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Compliance with the EMF occupational limitations - Groups with special needs

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The general provisions by the EMF Directive give the minimum requirements for the protection of workers from risks to their health and safety arising or likely to arise from exposure to EM fields (0 Hz to 300 GHz) during their work. Adherence to the exposure limit and action values provides a high level of protection as regards the established health effects from exposure to EMFs. This adherence may not, however, protect workers with special needs. Examples of such situations are as follows:

1. The employer shall give particular attention to effects concerning the health and safety of workers at particular risk, such as pregnant workers. The EMF Directive does not foresee specific limit values or action values for pregnant workers, but there exists a specific Directive on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (92/85/EEC). According to it, the employer is obliged to assess any specific risk of exposure of pregnant workers, in particular the exposure to non-ionizing radiation, in order to decide what measures should be taken.
2. The employer shall also consider interference problems with medical devices such as metallic prostheses, cardiac pacemakers and defibrillators, cochlear implants and other implants. Interference with active implanted medical devices (AIMD) may occur at levels below the action values, and if the workplace has employees with AIMDs, they should be the object of appropriate precautions and protective measures.
3. The EMF Directive also requires that the employer considers risks from indirect effects of EMFs, such as the projectile risk from ferromagnetic objects in static magnetic fields with a magnetic flux density greater than 3 mT. These situations are typical for instance at worksites of hospital personnel at MRI departments.