



Ultra-Violet Tanning Equipment

Despite health warnings, artificial or cosmetic tanning has become increasingly popular. As with exposure to natural sunlight, the use of sunlamps, sunbeds or tanning booths may expose customers or staff to levels of UV radiation which can cause injuries and ill-health (both short and long term). The level of risk depends critically on the skin type and sensitivity of the individual. Good management of tanning sessions in conjunction with safe and properly maintained equipment should ensure that health and safety risks are minimised.

You may find the simple steps below useful as a safety checklist.

STEP 1 Purchase equipment from a reputable manufacturer/supplier and ensure that exposure schedules which give maximum recommended exposure times for all skin types are available for all items of U-V tanning equipment.

STEP 2 If equipment cannot be located in individual cubicles/booths ensure adjacent facilities and staff are effectively screened from the UV radiation. Ensure adequate ventilation in room/cubicle containing uv equipment – temperatures should be maintained below 25°C

STEP 3 Ensure equipment is connected to the mains supply via switched sockets and that there is an identifiable emergency shut-off device within easy reach of the user. A 30mA RCD (Residual Current Device) should be provided at the distribution board or alternatively, at the socket outlet. Equipment should be electronically inspected annually.

STEP 4 Provide and ensure that both users and staff wear suitable protective eyewear (not sunglasses) whenever operating equipment or in the vicinity of the UV radiation.

STEP 5 Ensure up-to-date customer information is available in the tanning cubicle including

- the risks associated with tanning
- how to assess skin type
- advice on the frequency and duration of exposure depending on skin type and the equipment being used
- specific operating instructions for the equipment
- how to summon help in an emergency

Case Study

Two guests suffered burns to their upper body, abdomen and thighs after using a sunbed in a hotel's solarium. The tubes in the sunbed had been changed that morning, but no one had advised the guests that the sunbed would be very powerful; nor had the hotel manager thought to reduce the exposure time.

STEP 6 Have a documented programme of planned maintenance and tube replacement, ensuring all servicing and repair work is carried out by competent persons. After tubes are replaced assess whether exposure duration should be reduced; e.g. for some devices session times will need to be reduced by 1/3 for the first fifty hours of use. Use only manufacturer recommended equipment.

NB Keep records of all servicing/tube replacements

STEP 7 Conduct daily safety checks of all facilities to verify

- the safe operation of emergency devices and timers,
- the availability of eyewear and customer information, and
- the hygiene and safety of equipment surfaces (equipment should be cleaned after each client session and thoroughly at the end of each day with manufacturer approved cleaning agents.)

STEP 8 Provide suitable washing or showering facilities for customers. If suitable washing facilities cannot be provided, inform clients of this. Cosmetic/perfumes should be removed before the use of uv equipment.

NB Soaps/cleaners must not contain perfume or other sensitising agents

STEP 9 Ensure that staff are trained and provided with up-to-date information on equipment and the risks associated with UV exposure.

Assess each customer prior to their first U-V tanning session, establish their skin type and medical history, advise them on the recommended number and duration of tanning sessions.

As a general guide it is recommended that clients leave at least 24hours between each session and do not exceed 20 sessions per year (this can vary depending on skin type and the equipment being used).

Monitor and control the exposure of customers and staff to UV radiation, e.g. by keeping client records, including the number of visits made.

■ For further information

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