

# PRESS RELEASE



**For immediate release: Wednesday, 21 September 2011**

## **IS YOUR DENTAL PRACTICE READY FOR RADIATION INSPECTORS?**

Dentists are reminded to take extra steps to ensure patients are fully protected from the hazards of ionising radiation.

UK-wide dental defence organisation MDDUS understands inspections are currently being carried out across the country, making it imperative that all dental practices are compliant with the requirements of the Ionizing Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2000 and Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999 (IRR99).

These requirements are primarily concerned with the safe use of x-ray equipment for examining patients and MDDUS advises practitioners to check that they are compliant now, rather than waiting until an inspection happens. The regulations are enforced under the Health and Safety at Work Act and therefore breaches under the Act are criminal charges.

"Inspectors have the power to enter a premises at a reasonable time and take with them anyone else authorised to assist them," warns MDDUS dental adviser Rachael Bell.

There is a different authority for each of the administrative areas in the UK - the Care Quality Commission has been delegated the task in England and the Scottish Executive Health Department north of the border.

Following inspection, if practitioners are found to be non-compliant, inspectors can issue an improvement notice, or if the breach is considered severe, they can shut down the premises. "Dentists need to be organised now for their inspections," states Bell.

"Waiting until it's too late and finding you are non-compliant will cause stress and ultimately could cost you money if your practice is closed. If you are charged under the Act your registration at GDC could also be at risk, so protect yourself by being prepared."

There are two types of inspections the authorities can carry out. Proactive inspections are carried out to check if a healthcare organisation is in compliance with the regulations, while reactive inspections are a response to a notification of an incident or from concerns raised by the public or whistleblowers.

In Scotland, NES (NHS Education Scotland) has sent out notification of information meetings to inform practitioners about what to expect and how to comply. However, these are not

available through the NES Dental Portal. Currently the meetings are fully booked but look out for notification of any new dates to avoid disappointment.

Help is at hand, however, in the shape of the document *Guidance Notes for Dental Practitioners on the Safe Use of X-Ray Equipment* which can be downloaded from [www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb\\_C/1194947310610](http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1194947310610)

“Dental Associates also need to be aware of the regulations,” states Bell. “All members of the dental team carry responsibilities under IRMER. Associates cannot assume the principal will have all the responsibility. Even if all you do is ‘press the button’, there is part of the regulations you will need to be familiar with, so download and read the documentation now.”

## **Ends**

For further information contact Richard Hendry on 0845 270 2034 or 07976 272266, or email [rihendry@mddus.com](mailto:rihendry@mddus.com).

## **Note to editors**

MDDUS (The Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland) is a medical and dental defence organisation providing access to professional indemnity and expert medico- and dento-legal advice for doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals throughout the UK.

For further information on MDDUS go to [www.mddus.com](http://www.mddus.com).