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NEWSLETTER 4 – Winter 2014

Proceedings of the SRP One Day Meeting of Medical Radiation Equipment – Promoting Mutual Understanding and Co-operation (held at the British Dental Association, Tuesday 4th February, 2014)

Note: the information and views expressed below are not intended as a verbatim report of the meeting. If further details are required, the professional body should be contacted. That said some of the issues will be of interest not only to radiation employers represented by Radiation Protection Advice and Services (RAPAS), but to other organisations such as x-ray equipment suppliers (including also sealed radiation or unsealed radiation sources), and servicing/maintenance companies. The purpose of this particular newsletter is therefore to keep you informed of the radiation safety issues that professional groups and regulators discuss, and also to alert you to the requirements of relevant regulations, codes of practice, guidance notes and other radiation safety directives.

The inclusion of the regulator (HSE) in the meeting was important and should be of interest to all. If further development of your own radiation health and safety arrangements is necessary, Radiation Protection Advice and Services would be glad to help you.

Aims of the meeting

The aim of the meeting was to promote mutual understanding and co-operation between different specialities and professions such as manufacturers, physicists, applications specialists, radiographers and so on. Presentations were made on a wide range of subjects covering regulatory requirements and equipment installation, through routine equipment use and maintenance problems, and also best practice. A summary of the main issues discussed is given below.

Issues of interest

1. **Radiation risk assessments**

A representative from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the regulator for radiation employers under the Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999, pointed out that a number of improvement notices related to employers failing to keep adequate risk assessments. The feeling of the meeting was therefore that some risk assessments currently in use may require review and updating.

My comments- the HSE usually favour a style of risk assessment recommended by the Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999 approved code of practice (paragraphs 44 and 45). Radiation risk assessments should be reviewed on a regular basis.

If you are a client of RAPAS you should have already been provided with an up to date risk assessment that mirrors the approach favoured by the HSE.

2. **Routine service maintenance**

A specialist cardiac radiographer covered his experience in setting up a new service and had several comments, including one that 'radiographers should be involved from the outset' and 'trust managers can sometimes overlook broader responsibilities'. The main lesson was to try and promote an ethos of inclusiveness.



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Another speaker gave a talk on routine service maintenance, especially the engineer's process and checklist; and the advantages of remote diagnostics.

My comments- the issue of 'inclusiveness' can obviously vary depending on the size of the organisation and the complexity of the servicing arrangements. The lesson here is to take each project and work arrangement on a 'case by case' basis. One size does not fit all circumstances. The RPA can often help the client in identifying a suitable approach.

3. Equipment malfunctions, knowledge databases and remote assistance

A couple of speakers gave a talk on user's experience of equipment malfunctions, whilst another discussed reactive visits by engineers and the increasing use and usefulness of knowledge databases and remote assistance.

4. Handover forms

There was a lot of discussion about handover forms, especially the one developed by a company at the meeting which some felt to be inadequate in view of the range and complexity of modern-day x-ray equipment.

My comments- the use of handover forms should now be standard practice. There are other issues that can arise here especially with regard to outside workers and classified staff. All clients of RAPAS should already be aware of outside workers arrangements and also be using appropriate handover forms.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "m. omahony", is centered above the printed name.

Michael O'Mahony – Radiation Protection Adviser

24 February 2014