LIGHTING FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE

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Contents

1. Introduction
2. Electromagnetic spectrum
2.1. Optical Radiation
2.2. Visible Radiation
2.3. Ultraviolet Radiation
2.4. Infrared Radiation
2.5. Wavelength, Frequency and the Velocity of Propagation of Light
3. Fundamentals of illumination
3.1. SI Units – Basic and Derived
3.2. Radiometry
3.3. Photometry
3.4. The Link between Radiometric and Photometric Units
3.5. The Relationship between Illuminance and Luminance
4. Laws of illumination
4.1. Inverse Square Law
4.2. Cosine Law
4.3. Reflection
4.4. Refraction
4.5. Dispersion
4.6. Diffusion
4.7. Transmission
5. Physiology of vision
5.1. The Structure of the Eye
5.2. Sensitivity of the Eye
5.3. Human Response to Light
5.4. Visual Perception

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5.5. Characteristics of Vision
5.6. Photopic, Scotopic and Mesopic Vision
5.7. Defects and Anomalies of Vision
5.8. Visual Comfort
5.9. Threshold of vision
5.10. Glare
5.11. Visual Performance
5.12. The Eye and Optical Radiation
6. Light sources
6.1. Natural Daylight
6.2. Incandescent Lamps
6.3. Discharge Lamps
6.4. Solid State Light Sources
6.5. Lamp Coding System
6.6. UV and IR Emissions from Lamps
6.7. Effects of Operating High Pressure Mercury Vapor and Metal Halide Lamps with a Broken Outer Envelope
6.8. Blue Light Hazard
6.9. Lamps Used For Non-Visual Applications
6.10. Lamp Output Dimming
6.11. Disposal of Spent Lamps
7. Color and color vision
7.1. Hue, Lightness and Saturation
7.2. Measurement of Color – The CIE Chromaticity Diagram
7.3. Color Temperature and Correlated Color Temperature
7.4. Spectral Power Distribution (SPD) of Light Sources
7.5. Spectral Reflectance of Objects
7.6. Spectral power distribution (SPD) of reflected light
7.7. Color Rendering, Color Rendering Index and Color Rendering Group
7.8. Color Contrast
7.9. Color Appearance of Lamps
7.10. Assessment of Color Vision
7.11. Color Coding in Industry
8. Lighting and wellbeing
8.1. Lighting and Health
8.2. Biodynamic Lighting
8.3. Light Therapy – Seasonal Affective Disorder
9. Luminaires
9.1. Optical Control of Light Output
9.2. Downlighter Luminaires
9.3. Uplighter Luminaires
9.4. Electromagnetic Interference (EMI) and Radio Frequency Interference (RFI)
9.5. The IP System of Classification of Luminaires
10. Lighting design and lighting systems
10.1. The ‘Lumen Method’ of Lighting Design
10.2. Lighting Systems
11. Lighting for interior applications
11.1. Assembly Tasks
11.2. Cold Stores
11.3. Display Screen Equipment Areas
11.4. Electrical and Electronic Engineering Industries
11.5. Engineering Workshops
11.6. Food & Drink Processing Areas
11.7. Furniture and Timber Industries
11.8. Glass Production
11.9. Hospitals and Healthcare Premises
11.10. Inspection Lighting
11.11. Offices and Administrative Areas
11.12. Paper and Printing Industries
11.13. Textile Industries
12. Lighting for exterior applications
12.1. Building and Construction Sites
12.2. CCTV Security
12.3. Hazardous and Hostile Areas
12.4. Industrial Floodlighting
12.5. Loading Bays
12.6. Mines and Quarries
12.7. Offshore Gas and Oil Structures
12.8. Petrochemical and Other Hazardous Industries
12.9. Railways and Railway Premises
12.10. Road Lighting
12.11. Tunnel Lighting
12.12. Shipyards and Docks
12.13. Storage Areas
13. Visual task lighting
13.1. Analysis of the Visual Task
13.2. Factors Affecting the Ability to See Detail
13.3. Use of daylight
13.4. Spacing - to - Height Ratio (SHR)
13.5. Uniformity Ratio
13.6. Factors Influencing Visual Comfort
13.7. Glare
13.8. Veiling Reflections
13.9. Luminance Contrast and Contrast Rendering Factor
13.10. Flicker and the Stroboscopic Effect
13.11. Loss of Perception
13.12. Effects of Age of Individual Observer
13.13. Effects of Adverse Lighting on Worker Posture
13.15. Modeling
13.16. Illuminance and luminance ratios
13.17. Spatial Variation of Illuminance in Task Area
13.18. Task Lighting Recommendations
14. Risk assessment
14.1. Assessment of Risks
14.2. Potential Hazards and Adverse Effects Created by Lighting
14.3. Management of Hazards  
15. Emergency lighting  
15.1. General Concept  
16. Light pollution  
16.1. General Concept  
Acknowledgements  
Glossary  
Bibliography  
Biographical Sketch  

Summary  

The assertion that ‘Lighting is of vital importance in the working environment’ - is substantiated by the clinical statement that light flowing into the eye produces approximately 85% - 90% of all of the information entering the brain. In addition to allowing humans to see, light triggers a complex variety of activities in the brain that control metabolism and hormones.

