

Mini-Carm Fluoro Operation

While working at an outpatient imaging facility today, it came to my attention that physicians (an entire group) without Fluoro Supervisor and Operator Licenses were operating mini-carm units. Further these same physicians were “authorizing” the nursing staff to also operate the mini-carm units. We discovered the sales and service personnel were the ones who told the physicians and the nurses they did not need to have any licenses or permits. Further, the sales and service personnel also told the physicians and nurses they did not need to wear any protective apparel.

I would ask all radiology Managers and Supervisors to consider sending a memo to all of your pertinent physicians and nurses reminding them that **ALL** fluoro equipment in the State of California must be operated only by a physician who has a Fluoro Supervisor and Operator License or by a technologist who has a fluoro permit, and even then the technologist must be under the direction of a physician who has a Fluoro Supervisor and Operator License. **There are no exceptions.**

As for the need for lead protective apparel, while the exposure output of a typical mini-carm is indeed quite low, the ALARA concept stipulates that proactive measures must be taken to reduce exposure to As Low As Reasonably Achievable. The simple act of donning a lead apron will certainly lower any exposure from scatter radiation to a much lower level than without it. Therefore, as onerous as it may seem, it is strongly recommended that personnel operating mini-carm units wear protective lead apparel. This policy protects the operators from scatter radiation and it protects the facility from lawsuits.