UV and Light Exposure

National Report Switzerland

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1. Involved parties and their activities

UV exposure

Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) www.bag.admin.ch
The main tasks of the FOPH are to protect the health of the public, to develop the Swiss health policy and to ensure an effective and affordable healthcare system. In the field of UV radiation, the FOPH is mainly involved in primary prevention. It provides information on UV protection, Vitamin D, the potential hazards of using solaria and publishes a daily UV Index forecast as well as real time measurement of the UV Index. To protect the public from non-ionizing radiation and sound, the FOPH elaborated a new law and ordinance (cf. section 2). In 2018, the Swiss Cancer League and the FOPH, in collaboration with the Swiss Society of Dermatology and Venereology, held for the first time a conference about skin cancer and UV radiation. The audience consisted of representatives of the state cancer league, interested federal and state law enforcement authorities, scientists and members of the Swiss Society of Dermatology and Venereology. A second conference is currently in planning to take place in 2020.

Federal Office of Meteorology and Climatology (MeteoSwiss) www.meteoswiss.admin.ch
MeteoSwiss models the UV Index and provides the data for publication of UV Indexes.

Swiss Cancer League (KLS) www.krebsliga.ch
The Swiss Cancer League is an NGO dedicated to cancer prevention, patient-oriented research funding and supporting cancer patients. Concerning skin cancer prevention, they offer a wide range of consultation services, disseminate information and organise campaigns.

Swiss National Accident Insurance Fund (Suva) www.suva.ch
Suva, the Swiss National Accident Insurance Fund, is an independent company under public law providing insurance to people for both work as well as recreational accidents and injuries. Regarding UV radiation, SUVA offers advice to enterprises and publishes corresponding information as well as occupational exposure limits (OEL), with the intention to protect employees from excessive exposure to UV radiation.

L'Institut universitaire romand de santé au travail (IST) www.i-s-t.ch
This institute is involved in the promotion of occupational health, research, teaching, and consulting. The IST occasionally performs Occupational Safety Research in UV radiation.

Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO) www.blv.admin.ch
The FSVO is the Swiss Federal centre of excellence in the fields of food safety, nutrition, animal health, animal welfare and species conservation in international trade. Concerning UV Radiation, the FSVO disseminates information on sun protection products and vitamin D.
Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine (ISPM) www.ispm.unibe.ch
Within the quadrennial project led by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), the ISPM is currently conducting a nationwide survey on children’s exposure to low dose of ionising radiation in Switzerland. This survey will help to assess the contribution to cancer risks in children from common sources of ionising radiation. The survey also includes some aspects on non-ionizing UV radiation exposure to investigate the risks of haematological cancers in children in association with exposure to UV radiation.

Light exposure

Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) www.bag.admin.ch
The FOPH published a factsheet on LED lamps. Another factsheet regarding blue light exposure and potential health effects is in planning.

Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) www.bafu.admin.ch
The Swiss Federal Council mandated the FOEN in 2013 to update their recommendations on prevention of superfluous light emissions that can have an impact on human health. The FOEN published a background report in 2016. Public consultation on the revised enforcement aid “light emissions” took place from April 12th to June 30th 2017. Over 70 official statements are currently processed and the final version of the enforcement aid will be published in the course of the year 2019.

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) www.seco.admin.ch
SECO is the federal government’s centre of excellence for all core issues relating to economic and labour market policy. Concerning optical light, the SECO, in collaboration with the FOPH, plans to provide information on “human centric lighting” on their webpages. Cajochen’s research group is currently writing a literature review on “human centric lighting” and plans to publish the review this year.

Federal Office of Metrology (METAS) www.metas.ch
The Federal Institute of Metrology serves as the federal centre of competence for all issues related to measurement and for measuring equipment and measuring procedures. METAS collaborates with other metrology institutes, universities and industry conducting various research and development projects. It provides internationally recognised calibration and measurement services. METAS also carries out various measurements in photometry on behalf of the FOPH.

2. New Policies and Legislations

Protection of the public from non-ionizing radiation and sound

The Swiss Federal Council passed the Federal Act on Protection Against Hazards Arising from Non-Ionizing Radiation and Sound (NIRSA) on June 16th 2017 and the Ordinance to the Federal Act (O-NIRSA) on February 27th 2019. Both law and ordinance will take effect on June 1st 2019. This law and ordinance regulate the use of sunbeds and cosmetic NIR-applications, restrict the use of laser pointers and further put limits on sound levels and laser radiation at public events.

Concerning UV exposure, the O-NIRSA stipulates several measures to reduce health risks from solaria to a tolerable level. Operators of solaria must provide users with properly installed, used and maintained solaria equipment according to the safety regulations of the solaria manufacturers. Operators must equip and operate their solaria in such a way that persons under the age of 18 have no admittance. Furthermore, operators must inform potential users about UV radiation risk groups and provide an appropriate exposure time schedule to each solaria user. Further information is available under the following link: https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/de/home/gesund-leben/umwelt-und-gesundheit/strahlung-radioaktivitat-schall/elektromagnetische-felder-emf-uv-laser-licht/solarium.html

With the new legislation, Switzerland prohibits the import, transit, supply and possession of class 1M, 2, 2M, 3R, 3B and 4 laser pointers in accordance with SN EN 60825-1:2014. In order to prevent safety-relevant visual glares, class 1 laser pointers may only be used indoors as a pointing device.
The O-NIRSA also includes events involving laser radiation. Anyone holding an event involving laser equipment of classes 1M, 2M, 3R, 3B or 4 will in future be required to appoint a qualified person to operate the laser equipment and notify the FOPH about the event via the new notification portal. Until now, the states were responsible for enforcing the regulations on events involving laser radiation. The Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) is now assuming responsibility for enforcing the regulations on events involving laser radiation.