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| C:\Users\susanb\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.Word\PRIMARY_A_Vertical_Housed_RGB.PNG | health & safety  Reproductive Health Requirements |

# Purpose

To provide guidelines and information to staff and supervisors of staff who may be pregnant, or planning a pregnancy, while working with potentially harmful substances.

# Scope

This procedure applies to all staff, students, contractors and other personnel at workplaces under the management or control of the University of Melbourne.

# DEFINITIONS

**1mSv**

1 milli Sievert is a measure of radiation dose

**SDS**

Safety data sheet

# Requirements

## General

The manager/supervisor shall address concerns from employees regarding potential workplace reproductive hazards by undertaking appropriate risk assessments and control measures.

Depending on the nature of the work and the associated risks, modified or alternative duties may be provided for pregnant staff or students.

## Chemicals

The manager/supervisor shall determine whether chemicals used in the work area could create a risk to pregnant staff or students. Safety data sheets must be kept for all chemicals used or stored in a workplace.

### Limiting exposure

Limiting chemical exposure levels below recognised exposure limits (as determined by the ACGIH Threshold limit values and biological exposure indices) should not present a health risk to the unborn foetus. A risk assessment should be undertaken to ensure that levels are below exposure limits. The SDS should be included in the risk assessment process.

Further advice can be sought from: [ohs-enquiries@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:ohs-enquiries@unimelb.edu.au)

### Local procedures

When establishing a standard operating procedure, the manager/supervisor shall include:

* reviewing current local procedures
* reviewing the SDS to identify possible reproductive hazards presented by a chemical;
* eliminating or replacing the chemical for a less hazardous chemical if able to do so;
* using (where applicable) a fume cupboard;
* avoiding contact by inhalation by only using chemicals in a containment hood;
* storing chemicals in sealed containers when they are not in use;
* using appropriate personal protective equipment such as gloves, gown and a mask;
* washing hands after contact with any laboratory reagents; and
* participating in training and education programs provided for chemical safety.

## Ionising radiation

When a staff member/student declares their pregnancy, the manager/supervisor shall determine whether the use of ionising radiation in the work area could create a risk to the staff member/student.

### Limiting exposure

Radiation dose limits for pregnant staff/students must be no more than that of a member of the general public. Therefore, the dose limit is 1 mSv per year. A risk assessment should be undertaken to ensure that the dose received is limited to no higher than 1 mSv per year. In the case of open sources.

Further advice can be sought from the department radiation safety officer (DRSO) or the University Radiation Safety Advisor.

Where there may be exposure to a neutron source, the University Radiation Safety Advisor must be contacted before the pregnant individual works in this area.

### Local procedures

When establishing a standard operating procedure, the manager/supervisor shall include:

* reviewing current safe work procedures;
* reviewing staff badge results to identify expected levels of exposure to the activity;
* reviewing the SDS (if an open source) to identify possible reproductive hazards presented by an open source;
* monitoring the working area, staff and students, before and after use, with a suitable meter; and
* avoiding exposure by applying the principles of time, distance and shielding.

## Biological

For information regarding biological exposures and reproductive health, refer to the [Biosafety page](https://research.unimelb.edu.au/strengths/ethics/committees).

# References

*Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic)

*Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017* (Vic)

*Radiation Act 2005 (Vic)*

*Radiation Regulations 2017 (Vic)*

*AS 2243.2: Safety in laboratories – Chemical aspects*

*AS 2243.4: Safety in laboratories – Ionizing radiations*

*Department of Health and Human Services (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health), The effects of workplace hazardous substances on female reproductive health (USA)*

*American Conference of Industrial Hygienists, Threshold limit values and biological exposure indices*

*Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency, Radiation Protection Series F-1: Fundamentals for Protection Against Ionising Radiation (2014)*

# RESPONSIBILITIES

Manager/supervisor

Departmental radiation safety officer

University Radiation Safety Advisor

# Associated DOCUMENTATION

## Processes

Nil

## Forms

Nil

## Guidance

Nil