



Press Release

Since September 2008, 10 market surveillance authorities from 10 European Union Member States have participated in a cross border action to enforce the safety requirements for sunbeds and sunbed services. During the action, which will end December 2009, tanning salons and similar facilities were inspected, as well as the sunbeds offered there for use to the general public. The joint action on sunbeds was partly funded by the European Commission – DG-Sanco.

The Market surveillance authorities participating in the sun bed cross border actions carried out inspections at more than 300 locations and investigated more than 500 sunbeds. The great majority of these inspections were at service providers (tanning salons, wellness centres, etc) and concentrated on the safety information and advice provided to consumers, the labelling of the sunbeds, the availability of eye protection and the UV –radiation emitted by the sunbeds.

Requirements for tanning salons

The European safety requirements for sunbeds are based on the Low Voltage Directive and for sunbed services on the General Product Safety Directive. Tanning salons should provide the consumer with Information and advice about the tanning schemes suitable for their skin type, block the use of sunbeds by consumers under the age of 18 and give clear information about the hazards of UV radiation. Preferably intake interviews with new customers should ensure that the information and advice provided is tailored to the specific consumer and that consumer under the age of 18 are not allowed to use the sunbed. The sunbeds must carry warnings and for consumer use the UV radiation emitted is restricted to 0,3W/m². These relatively recent regulations aim to reduce the risk of skin cancer due to exposure to UV light.

Industry

Under EU law manufacturers, distributors, retailers and importers have primary responsibility for the safety of the products that are put on the market. Service providers are responsible for the safety of products used in services, so tanning salons must assure that safe sunbeds are safe and are used sensibly. At the European level the tanning industry is organized in the European Tanning Association, which is playing an important role in ensuring operating standards in sunbed services. In regular consultations and with support of the market surveillance officials of the sun bed joint action ESA actively promotes fast adoption of the rules in the tanning sector, including the 0,3W/m² limit on UV radiation emitted from sun beds. To support tanning services in complying with EU legislation ESA is developing a European Code of Conduct for tanning services, training materials for tanning studios and organizes information seminars in cooperation with national associations in the Member States.

Joint action results

Though the industry itself makes significant efforts to assure the safety of its services and is adapting to the new rules, the process is far from complete. The percentage of artificial tanning service operators that claimed to provide sufficient information varied considerably between the participating Member States and was between 75% and 94%. Similar percentages of the providers of tanning services indicate that they have intake interviews with new customers. As yet few of the

proprietors can substantiate their claims and little is known of about the quality of the information provided. Best practice in providing tanning services should aim to register intakes and tanning programs for their customers and make proper intake and guidance of the consumers verifiable.

Checks of 207 sunbeds at service providers on the compliance with the labelling requirements in the LVD and in EN 60335 Part 2-27 and its amendments reveal that a substantial percentage fails to comply. For the common labelling requirements for electrical equipment (e.g. CE-marking, brand name, name and address of manufacturer) more than 20% of the sunbeds did not comply. Sun bed type was not listed on 32% of the inspected sunbeds and the warning that UV radiation may cause injury was not present on 52% of the sunbeds.

The risks of artificial tanning are not only determined by the way consumers use the sun beds, but also by the amount of UV radiation emitted from the UV-tubes. This radiation, measured as erythemally weighted irradiation (EWI), should not exceed $0,3 \text{ W/m}^2$. In the sun bed joint action the EWI values of 84 sunbeds were determined with equipment partly financed by the joint action program. Of the 84 sun beds that were tested 70 gave EWI values exceeding the limit of $0,3 \text{ W/m}^2$ (83,3 %). The highest value measured was $1,43 \text{ W/m}^2$, nearly 5 times the limit. The UV measurements were performed on sunbeds suspected to violate the limit. Therefore the 83,3 % of the measured sunbeds violating the limit does not present a proper estimate of the sunbeds presently in use at service providers. The best estimates of the fraction of sunbeds in use violating the limit indicate that the percentage varies from less than 3% in one of the Member States till above 80% for several other Member States. The overall conclusions from the results of the inspections in this first action on sun beds are that:

- consumer guidance in tanning studios is regularly not given and often not verifiable,
- the labelling of the sun beds fails to comply in at least 20% of the cases,
- How often the maximum EWI values for sunbeds are violated varies between the Member States. In several Member States the percentage may be above 80%, while in others the fraction of sunbeds that does not comply is between 3% - 20%.

Representatives of Prosafe and the European Sunlight Association also met with European Commissioner for Consumers, Meglena Kuneva, to present the results.

Continuation of the joint action on sunbeds

These conclusions justify continuation of the market surveillance of sunbeds, especially because the joint action has effected momentum in market surveillance authorities as well as sector organizations to improve the standard of service in the artificial tanning branch. A new project on sunbeds is being prepared, which again will partly be funded by the European Commission. Key activities are:

- continuation of market surveillance
- support and advice industry to stimulate compliance in the sector
- further harmonization of the interpretation of the rules and of the market surveillance in the Member States

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