The purpose of this code of practice

The social desirability of a tanned appearance is now viewed by many as a fashion accessory. However, high levels of ultra violet radiation (UVR) from equipment can cause injuries and ill-health to staff or customers. Associated health problems can be both short term (e.g. sunburn, conjunctivitis) and long term (e.g. premature skin ageing, skin cancer and cataracts). To comply with UK Health and Safety Legislation, it is important that the proprietors of premises where sunbed equipment is used, take measures to reduce associated health and safety risks, as far as is reasonably practicable.

The following code of practice is recommended, but not compulsory, guidance. It is designed to help the proprietors and operators of solaria and sunbed equipment to achieve the health and safety standards that UK Law requires.

Risk assessment and the Law

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) 1992 require that a risk assessment for any workplace is carried out.

As the proprietor of a commercial sunbed salon, you must carry out a risk assessment of your business’s activities and premises. Any risks to health and safety must be identified and following this, measures must be taken to reduce these risks as far as is reasonably practicable. The following people must be considered in the risk assessment;

- Employees assisting customers;
- Maintenance staff undertaking repairs or servicing;
- Customers using the equipment;
- Anyone else on the premises.
The MHSWR regulations state that if a business employs more than 5 employees, the risk assessment and any subsequent action to reduce risks must be recorded.

**Ultra Violet Radiation (UVR)**

The main health risk associated with the provision and use of sunbed equipment is from the Ultra Violet radiation emitted by the equipment.

There are three types of UVR – UVA, UVB and UVC. (UVC is not normally found in commercial sunbeds).

**Fig.1 - The three main types of UVR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Wavelength</th>
<th>Effects on human skin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UVA</td>
<td>400-315 Nm</td>
<td>The dominant type of UVR emitted by sunbed tanning equipment and penetrates the deepest of the 3 UVR types. Causes slow tanning. Can cause deep tissue damage, skin wrinkling, irregular pigmentation and skin cancer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVB</td>
<td>315-280 Nm</td>
<td>Emitted in small quantities by most sunbeds. Causes quicker tanning. Prolonged exposure can cause skin cancer and eye damage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVC</td>
<td>280-100 Nm</td>
<td>Not used in modern fluorescent tubes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To satisfy that operators are meeting requirements for the control of health risks from UVR, you and your employees must fully understand the following;

- The nature and extent of the UVR hazard, emitted from tanning equipment.
- The health risks associated with exposure to UVR.
- Information provided from the equipment manufacturers/suppliers on the potential hazards related to the specific type of sunbeds supplied.
- What advice must be given to individual customers on:
  - Duration of each tanning session
  - Periods between each session
  - Total number of sessions per year
- Where 2 pieces of tanning equipment are located next to each other, there should be sufficient screening between them to ensure that the UV hazard is not increased.

**Equipment Safety**

- A sudden collapse of sunbed equipment can cause electric shock, fire or physical injury. Equipment should always have adequate mechanical strength to withstand the impact of a person falling against it.
- If sunbeds have a removable canopy, provision must be made for the easy release by users who may become trapped in the event of an electrical or mechanical failure.
- **Protection of UVR tube lighting units**
  Lighting units should be protected to prevent contact by the user and contain any fragments if the lighting unit breaks. Such protective materials should have adequate mechanical strength which will not be damaged by repeated UVR exposure.
- **Electrical Safety**
  Lighting units should be protected to prevent perspiration from bodies increasing the possibility and severity of electric shock. A residual current device (RCD) should be considered as a additional safety feature for equipment.
• **Timer Switch**
  An accurate timer switch should be fitted to all sunbed equipment to terminate UVR exposure at the end of a pre-set exposure time. Timer mechanisms should be designed to stop the machine and terminate the exposure if the timer mechanism fails.

**Client Information and Medical History**
All clients should provide relevant details of their medical history to staff before being allowed to use sunbed equipment. This will help staff to identify whether clients are taking any medication or have any health issues which could be affected by exposure to UVR.
A full list of information that must be obtained from, and provided to, clients before sunbed use is given on the Health and Safety factsheet entitled ‘Sunbed Salons’ (Doc Ref D/H/33) available from Environmental Health Services (contact details are provided at the end of this factsheet)

**Appropriate Labelling and Suppliers Information**
- A warning notice advising staff and customers to read guidelines for use and safety information, should be clearly displayed in a prominent position.
- Manufacturers of tanning equipment should provide information for the operator on how to safely use the equipment and devise a suitable exposure regime for individual customers.

**Safe Installation, maintenance and equipment layout**
- Equipment should be installed and serviced regularly by a qualified electrician in accordance with the manufacturers instruction. An isolating switch should be fitted to isolate the equipment during maintenance. A service record must be kept on the premises.
- Defective equipment or components must be withdrawn from use immediately. Tubes, lamps, filters and other parts of the tanning equipment which may affect the radiation output should only be replaced in accordance with the manufacturers specifications.
- Any door to a cubicle or booth should open outwards and be capable of being unlocked from the outside to allow access in the event of an emergency.

**Equipment cleaning**
Equipment surfaces which come into contact with the users (including goggles) should be cleaned immediately after use with the cleaning fluid specified by the manufacturer. **Important:** Certain cleaning agents may have sensitising effects when in contact with skin, or photochemically react with skin when exposed to UVR. **Such products should not be used to clean sunbed equipment.** It is advisable to use cleaning products recommended by the equipment manufacturer.

**Washing facilities**
Suitable washing facilities (e.g. showers) should be provided for hygiene reasons. In addition, customers should be advised to shower before exposure to UVR to remove any deodorants, cosmetics or perfumes which may cause a photochemical reaction and cause sensitisation of the skin.

Risk assessment checklist overleaf ➔
Are you taking adequate measures to control the risks?

Risk Assessment for Sunbed Salons - Quick Reference Checklist

You may find this quick reference checklist useful when carrying out a risk assessment of your business. Use the list to check whether you have addressed the key safety issues involved in the provision and use of sunbed equipment and have implemented adequate measures to reduce the risks as far as is reasonably practicable.

Note: This list is not exhaustive. There may be other specific safety issues related to your particular business which are not listed here. Your risk assessment should take account of these.

- Adequate staff training
- Safe construction and installation of sunbeds
- Safe electrics and use of RCDs
- Regular servicing and maintenance by qualified personnel
- Suitable cleaning procedures and cleaning agents used
- Mechanical barrier present between lighting and client
- Protective screens/curtains between equipment
- Timer switch present on all equipment to control length of exposure
- Emergency stop switch present on all equipment
- Emergency procedures well documented and explained to both clients and staff
- Suitable layout of equipment and premises. Can it be opened in an emergency?
- Ventilation/temperature controls present on all equipment
- Central control panel for control of equipment by staff
- Protective eye wear provided to all clients
- Meaningful client medical history received before first use of sunbed equipment.
- Comprehensive information on skin type, UV including skin damage, eyes, photo-reactive drugs, foods and other health considerations provided to client before first use of sunbed equipment.
- Clear information provided to clients on who should not use sunbeds
- Washing and pre-sunbed showering arrangements in place
- Post sunbed advice available for users

For further advice on sunbed and tanning equipment safety issues or any other aspect of health and safety, you can contact the Health and Safety section of Environmental Health Services on (0113) 2477791 or env.health@leeds.gov.uk