

**NORTHERN TERRITORY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**CODE OF PRACTICE
FOR THE STORAGE AND TRANSPORT OF
SCHEDULE 8 SUBSTANCES**

August 2003

This Code is an adaptation of the South Australian Code of Practice for the Storage and Transport of Drugs of Dependence (31 July 2000), and we gratefully acknowledge the generosity of Pharmaceutical Services Branch, Department of Human Services in allowing the use of their publication.

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SCOPE

1. This code describes:
 - 1.1 the level of security required for the storage of Schedule 8 substances by manufacturers, wholesale dealers, pharmacists, hospitals and other persons who manufacture, possess, sell, supply or administer these drugs in the Northern Territory; and
 - 1.2 how to pack, dispatch and transport Schedule 8 substances within or from the Northern Territory for manufacturers, wholesale dealers, pharmacists, carriers and other persons involved with the transportation of these drugs.

APPLICATION

2. The principles in this code of practice apply to the storage and transport of all Schedule 8 substances other than drugs stored or transported by patients for whom they are legally prescribed.

INTERPRETATION

3. For the purposes of this code, unless the context otherwise requires, the following words and expressions have the meanings hereby respectively assigned to them:

“authorised person” means a person authorised under the NT Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act or its regulations to possess, manufacture, produce, sell, supply or administer a Schedule 8 substance.

“dose” means —

- (a) for divided preparations (eg tablets, capsules, ampoules, etc) one discrete dosage unit;
- (b) for undivided preparations (eg bulk powders, mixtures etc) the normal amount administered as a single adult therapeutic dose.

“Schedule 8 substance” means those substances listed in the Schedule 8 of the SUSDP (Schedule for Uniform Scheduling of Drugs and Poisons) which has been adopted by reference into the NT Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act.

“key” means any means for unlocking a drug storage cabinet, safe or strong room and includes a combination, personal identification number (PIN), password, electronic card or other device.

“ward” means a ward, operating theatre, clinic, day surgery unit, section or department of a health service in which patients are treated.

“supervised” means that an authorised person is physically on the premises near where the Schedule 8 substances are stored.

“SUSDP” is the Schedule for the Uniform Scheduling of Drugs and Poisons as published by the Commonwealth.

PART 1 STORAGE

HEALTH SERVICE AND SURGERY

4. All Schedule 8 substances stored in a health service, ward, day surgery unit, or medical, dental or veterinary surgery, must be placed in a securely locked storage cabinet that meets or exceeds the following requirements:
 - 4.1 Where the quantity of drugs stored is not more than 15 doses —
 - 4.1.1 made of 15mm thick hardwood; and
 - 4.1.2 fitted with a 5 lever key lock or equivalent locking mechanism; and
 - 4.1.3 securely fixed to the wall or floor; or
 - 4.2 where the quantity of drugs stored is more than 15 doses and the immediate area in which the cabinet is situated is supervised at all times, the requirements specified in sub-paragraphs 4.1.1 to 4.1.3 above; or
 - 4.3 where the quantity of drugs stored is more than 15 doses and the immediate area in which the cabinet is situated is not supervised at all times (eg nights) the requirements of Australia/New Zealand Standard for Safes and Strongrooms (AS/NZS 3809:1998) Resistance Grade 1; or
 - 4.4 as approved by the Chief Health Officer.

Restricted access

5. No person other than an authorised person shall have a key to the cabinet.
 - 5.1 At all times, while on duty, the authorised person for the time being in charge of a ward, medical, dental or veterinary surgery, day surgery unit or nursing home must keep the key to the cabinet in his or her control and possession.
 - 5.2 Where the key is a combination, PIN or password it must not be divulged to any unauthorised person. Combinations and passwords must be changed at regular intervals and de-activated when a person having knowledge of the combination or password ceases employment at the hospital, surgery or nursing home.
 - 5.3 No person other than an authorised person shall lock or unlock the cabinet or remove or add to or in any way interfere with drugs in the cabinet.
 - 5.4 The cabinet must only be unlocked for the purposes of:
 - 5.4.1 the storage of drugs;
 - 5.4.2 supply, administration or destruction of a drug; or
 - 5.4.3 the examination and counting of drugs for audit purposes.