For centuries natural light was the only means of illuminating spaces. Even now many workers still prefer to carry out tasks in daylight, which is perhaps to be expected since man’s biological systems evolved in natural light over many years.

It was, however, largely due to the advent of lighting driven by electricity that the continuation of working practices could be routinely maintained after daylight. As a consequence of the ability to work round the clock – both internally and externally - the functionality of lighting was reappraised. Lighting in the workplace is now almost universally provided a) to aid in the performance of visual tasks and b) to contribute in the aim of making the workplace safe and healthy.

Artificial light has become hugely important to human social and economic activity and yet at the same time it has become so routine that we have almost ceased to notice it to such an extent that it is taken for granted.

Occupational hygiene is the discipline of anticipating, recognizing, assessing, evaluating and controlling risks to health from workplace exposure to hazards. There is clear evidence that improved lighting conditions increase worker safety and wellbeing, staff morale and worker retention together with a simultaneous improvement in productivity. A lack of awareness of the importance of lighting may be a causal factor in poor workplace ergonomics and therefore worker dissatisfaction that in turn may lead to a reduction in productivity and a simultaneous increase in workplace accidents.

1. Introduction  

This Chapter aims to guide the reader through the fundamentals of vision and lighting in the workplace, and to highlight the potential health and safety problems that can develop as a consequence of inadequate lighting. It further aims to give guidance in respect of the necessary remedies available in order to strive for optimum lighting conditions for the workplace.
It is appreciated, however, that different countries throughout the world have their own legislation which must be adhered to in an attempt to produce safe working environments. Some countries adhere to continent-wide legislation, others refer to national legislation and in some areas the laws relating to health and safety issues (including lighting) may vary from state to state or between provinces.

It is therefore beyond the remit of this Chapter to include detail of all worldwide legislation relating to lighting in the workplace. Readers are advised to seek guidance from the appropriate authorities in order to ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

As a consequence, the author (and the publishers) make no warranty (ies), express or implied, nor assume any liability in respect of the use, or subsequent damages resulting from the use, of the information contained in this Chapter. Furthermore compliance with the recommendations given in the Chapter does not guarantee compliance with the specified legislation but implementing the recommendations in the guidance should assist in the reduction of the probability of contravention arising.

2. Electromagnetic Spectrum

Light is a form of energy. It passes from one body to another and can do so without the need for any substance in the intervening space. Such energy is termed radiation and it is said to be electromagnetic in character. The radiation thus has both an electric field and a magnetic field. Both of these fields vary sinusoidally and are mutually at right angles.

2.1. Optical Radiation

Light is an everyday example of optical radiation which is known as artificial optical radiation, if it is radiation that is emitted by a lamp. The use of the term ‘optical radiation’ is justified since light is a form of electromagnetic radiation, and because it is focused and then detected by the eye.

The colors that we perceive in light are dependent upon the wavelengths present in the light spectrum. Shorter wavelengths appear at the blue end of the spectrum whereas longer wavelengths appear at the red end. It is convenient to think of light as a stream of particles, known as photons.

When electromagnetic radiation interacts with a material, energy is likely to be absorbed at the point of interaction. This may result in some changes or effects in the material. As an example, visible light arriving at the retina provides enough energy to initiate biochemical reactions which, in turn, produce a signal that is ultimately sent to the brain via the optic nerve.

The quantity of energy available in electromagnetic radiation is dependent upon the wavelength. The shorter the wavelength corresponds to a more energetic radiation than is contained in longer wavelengths. It follows that blue light is more energetic than say red light.
2.2. Visible Radiation

Visible radiation is the term given to that radiation which is detected by the eye. It occupies only a relatively narrow range of wavelengths within the whole of the electromagnetic spectrum. Figure 1 shows the electromagnetic spectrum with the visible spectrum shown in detail.

![Electromagnetic Spectrum](image)

Figure 1. The electromagnetic spectrum

2.3. Ultraviolet Radiation

At lower wavelengths than the visible spectrum the radiation becomes ultraviolet (UV). Ultraviolet radiation is usually produced either by the heating of a material to incandescence or alternatively by the excitation of a gas discharge. The major source of UV radiation is the sun which can be considered to be a huge incandescent mass. When produced by incandescence UV radiation is in the form of a continuous spectrum.

An everyday example of the emission of ultraviolet radiation in industry is the arc produced in the electric welding process. The arc is created by the passage of an electric current across an air gap and between two metallic conductors or electrodes. The tip of the electrode, the workpiece and the air gap are in combination heated until incandescence is reached. Spectral analysis shows that there is a continuum produced with discrete spectral lines superimposed. The characteristics of these lines are significantly influenced by the properties of the materials from which the electrode and workpiece are made and also by the properties of the surrounding gases.

