Sun-beds

Code of practice summary

Sun-bed (also known as tanning unit) means an electrically-powered device designed to produce tanning of the human skin by the emission of ultra-violet radiation.

Services involving the use of sun-beds, or solarium, have the potential to burn the skin and lead to longer term skin conditions, including skin cancer. The World Health Organization has categorised ultra-violet radiation in sun-beds as “carcinogenic to humans”.

Your business premises

Premises should be clean and hygienic and operators must keep surfaces sanitary. There are minimum standards you must comply with if you have a shop (premises) or are a mobile operation and you must obtain a Health Protection Licence to operate. Information on premises, the conduct required of all operators and standards of practice for any services that risk burning the skin are included in this pack.

Working with your customer

When providing a health service, it is a good idea to have a conversation with the customer before commencing any treatment so they are aware of what the process will be, and you, the operator, are aware of any potential risk to their health. Appropriate aftercare instructions should be given to the customer, and check they understand these instructions.
How to provide a safe service

Essential health & safety

• Age restriction: All operators must ensure no person under the age of 18 years is permitted to use a sun-bed.
• All sun-beds used by any customer on the premises must be subject to supervision by a trained operator at all times.
• All operators must ensure any part or surface of a sun-bed that is subject to body contact with a sun-bed user is either disinfected or, if disposable, completely replaced after the sun-bed has been used.

Training: sun-bed operators

Any person who is supervising the operation of a commercial sun-bed must be properly trained in the following:
• the practical implementation requirements of the applicable standard, including identification of medication that causes photosensitivity
• ability to determine skin types and exposure times
• proper screening for potentially exposure-limiting conditions
• emergency procedures in case of overexposure to ultra-violet radiation
• types and wavelength of ultra-violet radiation
• correct procedures for cleaning and disinfecting protective eyewear and tanning equipment.

Precautions and aftercare

Before starting a sun-bed service, the operator must:
• advise the customer who wishes to undergo such service of the risks associated with the service; and
• give written advice appropriate to the sun-bed service concerning precautions and post service procedures that should be taken by the customer who wishes to undergo the service.

Customer consent and skin type assessment

Prior to the commencement of tanning sessions, all operators must determine the customer’s skin type based on the skin type assessment completed by the customer. All operators must ensure that a consent form is given to the customer. Customers on photosensitive medication should not use a sun-bed.

Before commencing any sun-bed service all sun-bed operators must ensure that:
• the customer completes a skin type assessment
• the customer returns the signed and dated consent form prior to commencement of the first tanning session in the establishment
• a copy of the signed and dated consent form is offered to the customer
• the original signed and dated consent form is filed in the records of the establishment for a period of not less than 2 years.
Skin type exclusions
operators must be aware that:
• individuals with skin phototype 1 (fitzpatrick skin type) are not permitted to use a sun-bed
• individuals with a history of melanoma are not permitted to use a sun-bed.

Protective eyewear
A sun-bed operator must ensure protective eyewear:
• is worn by every sun-bed user when the sun-bed is being used
• is either disinfected or, if disposable, completely replaced after the sun-bed has been used
• complies with the applicable standard.

Maximum repeated exposure
All operators must ask the customer if they have used a sun-bed at any other premises in the past 48 hours, and ensure that repeated exposure is not administered before 48 hours after the previous exposure, and does not exceed three times a week.

Record keeping
Records must be kept secure and confidential for a minimum of two years and made available to council for inspection on request.

Control of exposure time
All operators must determine, set and control the exposure time for a session according to the skin type and the number of prior sessions. An exposure chart should be available for each tanning unit to enable the operator to determine the time settings to achieve a particular dose for each customer.

Automatic timing device
All operators must ensure that the sun-bed has a functional automatic timing device that will terminate the session when the maximum initial exposure or repeated exposure time has been reached.

Lamp replacement
All operators must ensure each full set of sun-bed lamps are routinely checked for ultra-violet radiation output and changed within the lamp manufacturer’s specified useful life. Records of lamp operating hours must be kept on the premises for two years and the records must be available to the council for inspection on request.

Promotion
All operators must ensure claims of non-cosmetic health benefits are not made in relation to sun-bed use. There must be no claim that sun-bed use is safe from risk.
**Warning notices**

All operators must ensure one or more warning notices are placed in the immediate view of every customer entering each of the establishment’s sun tanning unit areas, and that these notices are a minimum A4 size. The following information must be presented:

- Tanning units emit ultra-violet radiation.
- Exposure to ultra-violet radiation from sun-beds can cause melanoma, skin cancer, skin ageing and eye damage.
- Repeated exposure to ultra-violet radiation from sun-beds further increases risk.
- People with fair skin who burn easily and people with any other risk factors for melanoma will not be permitted to use a tanning unit.
- Further intentional exposure to sunlight or a tanning unit must be avoided for the next 48 hours.
- Protective eyewear must be worn at all times while undergoing tanning unit exposure.
- No person under the age of 18 years is permitted to use a tanning unit.
- People who are unsure of their own personal risk of melanoma and skin cancer should consult their GP before using a tanning unit.

**Best Practice: additional recommendations**

- Due to an increased risk for sun-bed users of unsupervised, self-service sun-beds, such sun-beds should not be available to the public for use.
- The Indoor Tanning Association of New Zealand recommends that sun-beds must be maintained and serviced to an approved standard, as detailed by the equipment supplier and in compliance with New Zealand appliance requirements.
- Other legislative acts, guidelines and codes of practice also relevant include World Health Organisation “Artificial tanning sun-beds risks and guidance 2003”, and the Ministry of Health “Guidelines for Operators of Ultraviolet (UV) Tanning Lamps 2009”.

**Find out more:** This information is from the Health & Hygiene Code of Practice 2013 and is relevant to your business. For a full copy of the Code of Practice please see www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz. A listing of all relevant NZ Health Standards is contained in this pack for your reference.