- 5.5 The cabinet must be re-locked immediately after use.

PHARMACY

6. All Schedule 8 substances stored in a pharmacy must be placed in a securely locked drug safe that meets or exceeds the following requirements:
- 6.1 where the quantity of drugs held at any time is equivalent to 500 doses or less and the area in which the storage receptacle is situated is supervised 24 hours per day, the requirements of Australia/New Zealand Standard for Safes and Strongrooms (AS/NZS 3809:1998) Resistance Grade 0; or
 - 6.2 where the quantity of drugs held at any time is equivalent to 500 doses or less and the area in which the storage receptacle is situated is unsupervised for periods of time (eg nights), requirements of Australia/New Zealand Standard for Safes and Strongrooms (AS/NZS 3809:1998) Resistance Grade 1; or
 - 6.3 where the quantity of drugs held at any time is equivalent to more than 500 but less than 1000 doses, the requirements of Australia/New Zealand Standard for Safes and Strongrooms (AS/NZS 3809:1998) Resistance Grade II; or
 - 6.4 where the quantity of drugs held at any time is equivalent to more than 1000 doses, the requirements of Australia/New Zealand Standard for Safes and Strongrooms (AS/NZS 3809:1998) Resistance Grade III; or
 - 6.5 where the pharmacy is fitted with an alarm system monitored by a security company or the premises are supervised 24 hours a day, or the premises are patrolled by a security guard when not supervised, the resistance grade specified in paragraphs 6.2, 6.3 or 6.4 may be reduced by one resistance grade respectively; or
 - 6.6 as approved by the Chief Health Officer.

Pharmacy Drug Safes

- 6.7 For the purposes of this code a drug safe having the following specifications is deemed to be equivalent to Resistance grade I —
- 6.7.1 constructed of black mild steel plate built not less than 10 mm thick;
 - 6.7.2 with continuous welding of all edges;
 - 6.7.3 fitted with a flush fitting door constructed of mild steel plate not less than 10 mm thick, with a clearance around the door of not more than 1.6 mm;
 - 6.7.4 with a fixed locking bar welded to the inside face of the door near the hinged edge which engages in a rebate in the safe body when the door is closed;
 - 6.7.5 with a five lever key lock or locking mechanism providing at least equivalent security either of which shall be securely affixed to the rear face of the door;
 - 6.7.6 attached to a wall or the floor of the premises away from external walls, where it is not visible from outside the room in which it is situated and in accordance with subparagraph 6.6.7 or subparagraph 6.6.8;

- 6.7.7 where mounted on a brick or concrete wall or floor, be attached to such wall or floor by means of suitably sized expanding bolts through holes 9.5 mm diameter drilled in the rear or bottom of the safe;
- 6.7.8 where mounted on a timber frame wall or floor, be attached to such wall or floor frame by means of suitably sized coach screws through holes 9.5 mm diameter drilled in the rear or bottom of the safe;
- 6.7.9 where the wall or floor is constructed of material other than brick or concrete or with other than a timber frame, be attached to such wall, floor or frame in such manner as to provide equivalent security to a mounting made pursuant to subparagraph 6.6.7 or subparagraph 6.6.8.

Restricted access

- 7. A pharmacist must retain the keys to the drug safe in his or her personal possession at all times when such keys are not in use.
 - 7.1 Where the key is a combination, PIN or password it must not be divulged to any unauthorised person. Combinations and passwords must be changed at regular intervals and de-activated when a person having knowledge of the combination or password ceases employment at the pharmacy.
 - 7.2 No person other than a pharmacist shall lock or unlock a drug safe in a pharmacy.
 - 7.3 A drug safe must only be unlocked for the following purposes:
 - 7.3.1 the storage of drugs;
 - 7.3.2 the supply or dispensing of drugs;
 - 7.3.3 the examination and counting of drugs for audit purposes.
 - 7.4 No person other than a pharmacist shall remove, add to or in any way interfere with any drugs in a drug safe.
 - 7.5 The drug safe must be re-locked immediately after use.