UV radiation is sub-divided into three groups, referred to as A, B and C that are described by the limiting wavelength values as detailed in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Lower limit wavelength value (nm)</th>
<th>Upper limit wavelength value (nm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ultraviolet C (Far UVC)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultraviolet B (Middle UVB)</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultraviolet A (Near UVA)</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Ultraviolet radiation groups
2.4. Infrared Radiation

At higher wavelengths than the visible spectrum the radiation becomes infrared (IR). The principal source of infrared radiation is heat sometimes referred to as thermal radiation. This is produced by the motion of atoms and molecules within an object. The higher the temperature of the object, the more the atoms and molecules are agitated and therefore the more infrared radiation they produce. Any object which has a temperature above absolute zero i.e. 0 Kelvin or -273.15 degrees Celsius), radiates in the infrared region of the electromagnetic spectrum.

Humans, at normal body temperature (approximately 37° Celsius), radiate strongly in the infrared, at a wavelength of about 10 microns, where a micron is equivalent to a micrometer or one millionth of a meter. Humans experience infrared radiation every day – for example the heat that we feel from sunlight or an open fire is infrared. Whilst our eyes cannot see this radiation the nerves in our skin detect it as heat. The nerve endings in our skin are temperature-sensitive and can detect the difference between the inside body temperature and the outside skin temperature.

IR radiation is sub-divided into three groups, referred to as A, B and C that are described by the limiting wavelength values as detailed in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Lower limit wavelength value (nm)</th>
<th>Upper limit wavelength value (nm)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infrared C (Far IRC)</td>
<td>$3 \times 10^4$</td>
<td>$10^6$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrared B (Far IRB)</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>$3 \times 10^3$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrared A (Far IRA)</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>1400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Infrared radiation groups

2.5. Wavelength, Frequency and the Velocity of Propagation of Light

Light travels sinusoidally in waves and a relationship exists between the length of the wave, its frequency and the velocity of propagation of light whereby:

$$\text{Velocity of propagation (meters per second)} = \text{Frequency (Hertz)} \times \text{Wavelength (meters)}$$

(1)

3. Fundamentals of Illumination

3.1. SI Units – Basic and Derived

The SI system of units was agreed by the 11th General Conference on Weights and Measures (CGPM) in 1960. There are seven basic units from which all other units are derived, as shown in Table 3.
### Table 3. Basic SI units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Parameter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ampere</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Electrical current</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilogram</td>
<td>kg</td>
<td>Mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meter</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>Length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelvin</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Absolute temperature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mole</td>
<td>mol</td>
<td>Amount of substance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candela</td>
<td>cd</td>
<td>Luminous intensity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of derived units are shown in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Unit name (where applicable)</th>
<th>Derivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Force</td>
<td>Newton</td>
<td>Kg. m. s(^{-2})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kg. m(^{-3})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luminance</td>
<td></td>
<td>cd. m(^{-2})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure</td>
<td>Pascal</td>
<td>Kg. m(^{-1}). s(^{-2})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Joule</td>
<td>Kg. m(^{2}).s(^{-2})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Watt</td>
<td>Kg. m(^{2}).s(^{-3})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical charge</td>
<td>Coulomb</td>
<td>A.s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4. Derived SI units

3.2. Radiometry

Radiometry is the science of the measurement of electromagnetic radiation and is based on physical constants. The subdivisions of interest in radiometry are – radiant flux, radiant intensity, radiance and irradiance.

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Biographical Sketch
Following on from his electrical engineering apprenticeship, Alan Smith spent three years as an Engineering Draughtsman. He subsequently joined local authority as an Assistant Engineer (Electrical & Mechanical) and remained with local government in Public Lighting - following reorganization in 1974. In 1982 he entered academia and became a Lecturer and subsequently a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Electrical Engineering at Doncaster College. Whilst in this role he concentrated on his lighting specialization. He took early retirement in 1995. In 1972 he was awarded the Page Prize by the Institution of Electrical Engineers (UK). In 1996 he was awarded a Ph.D. in lighting from the University of Sheffield (UK).
Since taking early retirement he has lectured on lighting at various UK universities predominantly on optometry and occupational health courses and has simultaneously been active in industrial applications where he concentrated his interests in lighting for occupational health, optometry and sport. He has singularly written three textbooks including Lighting for Health & Safety published by Butterworth Heinemann and has contributed on lighting to other international publications including the ILO (International Labour Office) Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health & Safety (4th edition), The Workplace (International Occupational Safety & Health Centre & Scandinavian Science Publisher). He has also contributed on lighting to the Electrical Engineer’s Reference Book (Elsevier) and Occupational Hygiene (Blackwell) – editions 2 and 3.
He is the Chairman of CIE Technical Committee TC 5.26 Guide for the Lighting of Sports Events for Colour TV and Film Systems. CIE is the Commission Internationale de L’Eclairage – the International Commission on Illumination.
He holds the positions of Honorary Research Fellow in the Institute of Occupational & Environmental Medicine, University of Birmingham (UK) and Visiting Senior Lecturer in the Department of Optometry, Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Manchester (UK).