

RADIATION SAFETY AND NUCLEAR SECURITY AUTHORITY

Guide on the Appointment of a Radiation Protection Officer

1. Introduction

Pursuant to Section 20(1)(c) of the Radiation Safety and Nuclear Security Act 2018 (hereinafter referred to as “the Act”), every licensee shall appoint an appropriate person as Radiation Protection Officer (RPO) to oversee the safe and secure conduct of radiation practice(s) at a facility.

This guide sets out the requirements and guidance relating to the appointment, roles and responsibilities, and replacement of an RPO. It further outlines the criteria for the selection of an RPO and the obligations of the licensee in ensuring that the RPO is adequately supported to effectively discharge his or her duties.

2. Appointment of a Radiation Protection Officer

General Requirements

For every facility, the licensee should formally appoint an RPO and inform the appointed person, **in writing**, of his/her duties and responsibilities. The licensee should also ensure that the person appointed as RPO has formally accepted the appointment.

The model appointment letter, *at Annex I*, may be used for this purpose.

The licensee should promptly notify the Radiation Safety and Nuclear Safety Authority (RSNSA) of the appointment of the RPO for the facility by submitting the completed ‘*Notification Form for Appointment of a Radiation Protection Officer*’ at Annex II.

NOTE

The appointment of a RPO does not relieve the licensee of his/her responsibility for ensuring compliance with the Act and the regulations made thereunder.

Temporary Absence of the RPO

Where the appointed RPO is temporarily absent for an extended period, including due to leave, illness or training, the licensee should appoint another appropriate person to act in that capacity during the relevant period.

The licensee should notify the RSNSA, **in writing**, of

- (i) The full name, designation and contact details of the person acting as RPO; and
- (ii) the duration of his/her temporary appointment.

Replacement of an RPO

Where an RPO ceases to be employed at the facility, resigns from the position, or is otherwise unable to effectively perform his/her duties, the licensee should formally appoint another appropriate person as RPO **within one week**.

The licensee should promptly notify the RSNSA, in writing, of the cessation of duties of the former RPO and submit, in respect of the newly appointed RPO, a completed '*Notification Form for Appointment of a Radiation Protection Officer*', at Annex II.

Exceptional circumstances

As far as practicable, the appointed RPO should not be -

- the licensee, where the licensee is an individual; or
- the Head of the licensee's organisation, where the licensee is a company.

This is to ensure appropriate oversight, accountability and independent reporting of radiation safety and nuclear security matters within the facility.

In exceptional circumstances, where the licensee or Head of the licensee's organisation is the only person working at the facility, or where no other appropriate person is available for appointment as RPO, the licensee or Head of the organisation may assume the relevant duties of the RPO.

In such cases, the licensee should notify the RSNSA, **in writing**, provide the reasons justifying the appointment, and submit the completed '*Notification Form for Appointment of a Radiation Protection Officer*' at Annex II.

3. Criteria for appointment of a Radiation Protection Officer

The person appointed as RPO should -

- (i) be employed by the licensee on either a full-time or part-time basis;
- (ii) possess at least a Cambridge Higher School Certificate or equivalent qualification;
- (iii) possess good communication and interpersonal skills;
- (iv) be computer literate and capable of using information and communication technology (ICT) tools in the performance of his/her duties; and
- (v) be fully conversant with the radiation practice(s) conducted at the facility.

4. Duties and Responsibilities of the Radiation Protection Officer

In accordance with Section 21 of the Act, the duties and responsibilities of the RPO should include -

- (i) carrying out safety assessments of the radiation practice(s) conducted by the licensee;
- (ii) developing and maintaining the safety assessment report;
- (iii) advising the licensee, **in writing**, on the protection and safety measures to be implemented to minimise risks associated with the conduct of the radiation practice(s);
- (iv) assisting the licensee in the implementation of protection and safety measures and the radiation protection programme;
- (v) conducting radiation safety training, briefings and awareness sessions for relevant personnel, as necessary; and
- (vi) advising the licensee on matters related to radiation safety and nuclear security.

In addition, the duties and responsibilities of the RPO may include, but are not limited to -

- (i) promoting radiation safety and nuclear security culture at the facility;
- (ii) promptly informing the licensee, in writing, of any identified non-compliance and assisting in the implementation of corrective actions;
- (iii) maintaining an inventory of radiation sources at the facility;
- (iv) maintaining radiation safety and nuclear security records;
- (v) facilitating inspections conducted by the RSNSA;
- (vi) providing the RSNSA with safety-related information or documents, as and when required;
- (vii) acting as liaison officer between the RSNSA and the licensee on matters relating to radiation safety and nuclear security; and
- (viii) accepting such information, instruction and training in radiation protection and nuclear security to effectively perform his/her duties.

NOTES

- All the duties and responsibilities assigned to the RPO should be clearly specified in his/her appointment letter.
- Where necessary, the licensee should consider engaging the services of an external service provider approved by the RSNSA to provide technical guidance, support and assistance to the RPO to enable him/her to effectively perform his/her duties.

5. Responsibilities of the Licensee

The licensee should ensure that the appointed RPO -

- (i) is provided with adequate time and resources; and
- (ii) receives adequate information, instruction and training in radiation protection and nuclear security for an effective discharge his/her duties.

6. Record Keeping

The licensee should maintain records relating to -

- (i) the appointment and acceptance of the RPO;
- (ii) training received by the RPO;
- (iii) any change in the appointment of the RPO; and
- (iv) correspondence with the RSNSA regarding the appointment of the RPO.

Such records should be retained and made available to the RSNSA upon request.

7. Conclusion

The appointment and effective support of a competent RPO are essential for ensuring the safe and secure conduct of radiation practice(s) and compliance with the Act.

Licensees should therefore ensure that the person appointed as RPO is adequately supported, trained and empowered to effectively perform his/her duties.

Annexes

[Annex I - Template Letter for Appointment of a Radiation Protection Officer](#)

[Annex II - Notification Form for Appointment of a Radiation Protection Officer](#)