RESEARCH, INSTRUCTION OR TRAINING PERMIT HOLDERS

- 8. All Schedule 8 substances stored by the holder of a research, instruction or training authorisation must be placed and securely locked in a drug safe that meets or exceeds the following requirements:
 - 8.1 requirements of Australia/New Zealand Standard for Safes and Strongrooms (AS/NZS 3809:1998) Resistance Grade III; or
 - 8.2 as approved by the Chief Health Officer.

Restricted access

9. The person named on a research, instruction or training authorisation as the person responsible for the drugs must retain the keys to the drug safe in his or her personal possession at all times when such keys are not in use.
 - 9.1 Where the key is a combination, PIN or password it must not be divulged to any unauthorised person. Combinations and passwords must be changed at regular intervals and de-activated when a person having knowledge of the combination or password ceases employment at the research, instruction or training premises.
 - 9.2 No person other than a person named on a research, instruction or training authorisation shall open the drug safe.
 - 9.3 A drug safe must only be unlocked for the following purposes:
 - 9.3.1 the storage of drugs;
 - 9.3.2 the use of drugs for the purpose specified on the permit;
 - 9.3.3 the examination and counting of drugs for audit purposes.
 - 9.4 No person other than a person named on the authorisation shall remove, add to or in any way interfere with any drugs in a drug safe.
 - 9.5 The drug safe must be re-locked immediately after use.

MANUFACTURER AND WHOLESALE DEALER

10. All Schedule 8 substances stored by a manufacturer or wholesale dealer must be placed in a securely locked safe or strongroom that meets or exceeds the requirements of Australia/New Zealand Standard for Safes and Strongrooms (AS/NZS 3809:1998) Resistance Grade VII.
 - 10.1 The safe or strongroom must be situated away from the external walls of the building.
 - 10.2 The building and the area in which the safe or strongroom is situated must be fitted with an alarm system monitored by a security company; or
 - 10.3 as approved by the Chief Health Officer.

Restricted access

11. The nominated person for the business is responsible for the drugs and must retain the keys to the safe or strong room in his or her personal possession at all times when such keys are not in use.
 - 11.1 Where the key is a combination, PIN or password it must not be divulged to any unauthorised person. Combinations and passwords must be changed at regular

intervals and de-activated when a person having knowledge of the combination or password ceases employment at the licensed premises.

- 11.2 No person other than a person named on the licence as having access to the drugs shall open the safe or strong room.
- 11.3 The safe or strong room must only be unlocked for the following purposes:
 - 11.3.1 the storage of drugs;
 - 11.3.2 the supply of drugs;
 - 11.3.3 the examination and counting of drugs for audit purposes.
- 11.4 No person other than a person named on the licence shall remove, add to or in any way interfere with any drugs in the safe or strong room.
- 11.5 The safe or strong room must be re-locked immediately after use.

OTHER PLACES OF STORAGE

12. Subject to the above requirements where drugs are temporarily or permanently stored in any other place, including but without limiting the generality of the foregoing, in a vehicle, any such place of storage must be so constructed, secured and used as to prevent the unauthorised removal of, or interference with, the drugs.

QUICK REFERENCE TO STORAGE REQUIREMENTS

| Storage place | Doses stored | Hours per day supervised | Security level |
|--|----------------|---|--|
| Hospitals Nursing homes Surgeries Health Centres | ≤15 | — | Locked hardwood receptacle |
| | > 15 | 24 hours | |
| | >15 | <24 hours | AS/NZS 3809:1998 Resistance Grade I |
| Pharmacies | < or = 500 | 24 hours | AS/NZS 3809:1998 Resistance Grade 0 |
| | < or = 500 | <24 hours | AS/NZS 3809:1998 Resistance Grade I |
| | | 24 hour monitored alarm system | AS/NZS 3809:1998 Resistance Grade 0 |
| | >500 but <1000 | <24 hours | AS/NZS 3809:1998 Resistance Grade II |
| | | 24 hour monitored alarm system | AS/NZS 3809:1998 Resistance Grade I |
| | = or >1000 | <24 hours | AS/NZS 3809:1998 Resistance Grade III |
| 24 hour monitored alarm system | | AS/NZS 3809:1998 Resistance Grade II | |
| Holders of research, instruction or training authorisations. | Any quantity | — | AS/NZS 3809:1998 Resistance Grade III |
| Manufacturers & Wholesalers | Any quantity | monitored alarm system required | AS/NZS 3809:1998 Resistance Grade VII |

