

Breast Imaging Department

Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2017 Regulation 6 Schedule 2 Employer's Procedures

(n) Procedure to establish appropriate dose constraints for carers and comforters.	
Responsibilities relating to IR(ME)R procedures:	
Ensuring the required IR(ME)R procedures are in place	Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust (WAHT)
Authorisation of Breast Imaging IR(ME)R procedures	Clinical Director of Breast Imaging
Development, review and amendment to this document	Superintendent Radiographer
Assisting in development, review and amendment to this document	Radiation Protection Supervisors
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Authorised by Clinical Director of Breast Imaging	1.3.2023

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1	9.12.22 IRS	Revision of format and IRMER audit	1.3.2026
2	12.7.2024 IRS JB	No changes	12.7.2025

Purpose

- To ensure there is a clear process for staff to follow when carers or comforters need to remain in a controlled radiation area during procedures utilising ionising radiation.
- To ensure the radiation dose for carers, comforters and other escorts remains as low as reasonably practicable.
- To ensure compliance with legislation and guidelines for the medical use of ionising radiation (IRR17, & IR(ME)R17).

Scope

This procedure covers any exposure to ionising radiation where the patient is not sedated and requires care or comfort during the exposure.

Responsibility

The responsibility for this process lies with the practitioner, who needs to consider the risk to the carer or comforter and the health benefits to the patient, as well as the detriment associated with the exposure.

Procedure

Wherever possible the use of comforters and carers shall be avoided. Persons may only act as comforters or carers if, in the opinion of the healthcare professional supervising the exposure, they would be of benefit in calming or supporting the patient through the procedure to such an extent that if they were not present then it would not be possible to obtain the necessary images required for diagnosis.

- The operator should decide if it would be of benefit to the examination to have a comforter and carer within the controlled area.
- No person under the age of 18 shall be allowed to act as carer & comforter
- If the carer/comforter is a person of child bearing potential, they will be asked “is there any likelihood you could be pregnant?” If the answer is yes, they shall not be allowed to act as carer and comforter
- A dose constraint will be established for each situation for both a single examination and annually. 1mSv per annum has been defined as a suitable annual dose constraint for comforters and carer, with the expectation that the dose for a single procedure will not exceed 0.3 mSv. These values may be subject to change following review of monitoring badge records on an ongoing basis.

Author(s): D.Fox J.Broomer	Authorised by: Dr P.Haggett	Issue Date: 12.7.2024	Review date: 12.7.2025
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IRMER (n) Procedure to establish appropriate dose constraints for carers and comforters.

- The operator shall explain the procedure to the comforter or carer and highlight any additional safety measures. They should attempt to answer any reasonable questions/address any concerns relating to the radiation dose that could potentially be received.
- Carers and comforters should be advised to occupy areas where exposures remain the lowest consistent with a successful examination and never to place any body part into the primary beam.
- If the situation is covered, the practitioner [or the operator] should check the name of the C&C against the Carers and comforters log. This will allow a check to be made for repeat C&Cs that the annual dose constraint is not exceeded.
- All carers and comforters should wear a lead gown of at least:
 - 0.25mm Pb for kV up to 100
 - 0.35mm Pb for kV over 100

Thyroid shields/lead gloves will not be required.

- Each site – excluding mobile screening trailers is provided with a designated carers and comforters badge. Carers and comforters should wear the monitoring badge on the front of the trunk underneath the lead gown. Operators should ensure the badge is placed correctly prior to exposure and ensure it is returned after use.
- Following exposure, the following details should be added to the Carers and comforters log:
 - Name of carer/comforter
 - Patient identification number
 - Date
 - Exposure factors
- The carer/comforter's name to be recorded in the 'Event Comment' section on CRIS for symptomatic examinations and on 'notepad' on NBSS. Exposure factors are available on all images.
- The carer/comforter will sign a consent form prior to the exposure taking place. This will be scanned in to the patients CRIS record for symptomatic examinations or NBSS for screening patients. See Radiation Protection folder on Teamshare.

References

HSE research report 155; dose constraints for comforters and carers, produced by the Medical Physics department at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital for HSE. HSE Books, 2003.

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