

PREGNANCY REFERENCES IN RADIATION LEGISLATION

*Healthcare Legislation for the
safety of **Employees***

Occupational Health & Safety

291.2 (c) x-ray equipment used in a dental practice complies with Radiation Protection in Dentistry: Recommended Safety Procedures for the Use of Dental X-ray Equipment: Safety Code 30 (Revised 2000), published by Health Canada

291.6 Additional protections for pregnant and young workers

291.6(1) If an employer is informed by a worker that the worker is pregnant, the employer must reassess the worker's employment duties or training activities, as the case may be, and modify the duties or activities, where reasonable to do so, to ensure that the worker's effective dose of ionizing radiation does not exceed the applicable maximum effective dose limits specified in Table 1 of Schedule 12.

291.6(2) An employer must not allow a worker under the age of 18 years to use or be involved in the use of ionizing designated radiation equipment or an ionizing radiation source except where Section 291.7 AR 191/2021 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE 207 (a) the worker is a student undergoing a course of instruction involving the use of such equipment or source, and (b) the use forms part of that course and is conducted under the direct supervision of a competent worker.

Guide for Albertas Radiation Protection Program

4.2 Inspections When conducting an inspection, an inspection agency may assess: additional protections for pregnant and young workers to limit exposure to radiation (whether work site has procedures in place where applicable)

Health Canada Safety Code 30 (2022)

A.2.1 General Requirements & Recommendations

14. If an X-ray operator declares to an employer that they are pregnant, the employer must take appropriate steps to ensure that the X-ray operator's work duties during the remainder of the pregnancy are compatible with the recommended dose limits as stated in Appendix II. Depending on the type of work being performed by the employee, it may not be necessary to remove a pregnant staff member from their duties of operating the dental X-ray equipment. It is recommended that the decision to remove pregnant workers from their duties include consideration of the radiation exposure risks associated with the employee's duties, as determined by an expert in radiation protection. In general, for the performance of dental X-ray examinations, there is no need to remove or restrict the duties of dental X-ray equipment operators during pregnancy because the radiation exposure is typically far below the dose limit under normal working conditions.

Health Canada Safety Code 30 (1999)

3.2 X-Ray Equipment Operators

A female operator should immediately notify her employer upon knowledge that she is pregnant, in order that appropriate steps may be taken to ensure that her work duties during the remainder of the pregnancy are compatible with the recommended dose limits as stated in Appendix I. In general, there is no reason to remove pregnant operators, or other pregnant staff members, from their duties of operating dental X-ray equipment.

PREGNANCY REFERENCES IN RADIATION LEGISLATION

*Healthcare Legislation for the
safety of **Patients***

Health Canada Safety Code 30 (2022)

A.3.1 Guidelines for the prescription of dental X-ray examinations

Appendix II Dose limits for occupational ionizing radiation exposures

8. In prescribing any X-ray examination of pregnant or possibly pregnant persons, full consideration must be taken of the consequence of foetal irradiation. In the case of dental X-ray examinations, it is generally accepted that the level of radiation to the foetus from dental X-rays is extremely low when the abdomen is not directly exposed [Footnote12](#), [Footnote13](#).

For dental X-rays of pregnant patients, the Canadian Dental Association states that "Elective procedures may be deferred until after the pregnancy. Pregnant patients requiring essential and/or emergency treatment should receive the minimum number of radiographs needed for diagnostic purposes."[Footnote14](#)

There are no references to pregnant patients or workers in the Z386.20 Safe Use of Lasers in Health Care. While there is no radiation risk, it is another piece of legislation that the radiation program references.

3. In prescribing any X-ray examination of pregnant or possibly pregnant persons, full consideration must be taken of the consequence of foetal irradiation. In the case of dental X-ray examinations, it is generally accepted that the level of radiation to the foetus from dental X-rays is extremely low when the abdomen is not directly exposed [Footnote12](#), [Footnote13](#).

For dental X-rays of pregnant patients, the Canadian Dental Association states that "Elective procedures may be deferred until after the pregnancy. Pregnant patients requiring essential and/or emergency treatment should receive the minimum number of radiographs needed for diagnostic purposes."[Footnote14](#)

Health Canada Safety Code 30 (1999) [OHS currently cites this version]

9.1 Guidelines for the Prescription of Dental Radiographic Examinations

In prescribing radiographic examinations of pregnant or possibly pregnant women, full consideration should be taken of the consequences of foetal irradiation. The developing foetus is sensitive to radiation damage that can result in congenital defects. In dental radiology, good radiation protection practice reduces the foetal dose to an acceptable minimum and dose levels which do not constitute a significant hazard. It should be emphasized that precautions to reduce radiation exposure to the patient should be taken all the time because a woman of child bearing capacity may be unaware of her pregnancy.