PART 2 TRANSPORT

PACKAGING FOR TRANSPORT

13. When packaging Schedule 8 substances for delivery or transport the following precautions must be observed:

13.1 Schedule 8 substances must be enclosed in a package that does not contain any other goods and which is labelled with the following statement:

SCHEDULE 8 - PLEASE CHECK CAREFULLY

13.2 A multi-part document (packing slip) stating the contents of the package must be enclosed within or attached to the package.

13.3 This package must be re-enclosed in a carton or other opaque container addressed to the purchaser or person authorised to receive it (the consignee). No indication that it contains a Schedule 8 substance is to be on this outer package.

LOCAL DELIVERIES

14. When making local deliveries that contain Schedule 8 substances the following precautions are to be observed:

14.1 Delivery runs to pharmacies and other recipients of Schedule 8 substances must be made with a view to maximising security.

14.2 Where possible, drugs of dependence must be delivered in unmarked company vehicles, however, contract carriers may be utilised.

14.3 Vehicles must not be marked so that they may be identified as being used for the carriage of drugs.

14.4 When a carrier is used it is the responsibility of the consignor to engage a carrier who complies with this code. It is also the responsibility of the consignor to ensure that pick-up and delivery are arranged with the object of the drugs spending as little time as possible at the carrier's premises (every effort must be made not to leave parcels at a depot over a weekend or public holidays).

14.5 When making local deliveries of Schedule 8 substances vehicles used must be fully enclosed with metal or other substantial material sufficient to retard unauthorised access to the vehicle's load. The enclosure must have a well fitting door or shutter and security lock.

14.6 Vehicles must be kept locked at all times and the key must be carried by the driver and not left in the vehicle.

14.7 Vehicles must be effectively immobilised when unattended for delivery of parcels into consignee's premises.

- 14.8 Vehicles must not be left unattended for any extended period, such as meal breaks etc, while carrying parcels for delivery.
- 14.9 Delivery schedules that provide for the recipient to sign for the delivery are essential but the contents of the parcel must not be described on the schedule.

POST

- 15. Schedule 8 substances must not be sent through the mail unless absolutely necessary and then only in small quantities and in accordance with the following precautions.
 - 15.1 Postal regulations require the sender's and recipient's name and address to be on the parcel.
 - 15.2 The contents of the parcel must not be disclosed on the package.
 - 15.3 Certified mail does not provide acceptable security for Schedule 8 substances and is not permitted by Australia Post.
 - 15.4 Postal regulations require any parcel containing a Schedule 8 substance to be sent by express post.
 - 15.5 The sender must request automatic advice of receipt of the parcel from Australia Post.
 - 15.6 Delivery to and pick-up from the Post Office are to be timed with the object of the drugs spending as little time as possible en route. Every effort must be made not to store parcels at a depot over a weekend or public holidays.
 - 15.7 The sender must notify the receiver that the parcel has been dispatched and the expected time and place of delivery.

RAIL

- 16 The principles set out in this section apply to the consignment of Schedule 8 substances by rail.
 - 16.1 Parcels containing Schedule 8 substances must be packaged as specified in clause 13.
 - 16.2 Where small quantities of ampoules or tablets are sent by rail they should be included in a larger consignment of other goods.
 - 16.3 Where larger quantities are sent by rail the parcel must be insured with the railway or be consigned in such a manner that the consignment will be specially handled and a signature obtained each time the consignment changes hands.
 - 16.4 Bulk consignments must not be sent by rail.

