

[DH reminds X-ray contractor to follow contractual requirement in providing service](#)

The Department of Health (DH) said today (February 9) that its Student Health Service (SHS) has required a contractor providing X-ray examination to students to follow the contractual requirement of using breast and gonad shields properly when taking spine X-rays for students.

The SHS has contracted out the X-ray service for screening of scoliosis of students to a contractor since November 2020. It is a requirement in the contract that both breast and gonad shields should be used when taking spine X-rays for students.

The SHS first noted in January 2021 that breast shields were not placed in the proper position and no gonad shields were observed in the X-ray films of students. The SHS immediately requested the contractor to rectify the problem and ensure compliance with the relevant requirement.

A spokesman for the DH said, "The radiation dose in a single X-ray examination of the spine is low, and while using shields may further reduce the radiation, the health risk of not applying them in a single examination of the spine is extremely low, if any."

The increased radiation dose, if shields are not used, amounts to about one-tenth of the annual dose received by the public in Hong Kong from natural background radiation, or the radiation received from the natural background during one or two return flights between Hong Kong and New York, the spokesman added.

The DH will continue to follow up and closely monitor the performance of the contractor.

The DH is contacting the affected students or their parents to inform them of the incident. Students who had been referred by the SHS to the contractor for X-ray examination of the spine between November 23, 2020, and January 12, 2021, and their parents may also call the SHS at 3163 4612 during office hours if they have any enquiries.