

Bill

to amend the Radiation Protection Act no. 44/2002 with subsequent amendments

(Submitted to the 138th legislative session of Alþingi/parliament, 2009–2010.)

Art. 1

After para. 1 art 9 a new paragraph shall be added, worded thus:
Individuals under the age of 18 years are not permitted to use sun-lamps, for other than medical purposes, at premises which hold a licence under the Hygiene and Pollution Protection Act. The Minister may make more detailed provision for the implementation of this provision in regulations. Monitoring, compulsive measures and penalties are in accord with the provisions of the Hygiene and Pollution Control Act.

Art. 2

To para. 2 art 9 of the Act the words shall be added: and other restrictions.

Art. 3

This Act takes effect on 1 January 2011.

Notes to this Bill

This Bill has been prepared in the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Radiation Safety Authority. By this Bill it is proposed that individuals under the age of 18 years be prohibited from using sun-lamps or sun-beds, as they are generally known. This prohibition is based upon principles of health, in light of the fact that ultraviolet radiation from sun-lamps is now classified as carcinogenic.

Ultraviolet radiation significantly increases the likelihood of developing skin cancer. Children and young people are more susceptible than others. Those who suffer sunburn at a young age are at increased risk of developing malignant melanoma later in life. Malignant melanoma is regarded as the gravest form of skin cancer. According to international principles of radiation protection, any use of radiation must be justifiable on the grounds that the benefits outweigh the harm.

In 2005 Nordic radiation protection authorities advised young people under 18 and those with fair skin not to use sun-beds. Discussion of this, and the statement itself, may be seen on website <http://www.gr.is/frettir/nr/167>.¹ In a joint statement by four radiation protection authorities – in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Iceland – dated 11 November 2009, it has now been proposed that a lower age of limit of 18 years be imposed for use of sun-beds. Discussion of this, and the statement itself, are on website: <http://www.gr.is/frettir/nr/409>.² The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) in Lyon, part of the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), announced on 29 July 2009 that ultraviolet rays from sun-beds are now classified as carcinogenic, whereas before they were classified as probably carcinogenic. The Agency's statement points out that the risk of skin cancer is much increased if use of sun-beds commences before the age of 30 years.

In accord with these developments, the Radiation Safety Authority has now proposed to the Ministry of Health that it seek to introduce a lower age limit of 18 years for use of sun-lamps for cosmetic purposes. The age limit is intended to apply to use of sun-lamps at premises holding a licence under the Hygiene and Pollution Control Act, such as solaria, fitness centres and sports facilities. The working group on ultraviolet radiation unanimously supports this proposal; the group includes, in addition to a representative of the Radiation Safety Authority, representatives of the

¹ Translator's note: Nordic statement in English on:
http://www.gr.is/media/frettir/Sunbed_Health_Advice.pdf

² Translator's note: Joint statement in English on:
<http://www.gr.is/media/fraedsluefni/recommendation-sunbed-2009.pdf>

Cancer Society, the Medical Director of Health, the Public Health Institute and the Association of Dermatologists.

The working party on ultraviolet radiation has since 2004 commissioned an annual survey on sun-bed use, carried out by Capacent-Gallup. The survey includes on the one hand a population sample of 1,300 people aged 16-75 years, and on the other a sample of 1,800 young people aged 12-23 years. The number of sun-bed users in the 12-23 age group has dropped significantly since 2004, but the reduction is less marked than that seen in the surveys of those aged 16-75. A considerable reduction in sun-bed use was seen in 2004 among schoolchildren aged 12-15 when a campaign, *Hættan er ljós*, was launched, focussing on discouraging children from using sun-beds in connection with their confirmations.³ In recent years, however, sun-bed use has not fallen in this age group. The results indicate that it is difficult to influence youngsters' lifestyle choices in the long term through education and publicity efforts.

It should be pointed out that in a survey carried out in December 2009 by the Public Health Institute, to explore attitudes to possible legislation banning young people under 18 from using sun-beds, over 72% of respondents were in favour of such legislation.

Notes to specific articles of the Bill

On art. 1

The proposal is made here that it be prohibited by law for children and young people under the age of 18 years to use sun-lamps or sun-beds at premises which hold a licence under the Hygiene and Pollution Control Act, such as solaria, fitness centres and sports facilities. On the basis of health principles, it is deemed correct to prevent use of sun-lamps by young people, due to their harmful effect on young skin. Monitoring is to be provided by local authority health officers, under the Hygiene and Pollution Control Act.

The prohibition will not prevent the use of sun-lamps on medical advice.

The minister is authorised under the article to make more detailed provisions regarding the prohibition. This entails such matters as e.g. requiring clients to prove

³ Translator's note: at age 14

their age by showing personal identification, and signs on the premises in question and on the equipment itself.

On art. 2

By the article an extension is proposed to the authority granted under para. 2 art. 9 to issue regulations, so that the Minister can make provision in regulations that use of radiation equipment which emits ionizing rays may be subjected to restrictions. This is a reference to e.g. requirements for signs, including warnings of the dangers of using sun-lamps.

On art. 3

The article makes provision for when the Act will take effect. If this Bill is passed as law, it is to take effect on 1 January 2011. This will allow time for parties which provide public access to sun-lamps to adapt to the changed rules entailed by the Bill.