

Clinical indication (reason /purpose)

X-ray examinations shall not be performed unless there is **valid** clinical indication.

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Justification of the practice: no radiation examination shall be adopted unless the benefit outweighs the associated risk.

Optimisation of protection: radiation doses from medical exposures and those received by the public and occupationally exposed persons must be kept ALARA.

Limitation of individual dose and risk: all medical applications of ionising radiation must be managed in such a way that radiation doses to occupationally exposed persons and members of the public do not exceed the specified dose limits.

Radiation examination may only be **requested** by (refer Guideline)

- ✓ a medical practitioner
- ✓ appropriately trained and registered physiotherapist
- ✓ primary health care nursing staff
- ✓ occupational safety nursing staff

All requests must be in writing and signed by the person requesting the examination(s)

Should the radiographer question the qualifications and competency of the professional making the request, or the possibility of an unsubstantiated request, for example, clinical history indicated does not justify or necessitate the performance of the x-ray examination, then the radiographer can refuse to perform the examination (example L wrist but patient presents with a fracture of the right ankle).



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DIRECTORATE: RADIATION CONTROL



GUIDELINES

REQUEST FOR MEDICAL X-RAY EXAMINATIONS

1. All requests must be in writing and signed by the person requesting the examination(s).
2. The clinical indication for the examination(s) must be indicated.
3. X-ray examinations may only be requested by:
 - 3.1 A Medical Practitioner
 - 3.2 A Dentist
 - 3.3 Any other appropriately trained and registered health professional other than above (3.1 & 3.2) e.g. physiotherapist, primary health care nursing staff / occupational safety nursing staff, provided that such a request is based on **good and sufficient grounds**.
4. A radiographer in his/her professional capacity may refuse or accede to the request (par 3.3 above) provided that **sufficient grounds** exist for his/her decision.
5. Serious cases of contravention of the ethical rules in terms of requesting x-ray examinations had to be reported to the Legal Department of the HPCSA to be dealt with in terms of the professional conduct provisions.

Clarifications

Clarifications of the terms used in the above Guidelines has been typed in bold:

- Par 3.3 – **appropriately trained** refers to the professional who underwent an education and training program at an institution that has been accredited by the board or any other professional council like SA Nursing Council (SANC). The scope of practice is based on the education program and will thus determine what the practitioner can or cannot do.

Good and sufficient grounds relates to the fact that the professional making the request shall have performed a clinical examination on the patient because he/she has been educated and trained in doing so.

- Par 4 – **sufficient grounds**
Should the radiographer question the qualifications and competency of the professional making the request, or the possibility of an unsubstantiated request, for example, clinical history indicated does not justify or necessitate the performance of the x-ray examination, then the radiographer can refuse to perform the examinations.

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References:
HPCSA Ethical Rules of Conduct, Annexure 10
HPCSA Act, 56 of 1974

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