



Fact Sheet

New B.C. Rules Ban Youth under 18 from using Tanning Beds

New changes to the provincial Regulated Activities Regulation ban young people under the age of 18 (minors) from using tanning equipment, to reduce the chances of developing skin cancer later in life. The regulation, under the *Public Health Act*, defines tanning equipment as equipment designed to cause tanning of the skin through exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation.

Under the regulation, minors are not permitted to use tanning equipment – and operators must not allow them to use it – unless the minor has a prescription from a physician. Also, tanning bed facilities must display a government-approved sign in a clearly visible location, advising staff and customers about the under-18 tanning ban.

What are the New Provincial Rules?

Below is an outline of the tanning facility rules in the Regulated Activities Regulation. This is for information only and is not the official version of the regulation. The full regulation can be found at: http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/161_2011.

Minors are prohibited from using tanning facilities unless they have a medical prescription.

- The operator of a tanning facility must not permit a person under 18 years of age to use tanning equipment in a tanning bed facility.
- The exception to this ban is a person under 18 who holds a prescription written by a B.C. medical practitioner or nurse practitioner. The operator must follow the exact directions in the prescription regarding how the customer is to use the tanning equipment.

An approved sign must be posted in a prominent place in the tanning facility.

- A tanning facility must display a clearly visible, B.C. government-approved sign in a prominent place where customers purchase services.
- There are two kinds of approved signage. One is a sign that can be hung on the wall, door, etc. The other is a smaller adhesive-backed label that can be attached to such places as a counter or cash register.
- Both the sign and label state: “It is illegal to permit persons under 18 to use UV tanning equipment in this facility without a prescription.”



Wall Sign (8.5" by 11")



Adhesive-backed Label (4"by 5")

- Operators are required to display either the sign or the label – whichever works for their facility – although they may use both if they so choose.
- The sign is available for download on the Ministry of Health's Tanning Beds website, at <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/protect/ehp-tanning-beds.html>.
- The label can be obtained from the Ministry of Health, B.C.'s regional health authorities and the Joint Canadian Tanning Association (JCTA). See below for contact information.
- It is recommended that a government-issued photo ID, such as a driver's licence or passport, be used to determine a young person's age.

Offences

If the operator of a tanning facility permits a person under 18 years to use tanning equipment and/or does not post an approved sign in a clearly visible location, he/she contravenes the Regulated Activities Regulation. Each offence carries a \$345 fine. Environmental health officers from the regional health authorities are responsible for enforcement.

Why are Youth under 18 Banned from Using Tanning Equipment?

The World Health Organization has found that ultraviolet (UV) radiation from indoor tanning equipment is a proven carcinogen and the risk of melanoma increases by 75% when tanning bed use starts before 35 years of age. Melanoma is the most serious skin cancer, and incidence is increasing in Canada.

In 2012, an estimated 966 British Columbians will be diagnosed with melanoma and 150 will die of it. One in 69 females and one in 56 males are expected to develop melanoma during their lifetime. The lifetime risk for dying of melanoma is one in 413 females and one in 284 males. (BC Cancer Agency statistics)

How Was the Tanning Ban Developed?

The tanning ban was developed through consultation with representatives from medical organizations, government agencies and the tanning industry. In September 2011, the Minister of Health directed that the Indoor Tanning Working Group (ITWG) be formed to make recommendations on indoor UV tanning by minors.

The *Report of the Indoor Tanning Working Group* was completed in December 2011. With the exception of the JCTA, ITWG members recommended the Province ban youth under 18 from using commercial tanning equipment without a medical prescription. To read the ITWG report, see <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2011/ITWG-Report.pdf>.

After reviewing the ITWG Report, in March 2012 the B.C. Government announced its intent to ban tanning equipment use by youth under 18 years. The new law is effective as of October 15, 2012.

Contact Information

Ministry of Health:

Email: HP-PHW@gov.bc.ca

Health Authorities

Website: Contact information for all regional health authorities:

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/socsec/>