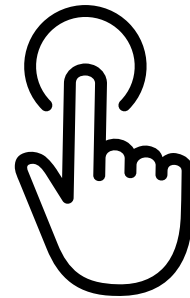


**PHARMACEUTICAL WASTE
GUIDELINES AND POLICIES**

**SOUTH
AUSTRALIA**



'Go there' Buttons can be found throughout the document. Clicking on them will result in the relevant linked policy opening in your browser.



DISCLAIMER

This document was created by DrugWaste International for the sole purpose of education and information provision. This document has not been created for commercial purposes and should not be viewed as such. It includes relevant links to governing policies and documents. All credit is given to the original authors. We encourage clinicians to read the linked policies/guidelines in their entirety to ensure complete understanding. This document is not a completely exhaustive or comprehensive list. Policies and frameworks are constantly being updated. DrugWaste International will attempt to ensure that all information presented is current, however, it is the full responsibility of the reader to ensure they engage with the links to ensure currency of resources.

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Contents

SA EPA Guidelines Medical waste – Storage, transport,
disposal

Registered and Enrolled Nurses' and Midwives Obligations.
Drug of Dependence Unit: The Controlled Substances Act
1984 (SA)

Handling of Hazardous Drugs and Related Wastes in South
Australian Health Services Policy Directive

Guidelines for the Operation of Pharmacy Premises by
Pharmacy Services Providers

Summary

Further Information

References

SA EPA GUIDELINES MEDICAL WASTE - STORAGE, TRANSPORT, DISPOSAL

Purpose: It is important that the medical profession, nurses, portering staff, laboratory staff and others dealing with medical wastes adopt procedures that minimise risk to the environment, public, fellow workers and people working in the waste industry. (Government of SA, EPA, 2003, pg. 1).

KEY COMPONENTS



- **Page 2:** EPA Definition of Medical waste requirements surrounding its management.
- **Page 4:** Disposal of medical waste, incineration mandate.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

The EPA outlines that:

- Medical waste must be disposed of in such a way that **minimises environmental impact**.
- Medical waste must be discarded in a way that **mitigates risk to the community or individuals**.
- Medical waste must be **incinerated** at end of life.

In relation to pharmaceutical management, this means ...

- That **drugs do not end up in waterways or landfill**. Therefore, mitigating risk of waterway or soil contamination.
- Drugs are **rendered irretrievable and unrecognisable** at point of disposal, guaranteeing safety for staff and community.
- Drugs end up in a **waste stream bound for incineration**.

Clinicians must take all steps to ensure compliance with this legislation.

REGISTERED AND ENROLLED NURSES' AND MIDWIVES OBLIGATIONS

DRUG OF DEPENDENCE UNIT: THE CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT 1984 (SA)

Purpose: The Controlled Substances Act 1984 (SA) and the Controlled Substances (Poisons) Regulations 2011 (SA) regulate the prescription, supply, and administration of drugs and poisons in South Australia. (Drug of Dependence Unit, pg. 1)

KEY COMPONENTS



- **Page 3:** Destruction of a Drug of Dependence Guidelines

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Destruction and disposal of Drugs of Dependence must ensure safety.

It is not appropriate to dispose of drugs in sharps bins because the drugs are not rendered unusable, meaning that they remain a public health and safety threat within your facility and once they leave.

It is irresponsible to dispose of drugs down drains and into general waste. This has massive environmental ramifications that directly impact public health, with levels of drugs being found in waterways throughout Australia and the world.

Disposal methods must mitigate the risk of diversion and waterway pollution and community harm.

HANDLING OF HAZARDOUS DRUGS AND RELATED WASTES IN SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HEALTH SERVICES POLICY DIRECTIVE

Purpose: This document outlines SA Health's position on the safe handling of hazardous drugs and related waste in health units incorporated under the South Australian Health Care Act 2008. Effective implementation of this policy directive will assist health services to meet related Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislative requirements. (Medicines and Technology Programs and Workforce Health, 2017, pg. 4).

KEY COMPONENTS



- **Page 5:** Implementing relevant risk protocols to minimize risk to staff and community in relation to hazardous waste management.
- **Page 6:** Roles and responsibilities of staff in managing waste
- **Page 8:** Hazardous Drugs

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Hazardous drugs are drugs that present an occupational risk and must be **handled with special caution** in healthcare facilities.

Managers and team leaders must implement policy in accordance with the law.

Staff must align themselves with the policy to meet legislative requirements.

It is a requirement to implement procedures within a healthcare facility to ensure that hazardous waste management requirements are met.

GUIDELINES FOR THE OPERATION OF PHARMACY PREMISES BY PHARMACY SERVICES PROVIDERS

Purpose: Although matters relating to pharmacy practice are the responsibility of the Pharmacy Board of Australia, some areas of practice combine both premises and practice elements. Therefore, these pharmacy premises focused guidelines should be read and considered in conjunction with all current Pharmacy Board of Australia guidelines. (Pharmacy Regulation Authority SA, 2018, pg. 4).

KEY COMPONENTS



- Page 14: Disposal of Wastes

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Unwanted medication must be rendered unusable – prior to being dispersed in a RUM bin for incineration.

SUMMARY

South Australia has numerous policies and directives that mandate specific management around pharmaceutical waste.

Some key directives are:

- Pharmaceutical waste must be **incinerated**
- Disposal of pharmaceuticals must ensure **environmental preservation**
- Safety is of utmost importance when disposing of drugs of dependence, **diversion risk should be mitigated** at point of disposal.

In practice, this means that it is illegal to dispose of drugs down drains or in general waste.

Drugs should be made unusable and unrecoverable at point of disposal – disposal via sharps bins is therefore non-compliant.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

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