- 16.5 Delivery to and pick-up from the carrier's premises must be timed with the object of the drugs spending as little time as possible at the premises (eg . Every effort must be made not to store parcels at a depot over a weekend or public holidays).
- 16.6 A signature must be obtained from the recipient every time a consignment changes hands.
- 16.7 The sender must notify the receiver that the consignment has been dispatched and the expected time and place at which it is due to arrive.

AIR FREIGHT

- 17 The principles set out in this section apply to the consignment of Schedule 8 substances by air freight.
 - 17.1 Parcels must be packaged as specified in clause 13.
 - 17.1 The contents of the parcel must not be revealed unnecessarily to airline employees other than the cargo terminal manager or security officer.
 - 17.2 When consigned by air freight, other than as part of a normal delivery from a wholesaler to a pharmacy, Schedule 8 substances, where practicable, must be classified as "vulnerable".
 - 17.3 Care must be taken to ensure that cargo handling, storage, loading and unloading at either end of the journey is not accessible to the public.
 - 17.4 Consignors, where possible, must ascertain the flight number on which the drugs will be carried and insist on notification of any change before the flight commences.
 - 17.5 Parcels containing Schedule 8 substances must not be delivered to a city terminal for transportation to the airport in airline vehicles but must be taken to the cargo establishment at the airport in a company or contract carrier's vehicle.
 - 17.6 Delivery to and pick-up from the carrier's premises must be timed with the object of the drugs spending as little time as possible at the premises (eg . Every effort must be made not to store consignments at a depot over a weekend or public holidays).
 - 17.7 A signature must be obtained from the recipient every time a consignment changes hands.
 - 17.8 The sender must notify the receiver that the consignment has been dispatched and the expected time and place at which it is due to arrive and any changes in flights.

ROAD

18. The principles set out in this section apply to the transport of Schedule 8 substances by road other than local deliveries to which clause 14 applies.
 - 18.1 Parcels are to be packaged as specified in clause 13.
 - 18.2 Where possible, drug parcels must be consigned to a particular person.
 - 18.3 The contents of a drug parcel should not be unnecessarily revealed to carrier employees.
 - 18.4 When consigning Schedule 8 substances by road, the consignor must engage, where possible, a carrier:
 - 18.4.1 who uses standard cargo containers or fully enclosed trucks on which the enclosure is metal or other substantial material sufficient to retard unauthorised access to the cargo. The containers or enclosures must be fitted with high standard security locks which are kept locked at all times en route;
 - 18.4.2 with vehicles fitted with automatic logs;
 - 18.4.3 who operates a service where no avoidable stops are made and where scheduled stops are made the vehicle is not left unattended unless parked in a security area. (Note: this could be difficult in the case of long distance haulage when drivers should stop for meal and rest breaks);
 - 18.4.4 who provides a terminal where goods being loaded or unloaded are not easily accessible to the public or unauthorised personnel.
 - 18.5 Deliveries to and from the premises of the carrier must be subject to similar stringent security precautions.
 - 18.6 Delivery to and from the carrier's premises must be timed with the object of the drugs spending as little time as possible at the premises (eg . Every effort must be made not to store consignments at a depot over a weekend or public holidays).
 - 18.7 A signature must be obtained from the recipient every time a consignment changes hands. It should be the general practice of any carrier employed to obtain a receipt for the delivery of all goods.
 - 18.8 The sender must notify the consignee that the consignment has been dispatched and the expected time and place at which it is due to arrive.

RECEIVING SCHEDULE 8 SUBSTANCES

19. The receiver must ensure that he or she or an authorised person will be on hand to receive the consignment.
 - 19.1 A receipt must be given for the consignment. A signature on a carrier's delivery schedule is deemed to comply with this requirement.
 - 19.2 The receiver must immediately check the contents of the parcel, and notify the supplier that the stock has been received.

- 19.3 In the event of any shortages the receiver must immediately notify the sender. If the matter cannot be resolved the sender must notify the police and Poisons Control within 24 hours.

