



STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Flanigan Square 547 River Street Troy, New York 12180-2216

Richard F. Daines, M.D.
Commissioner

James W. Clyne, Jr.
Executive Deputy Commissioner

Notice to Licensees – BERP 2009-02

TO: Licensees that Possess Gammacell 40 Irradiators, and Irradiator Service Licensees
FROM: Bureau of Environmental Radiation Protection
SUBJECT: Gammacell 40 – Leaking Sources
DATE: November 23, 2009

The purpose of this notice is to inform Gammacell 40 unit licensees of the recent occurrence of leaking sources in an older (circa 1975) unit.

On November 3, 2009, Best Theratronics engineers/service personnel were “hardening” an irradiator. After removal of the cabinet, pneumatic drive cylinders and end caps to the source drive, rust/corrosion was noted on the source drive rods. A wipe/leak test of those areas (both upper and lower source drives) identified presence of cesium-137 in quantities that exceed the leak test limit. Contamination was limited to the internal areas of the unit. No persons, equipment/tools or the room were contaminated. The unit was reassembled and taken out of service by the licensee, with concurrence for such action by the Department and Best Theratronics.

Please note that the areas where the contamination was found are not accessible during routine use and are not typically accessible during routine preventive maintenance (PM) service. Therefore, it is unlikely that such areas have been measured for contamination (leak test) on most Gammacell 40 units.

Best Theratronics has implemented a program to inspect a number of units that are due for routine PM. The inspection involves disassembly to access the same areas where contamination was found on the subject unit in order to conduct leak testing. Two units were inspected on November 15, 2009, and contamination was not found. Additional inspections, which include older models, have been scheduled. We anticipate that Best Theratronics will issue a service bulletin in regard to this situation.

The Department is not requiring its licensees to take any action at this time. However, it is strongly recommended that those who possess older units contact Best Theratronics and/or a licensed/qualified irradiator service provider to schedule an inspection of your irradiator(s). If you are unsure of your unit’s vintage, please contact Douglas Beatty at Best Theratronics, 613-591-2100, ext. 2177, or doug.beatty@theratronics.ca. Please note that the Department may provide additional recommendations or implement new requirements based on the outcome and data from Best’s inspections.

If you have any questions, please contact us at 518/402-7550, berp@health.state.ny.us or write to:

New York State Department of Health
Bureau of Environmental Radiation Protection
Radioactive Materials Section
547 River Street, Room 530
Troy, New York 12180-2216

Sincerely,

Robert E. Dansereau, Assistant Director