

LASER & IPL: A BUYERS GUIDE

With so many different devices out there to choose from, make sure you use Skyncare's Laser & IPL Buyer's Guide Checklist to help you get the **right equipment** and **support** for *your business*.

Quality - Medical CE / UKCA

- There can be a substantial difference in quality between a Laser or IPL device that claims to be 'medical grade' and one that holds a full Medical CE or UKCA. This will be represented by a CE/UKCA mark on the machine followed by 4 numbers specific to medical device standards (e.g. CE 0197). To ensure quality equipment and safety for your clients, be certain that your Laser/IPL device has a Medical CE or UKCA.
- Getting confirmation of the Medical CE/UKCA conformity in writing before purchase will protect you against any false claims.

Training

- Any product training should be accredited by an awarding body that is recognised by insurance providers, to ensure you are receiving the appropriate level of training for your new technology and treatments.
- With Laser/IPL, virtual training is not a suitable substitution for in-person training. Find a company that includes full in-person product training that is delivered in the comfort of your own clinic/salon.

Warranty

- Check the length of warranty that comes with any new equipment. Are you getting a standard 1-year warranty, or is your equipment provider offering you a longer warranty that shows confidence in the reliability and integrity of their technology?

Tech Support

- Check the level of support you will receive with your equipment. Will you be provided with a free replacement machine in the event of a technical fault that requires an off-site repair?
- Your Laser or IPL device will need to be recalibrated annually. Make sure your equipment provider has the expertise and equipment to perform this service – No calibration, no insurance.
- Some companies will require you to ship your machine back to their HQ for its annual service. This leaves you with a large bill and without a machine for over a week. Check that the company has qualified technicians that come to you to service your machine.

Treatment Protocols

- Many local authorities and regulatory bodies require Laser and IPL operators to have detailed treatment protocols that have been written and signed-off by an Expert Medical Practitioner (EMP). Check if your equipment supplier includes these important documents.

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LPA Support

- Any business operating a Laser or IPL device is required to have a certified Laser Protection Advisor (LPA) to draft your Laser risk assessment and safe working practices ('Local Rules') documents. Check if this service is included in your equipment package, or you will have to pay for this separately (costing up to £1,000).
- If employing the services of an independent LPA, make sure they are certified by an association recognised by the MHRA, such as the ALSP (Association of Laser Safety Professionals).

TOP TIP! If a Laser supplier claims you don't need LPA support or doesn't know what it is, then you are probably best speaking with a supplier that is more knowledgeable and trustworthy.

Expertise

- Does your supplier know their IPL from their LPA? Do they know their watts from their wavelengths? Make sure you are buying from a reputable supplier with the relevant expertise in Laser/IPL technology and the necessary qualifications and specialist equipment for machine repair, servicing and recalibration.

Price

- You don't need to spend enough to buy a Ferrari on a good Laser device. Remember that buying a £75K machine means performing £75K of treatments before you see your true profit, and an expensive machine can still only treat one client at a time.
- Don't fall for the "40% Off Show Discount". This is a common marketing tactic where an inflated RRP is given and then heavily discounted to create a false perception of value.

The 3 Biggest Mistakes Buyers Make:

1. Not having an Laser Protection Advisor (LPA)

Our LPA has seen clinics that have unfortunately purchased equipment that was uncompliant with relevant Laser standards, as well as clinics being provided Laser glasses that weren't suitable and risked serious eye injury. Having an LPA could mean the difference between the treatment room and the courtroom!

2. Buying direct from abroad

Going online and finding a machine for a fraction of the price can seem very appealing from a financial perspective. However, the vast majority of these machines (despite the manufacturer's claims) are not compliant with UK Laser regulations. Furthermore, without UK-based technical support, repairing any faults or completing an annual service won't be possible – in each instance, leaving you without a usable machine.

3. Not checking the supplier's expertise and support

Buying a Laser or IPL device without checking that the supplier has the expertise and equipment to support you could leave you with a non-compliant device that the supplier is unable to recalibrate or repair if it breaks down. A new Laser/IPL device is an important investment, so taking the time to ensure you are in safe hands should be a priority.

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