

UV Transilluminator

An individual sustained an eye injury from exposure to UV while working briefly at a UV Transilluminator

BACKGROUND

A student used a UV Transilluminator (similar to the one pictured) without the shielding provided with the unit, nor did they wear any personal protective equipment (PPE). This resulted in a burn to the eyes' that was not felt by the student until 6-8 hours later. In this incident the UV exposure was very brief (seconds) but still caused injury (fortunately with a full recovery). Transilluminators can cause harm such as photokeratitis, photoconjunctivitis and cataracts and skin erythema (sunburn like condition) and elastosis (photoaging and skin cancer).



WHAT WAS DONE WELL

The area had all the required shields and PPE needed to operate the unit. As soon as the injured person realised the symptoms were work-related it was reported.

ABSENT / FAILED DEFENSES

The PPE storage location was not easily found (inside a cupboard). The user didn't fully understand the level of risk, even with brief exposure. Training on use of the unit didn't fully explain the consequences.



ACTION FOR LOCAL AREAS TO TAKE

- Review existing controls and practices around UV Transilluminators.
- Ensure it is clear what PPE is required with use of the unit (for example, with photos) and where the PPE is stored.
- Discuss this Safety Alert with staff and student as a reminder of the importance of following controls and wearing PPE.