

Low level lasers include class 1, 2, 3A and 3B lasers, but it is the class 3B lasers that are considered to have therapeutic effects and would most benefit clients/patients of Registered Massage Therapists (RMTs). Although low level lasers require electricity for function, they **give off wavelengths of light**: red light or near-infrared light. Thus they are not considered to conduct electricity into the body nor **do they give off enough heat to harm tissue because of their low output power**. **Class 3B lasers can harm the eyes**, so goggles are recommended. However, most **manufacturers build in safety precautions** to prevent accidental exposure. If low level lasers do not harm tissue, if goggles are worn and equipment is designed to prevent accidental exposure to eyes, these lasers should be considered non-hazardous. Note that **class 4 and 5 lasers are the more hazardous types of lasers which can produce enough heat to burn and cut tissue**. They are used for hair and tattoo removal and surgery, not therapeutic purposes.

Through the use of class 3B lasers RMTs in BC would be able to provide additional benefits to their clients by **increasing the rate of healing and reducing inflammation for musculoskeletal conditions**. **Many recently published, well designed randomized, controlled clinical trials support the benefits of using low level laser therapy (LLLT)**, specifically class 3B lasers, for the treatment of tendinoses (lateral epicondylitis, Achilles tendinosis), knee pain, lymphedema post-mastectomy, rheumatoid arthritis, TMJ, osteoarthritis, fibromyalgia, and carpal tunnel syndrome. Most of the rigorous studies have been published just in the last year (see the studies described in the LLLT effectiveness section). These studies also repeatedly state that **class 3B lasers are safe and no side effects reported**.

Health Canada does not give specific information about the training required by individuals using class 3B lasers. The training is the responsibility of the vendors of the devices. For example, Meditech offers short courses to train users of their Bioflex Lasers and at the end of the session participants receive a certificate. **Anyone can buy and use their equipment as long as they take the training program**.

Cosmetologists in BC with much less education and training than BC RMTs (ten months without even the need of a high school diploma versus the present massage therapy education of 3000 hours of academic and practical training based on competencies) can not only use class 3B lasers in their establishments, but they **can use even higher powered class 4 lasers for hair and tattoo removal**. These lasers do harm tissue. The laser systems that cosmetologists buy can also deliver the dosage for LLLT and who's to stop them from using them for this purpose. More significantly, a class 3B laser has been approved for **home use** by dental surgery patients (and thus no supervision by a trained professional).

Many jurisdictions (PEI, Saskatchewan) do not regulate LLLT and this means that individuals other than regulated practitioners can purchase and use lasers for the purpose of LLLT. The Health Professions Act of Alberta does not include LLLT as a restricted modality and this has been interpreted to mean that individuals other than regulated practitioners can use them (FAQ on Lasers Alberta). The Ontario Act explicitly permits RMTs to use low level laser therapy in their practice. One final note, **many jurisdictions in Canada do not regulate LLLT** and this means that individuals in addition to regulated practitioners can purchase and use lasers for the purpose of laser therapy.