

HOSPITAL RADIO PERTH

USE OF STROBE LIGHTS

ONE **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

When using any sort of strobe lighting or effect, the risk of triggering seizures in people suffering from photosensitive epilepsy is present. Statistics for the UK suggest between 1 in 4000 and 1 in 7000 members of the general population is affected in this way. Many more people report discomfort during prolonged exposure to intense strobe effects. Most people suffering from epilepsy (around 1 in 200 members of the general population) do not experience any more adverse effects due to strobes than members of the general population; only people suffering from epilepsy who are specifically photosensitive are affected.

TWO **REDUCTION OF RISK**

While the only sure prevention is to avoid using any sort of strobe (or strobing effect) altogether, the risk can be reduced by limiting the duration of strobe effects - UK guidelines suggest no more than 30 seconds at any one time. Continuous operation of strobe lighting for long periods should be avoided.

Whenever strobe lights are used, arrange for a prior warning to be given at the entrance to the event or in the programme.

If strobe lights are used, keep flicker rates at or below four flashes per second. Below this rate it is estimated that only 5% of the flicker-sensitive population will be at risk of an attack. This flicker rate only applies to the overall output of any group of lights in direct view, but where more than one strobe light is used the flashes should be synchronised.

To reduce the risk further, mount lights as high above head height as is practicable. Where possible, the lights should be bounced off walls and ceilings or diffused by other means so that glare is reduced.

They should not be used in corridors, on stairs or where there are moving machinery parts.

THREE **LICENSING RESTRICTIONS**

There is no legislation specifically covering the use of strobe lighting. However, in places of public entertainment the licensing authority may choose to set conditions on the use of strobe lighting effects as part of the license.