

HS ALERT



Incident /Hazard	UV Burn from Transilluminator
Incident	Prolonged exposure to UV light from transilluminator resulted in both eye and facial burns
Date	19/10/2012



What happened?

A lab worker received significant eye and skins burns from over-exposure to UV while working adjacent to a UV transilluminator.

On 19th October, two lab workers were using a transilluminator to view DNA/RNA that had been separated by electrophoresis. In addition they were cutting out the bands that form on an agarose gel during this process. Whilst viewing of the bands can be undertaken with the protector cover/shield in place, cutting up of the bands requires the shield to be up, to enable access for cutting. In such instances a UV rated protective face shield must be worn. However, on this day only one of the workers was wearing the appropriate face shield.

What systems were in place at the time of the incident?

An appropriate documented safe work procedure was available for the task. A hazard warning sign was displayed adjacent to the equipment. Two sets of UV rated protective face shields were available but only one had obvious signage indicating its suitability for transilluminator use. The injured worker mistakenly believed that this face shield was inadequate to protect against the hazard and thus did not wear it. She further believed that as she was not working directly under the UV light (rather she was working adjacent to the instrument), she would not be at risk.

Actions for the local area



1. Ensure that all workers in the vicinity of the transilluminator are sufficiently aware of the hazard regardless of whether they are using the equipment or not.
2. Ensure a UV rated shield is installed around the equipment to protect workers who are working adjacent to the equipment particularly where the fixed shield cannot be used .