



Newfoundland and Labrador Pharmacy Board

Interpretation Guide

Destruction of Expired or Unusable Narcotics and Controlled Drugs

Revised August 2016

1) Introduction

The regulations regarding narcotics, controlled drugs, benzodiazepines and targeted substances require that pharmacists take all steps necessary to protect these drugs while they are in their possession. This includes ensuring that the drugs are accounted for and the inventory is accurate. Damaged, unserviceable or outdated drugs are considered part of the inventory. As such, pharmacies need to account for these drugs as well as those returned by patients.

As of July 2016, Health Canada will no longer require pharmacies to have pre-authorization for destruction of expired or unusable narcotics and controlled drugs. However, auditable records must still be maintained in accordance with the applicable legislation.

There are options available to pharmacists in dealing with these expired or unusable drugs. The pharmacist may choose to destroy the drugs on-site or choose to sell or provide the drugs to a licensed dealer who is licensed to destroy them.

2) Documentation Requirements

- a) Before any destruction takes place, the pharmacist-in-charge should ensure information regarding the drugs to be destroyed is appropriately recorded, including:
 - i) the name and strength per unit of each drug to be destroyed; and
 - ii) the quantity of each drug to be destroyed.
- b) There are additional documentation requirements that vary depending on whether the drugs are destroyed on-site or are sold or provided to an authorized licensed dealer. See sections 3) and 4) for these specific requirements.
- c) Records related to narcotics and controlled drugs returned by patients should be kept separate from records related to drugs in the pharmacy's inventory.
- d) All documentation must be retained for a period of two years, in a manner that permits an audit to be made.

3) On-Site Destruction

- a) If the pharmacist-in-charge chooses to destroy the drugs on-site, the destruction should take place in a manner that conforms to applicable federal, provincial and municipal environmental legislation and which alters or denatures the drug to such an extent that its consumption has been rendered impossible or improbable. This could include dissolving the drugs in soapy water or other suitable vehicle and then disposing of the slurry in an acceptable manner, such as mixing with kitty litter, sawdust, etc.
- b) On-site destruction of narcotics and controlled drugs must be conducted by a pharmacist in the presence of another health professional (e.g. pharmacist, registered pharmacy technician, pharmacy intern, physician, nurse practitioner).

- c) Appropriate records, as described in section 2.a), must be retained for a minimum of two years. These records should also include:
 - i) the method of destruction used;
 - ii) the name of the pharmacist that conducted the destruction;
 - iii) the name and profession of the person who witnessed the destruction; and
 - iv) the date on which the destruction took place.

4) Destruction Through Licensed Dealers

- a) Pharmacists-in-charge and persons in charge of hospitals who do not wish to destroy narcotics or controlled drugs on-site may choose to sell or provide the substances to:
 - i) the licenced dealer who initially provided them, or
 - ii) a licensed dealer who is licensed to destroy narcotics or controlled drugs, through an exemption under section 56 of the *Controlled Substances and Drugs Act*¹ (e.g. Stericycle).
- b) In these cases, the licensed dealer must provide the pharmacy with a written order that specifies the name, strength per unit and quantity of drugs and that indicates that the sole purpose of the order is destruction.
- c) Appropriate records, as described in section 2.a), must be retained for a minimum of two years. These records should also include:
 - i) the name of the pharmacist that requested the destruction;
 - ii) the name and address of the licensed dealer to whom the drugs were sold or provided; and
 - iii) the date the transaction took place.

¹ Available at <http://www.nlrb.ca/media/HC-S56-Class-Exemption-Destruction-Letter.pdf>