

Radiation protection in schools

Most secondary schools use low-level radioactive sources as part of the national curriculum in science and/or advanced level physics.

The employer of these schools in many cases is Ealing Council and under the Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999 (made under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974), the employer is regarded as a radiation employer.

These regulations require that all radioactive substances are accounted for, stored properly, handled safely and monitored regularly.

This responsibility is delegated to individual schools with Ealing Council having overall responsibility (where the local authority is the employer).

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Radiation protection roles

Radiation protection supervisor

The person in charge of radioactive sources within individual schools is known as a radiation protection supervisor (RPS). The RPS has the day-to-day responsibility for the security, safe storage, use and monitoring of radioactive sources in the school, and for ensuring that staff understand the standard operating procedures and model risk assessments.

It is recommended that this person should be a member of the science teaching staff, typically a subject leader or senior physics teacher.

It is not recommended that the RPS role is taken on by a technician because technicians do not usually hold an authoritative role or an overview and active involvement in all aspects of the use of radioactive sources (including classroom practices). A technician could, however, be appointed as an assistant RPS within the school.

It is strongly recommended that any RPS attends a course specifically designed for school-level work. CLEAPSS run such courses for schools.

Radiation protection adviser

A radiation protection adviser (RPA) is an expert in radiological protection and will have the relevant training, experience and certification.

All schools that hold radioactive sources are required by the Ionisation Radiation Regulations 1999 to have an appointed RPA so that they can get specialist advice and support. Ealing Council has appointed an RPA to meet this requirement.

Corporate health and safety must be contacted with any radiation protection queries and schools must not make direct contact with our RPA.

[Contact Raj Chowdhury](#) from Schools Health and Safety with all radiation protection queries.

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Standard school holding

Schools should refer to section 3.3.1 of [L093-Managing-Ionising-Radiations-and-Radioactive-Substances-in-Schools-and-Colleges.pdf](#) (cleapss.org.uk)

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Resources

- [L093 - Managing ionising radiations and radioactive substances in schools and colleges](#) (CLEAPSS website)
- [CLEAPSS membership](#) (CLEAPSS website)
- [Radiation protection](#) (HSE website)
- [Risk assessment guidance for 2,4-DNP](#) (CLEAPSS website)

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