certificates, but when necessary, these can be revised, with the help of Safety Services.

The Radioactive Material (Road Transport) Act 1991 and the regulations enacted under it are designed to bring the U.K. into line with the Regulations drawn up by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Together with the Ionising Radiation Regulations 1999, they govern the movement and transport of radioactive materials. More information on this subject can be found in [transport guide](#).

Copies of the main regulations, where appropriate, are held by Departmental Radiation Protection Supervisors, and should be available for viewing at any reasonable time. These local rules are based upon all current regulations and provide the radiation worker with guidance which should enable him to observe them.

There are enforcement agencies - The Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency- which, from time to time, inspect work with ionising radiations at the University to ensure that the Regulations are complied with. They have the power to enter premises unannounced, to withdraw licences or issue prohibition notices if they find an unsatisfactory situation and to prosecute with possible fines of up to £20,000 per offence.