

To: Relevant Heads of Department/Section, HSLOs, DHSOs, SNIRPAs and DNIRPAs

For Information & Action

New Electromagnetic Fields (EMF) Safety Standard

The Control of Electromagnetic Fields at Work Regulations 2016 came in force July 2016. The Regulations require the University to ensure EMF exposure is below a set of exposure limit values (ELVs) and assess the levels of EMF and the risk to employees, students and others. The exposure to hazardous EMF should be eliminated or minimised and take into account people at particular risk.

The University has a new health and safety standard on how to manage the risk from EMF. It describes common EMF sources in the workplace and exempt sources, the direct and indirect consequences of EMF exposure on people, your roles and responsibilities and how to assess and control the risk.

<http://www.essex.ac.uk/health-safety/phys-agents/electromagnetic.aspx>

Who needs to take action?

Managers, principal investigators and academic supervisors who are either responsible for hazardous EMF sources or may be responsible for work or activities carried out near EMF sources where there could be a risk to safety and health.

You will need to identify equipment that may emit hazardous levels of EMF and equipment must have a risk assessment carried out and risk controls put in place to reduce the exposure to so far as is reasonably practicable. Existing risk assessments should be reviewed in line with the new standard to ensure they are suitable and sufficient. The DNIRPA will maintain an up to date departmental EMF workers lists and source list.

If you are responsible for work carried out near EMF sources where there could be the potential for exposure you will need to communicate and co-operate with the person responsible for the source to ensure the risk of exposure is eliminated or minimised.

Who are the people at particular risk?

The new standard protects people at particular risk from EMF. You must give special consideration to pregnant workers and those with active implanted medical devices, passive implanted medical devices, body worn medical devices or items that may contain ferromagnetic materials in the body.

Before work starts, people who have been identified as at risk will need to complete an Electromagnetic Fields (EMF) Health Screening Form and return it to the University's Occupational Health Service to ensure it's safe for them to work with or near EMF.

Advice and support

If you are unsure on what to do next contact the University Non-Ionising Radiation Protection Adviser (UNIRPA), Dr Joanna Carrington, ext 4517, jcarring@essex.ac.uk for advice and support.