

Dose Constraints for Helpers

Under Section 12 (1) of Statutory Instrument 478 of 2002 “The European Communities (Medical Ionising Radiation) Regulations” the Dental Council is required to establish the dose constraint for the exposure of those individuals knowingly and willingly helping in the support and comfort of patients undergoing medical diagnosis or treatment (helpers).

Under this regulation the “Dose Constraint” means a restriction on the prospective doses to individuals which may result from a defined source, for use at the planning stage in radiation protection whenever optimisation is involved.

The Council agreed that dose constraint for those individuals knowingly and willingly helping in the support and comfort of patients undergoing medical diagnosis or treatment (helper) is 3mSv per procedure (15mSv for those over 60 years old)ⁱ. The Council agreed that, where possible, pregnant women should be precluded from the role as helper. In the event of a pregnant woman acting as helper the dose constraint should be 0.3mSv.

People who assist the patient as part of their occupation are not ‘Helpers’ within the meaning of this regulation and dose limits for this category of person must meet the requirements of Statutory Instrument 125 of 2000.

ⁱ Medical Council in their position paper of 3 September 2004 titled “Dose Constraints for Helpers (Comforters and Carers)”