

# X-ray Program: Keeping Us Safe

X-rays allow us to see inside bodies and objects. Most of our exposure to man-made radiation comes from medical x-rays. These include dental, general x-rays (like chest or bones), fluoroscopic (moving), and CT scans. While we're all grateful to have these tools available to diagnose problems and keep us healthy, we need to keep these exposures to as low a dose as possible so they don't become a problem. The goal of the X-ray program in the Division of Waste Management and Radiation Control is to reduce exposure of patients and workers to the least possible level.

The X-ray inspection program evaluates radiation safety programs of medical facilities. This not only means testing the machine itself to see that it is operating within allowed limits, but also checking that operators of the machines are trained (licensed if required) to safely take x-rays. Safely means for themselves, the patients, and others who may be nearby. Appropriate training, correct procedures and properly operating equipment means lower doses of radiation.

Not all of the X-ray machines are used in medicine. Some are used in veterinary medicine, food processing facilities, laboratories, and other industrial uses. These machines, like medical ones, vary in power from lower output to extremely high. It is just as important to assure that the operators of these machines are trained in operation procedures and radiation safety for their protection as well anyone else working in the area.

In addition to the compliance role, the X-ray program also has an education component. Staff of the X-ray program are a source of information to put people at ease while stressing safe radiation practices.



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