

Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations (IR(ME)R)

Guidance updated 28 August 2024

Since the April 2023 version of this guidance, we have:

- updated requirements for a detailed investigation and report when notifying a significant accidental or unintended exposure (SAUE)
- amended notification criteria for interventional radiology and cardiology

We enforce the Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations (IR(ME)R) in England

Medical ionising radiation is used widely in hospitals, dental care, clinics and in medical research to help diagnose and treat conditions. Examples are x-rays and nuclear scans, and treatments such as radiotherapy.

The regulations aim to make sure that it is used safely to protect patients from the risk of harm when being exposed to ionising radiation.

They set out the responsibilities of duty holders (the employer, referrer, IR(ME)R practitioner and operator) for radiation protection and the basic safety standards that duty holders must meet.

Responsibilities include:

- minimising unintended, excessive or incorrect medical exposures
- justifying each exposure to ensure the benefits outweigh the risks
- optimising diagnostic doses to keep them “as low as reasonably practicable” for their intended use.

The regulations apply to both the independent sector and the public sector (NHS).

Regulations

The Ionising Radiation (Medical Exposure) Regulations 2017 are on [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk):

- [The Ionising Radiation \(Medical Exposure\) Regulations 2017](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1222/contents/make)
- [The Ionising Radiation \(Medical Exposure\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2018](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/1111/contents/make)