



# Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

**Oregon Health Authority**

Public Health Division

Radiation Protection Services

800 NE Oregon Street, Suite 640

Portland, OR 97232

Voice: 971-673-0490

Fax: 971-673-0553

TTY: (971) 673-0372

February 23, 2011

## INFORMATION BULLETIN 2011-02

To: Dental X-Ray Machine Registrants

From: David M. Howe, Section Manager   
Radiation Protection Services

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

#### **GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR USE OF HAND HELD DENTAL X-RAY UNITS and SUSPENSION OF FORMAL ENFORCEMENT ACTION FOR HAND HELD DENTAL X-RAY UNITS IN GENERAL DENTISTRY**

In recent months, Radiation Protection Services (RPS) has been evaluating hand-held dental X-ray devices and their use in Oregon. At the same time, RPS is aware that there 1) is a need to provide dental services at locations or to populations that are underserved or may lack access to dental services and 2) are selected dental registrants using hand-held X-ray devices for general dentistry purposes.

**Current RPS Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) states that hand-held dental X-ray devices shall only be used when it is impractical to transfer a patient to a stationary X-ray installation [OAR 333-106-0045(3)].** The attached "Guidance Document for Use of Hand-Held Dental X-ray Units" provides information for dental practitioners who prescribe and/or take dental X-rays (i.e. dentists, and dental hygienists/dental assistants permitted by Board of Dentistry Administrative Rule Chapter 818), and includes examples of situations where it may be impractical to transfer a patient to a stationary dental X-ray installation.

A recent RPS "Information Bulletin 2010-08", dated December 1, 2010, suspended formal enforcement action until March 1, 2011 against any dentist who was using a hand-held X-ray device for general dentistry, contrary to OAR 333-106-0045(3) above and OAR 333-106-0325(4)(c) regarding use of hand-held dental units beyond one work week. Due to the continuing RPS staff review of hand-held dental devices, **suspension of formal enforcement for use of hand-held dental units in general dentistry is extended and will remain in effect until June 1, 2011.**

This will allow RPS staff more time to further evaluate hand-held units for possible broader use. Any potential change(s) will be based upon the outcome of studies, As Low As Reasonable Achievable (ALARA) principles, Suggested State Regulations and practices, and RPS and Oregon Board of Dentistry rules and statutes.

**INFORMATION BULLETIN 2011-02**

February 22, 2011

Page 2

Be advised that RPS will issue non-compliance citations for operators not wearing lead aprons while using hand-held dental X-ray devices. As always, RPS will take enforcement action if a situation presents an imminent threat to patient and/or operator safety.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Todd Carpenter, RPS Licensing Manager, at 971-673-0500 or [Todd.S.Carpenter@state.or.us](mailto:Todd.S.Carpenter@state.or.us).

**Oregon Health Authority - Radiation Protection Services**  
**Guidance Document for use of Hand-Held Dental X-ray Units**

**February 23, 2011**

Radiation Protection Services (RPS) recognizes the need to provide dental care at locations or to populations that are underserved or may lack access to dental services. RPS is also committed to carry out its mission statement to “*Promote the health and safety of the people in Oregon by protecting them from unnecessary radiation exposure.*”

Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) states that hand-held dental X-ray units shall only be used when it is impractical to transfer a patient to a stationary X-ray installation (OAR 333-106-0045(3)).

The following list provides examples of situations in which it may be “impractical” to transfer a patient to a stationary unit, and therefore adhere to the intent of RPS rules:

- Patients or residents of facilities or programs who, due to age, infirmity or disability, are unable to receive regular dental treatment, including but not limited to patients or residents of:
  - Nursing homes
  - Adult foster homes
  - Residential care facilities
  - Adult congregate living facilities
  - Mental health residential programs
  - Facilities for mentally ill persons
  - Facilities for persons with mental retardation
- Treatment of:
  - Adults who are homebound
  - Special needs patients with medical, mental health, or developmental disabilities
  - Sedated patients who are unable to cooperate with positional requirements
  - Students or enrollees of nursery schools and day care programs and their siblings under 18 years of age, Job Corps and other similar employment training facilities, primary and secondary

schools, including private schools and public charter schools, and persons entitled to benefits under the Women, Infants and Children Program

- Individuals in correctional facilities and juvenile detention facilities, regional correctional facilities, and youth correction facilities.
- Provision of treatment:
  - Mobile health care programs that provide dental care to populations that are underserved or may lack access to regular dental services.
  - Public and nonprofit community health clinics that provide dental care to populations that are underserved or may lack access to regular dental services.
  - Patients in hospitals, medical clinics, medical offices or offices operated or staffed by nurse practitioners, physician assistants or midwives.
  - At locations or to populations that are underserved or lack access to dental hygiene services as authorized by the Oregon Board of Dentistry in ORS 680.205.

In accordance with OAR 333-106-0325(4)(c), mobile, portable and hand-held dental units shall **not** be used greater than one work week in the same location (i.e., a room or suite). However, for those situations as described above, there may be a need to serve a population for a period of greater than one work week in the same location.

In these cases, a facility must apply for a variance to OAR 333-106-0325(4)(c).

Situations that require a variance request need to be submitted in writing to RPS for consideration and include the following information:

- The basis for being “impractical” to transfer the patient/s to a stationary X-ray unit
- Population that is underserved or may lack access to dental services
- The intended time frame for using the hand-held dental unit (i.e. number of days, weeks, etc.)
- A scale drawing of the location the hand-held unit will be used in and its secured storage location. Surrounding and/or adjacent areas must also be labeled.
- Designated person responsible for the hand-held unit and their contact information.

Other requirements regarding the use of hand-held dental X-ray systems can be found in OAR 333-106-0325(8) & (9). You may direct any questions to Todd Carpenter, Radiation Protection Services Licensing Manager, at 971-673-0500 or [todd.s.carpenter@state.or.us](mailto:todd.s.carpenter@state.or.us)