



Health  
Canada

Healthy Environments  
and Consumer Safety  
Branch

Santé  
Canada

Direction générale,  
Santé environnementale et  
sécurité des consommateurs

Dear Sir/Madam:

Thank you for your request for approval of the destruction of narcotics and/or controlled drugs. Effective immediately, Health Canada no longer requires pre-authorization requests for the local destruction of unserviceable narcotics and controlled drugs. This means that pharmacists may proceed with destruction without notifying and receiving acknowledgment from Health Canada in advance.

Local (on site) destruction is one option available to pharmacists and persons in charge of hospitals when destroying unserviceable narcotics and/or controlled drugs.

It is important to note that any record or written order required to be retained under the regulations made under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA)* or any relevant CDSA exemption must be retained in a manner that permits an audit to be made pursuant to sections 41 and 64 of the *Narcotic Control Regulations* and sections G.03.011 and G.05.002 of Part G of the *Food and Drug Regulations*). With respect to appropriate record keeping and destruction, Health Canada recommends the following:

1. Before any destruction, the pharmacist should record information with respect to the destruction, such as the destruction date, name, strength per unit and quantity of the controlled substance to be destroyed. This information should be kept for a period of two years.

Beyond the two-year period, it is up to the hospital administrators, pharmacists or practitioners to determine if these records should be kept for a longer period based on other regulatory requirements such as provincial or professional practice regulations.

2. The pharmacist should destroy the drugs in the presence of another health professional. Both witnesses should record their names and destruction date on a statement indicating they witnessed the destruction.

For these purposes, a health professional could be a pharmacist, practitioner, nurse, pharmacy intern, regulated pharmacy technicians (in those provinces where they are registered with the pharmacy licensing authority) or an inspector from the provincial pharmacy licensing authority.

3. The controlled substance should be destroyed using a method of destruction that conforms with applicable federal, provincial and municipal environmental legislation.

4. The controlled substance should be altered or denatured to such an extent that its consumption has been rendered impossible or improbable.

For the regulatory requirements for the destruction of benzodiazepines and other targeted substances, please refer to sections 2, 55 and subsection 65(1) of the *Benzodiazepines and Other Targeted Substances Regulations*.

Pharmacists and persons in charge of hospitals who do not wish to destroy narcotics or controlled drugs on site may, through an exemption under section 56 of the *Controlled Substances and Drugs Act*, sell or provide these substances, to a licensed dealer who is licensed to destroy narcotics or controlled drugs. More information on this exemption and its conditions is attached for your reference.

Should you request the list of authorized licensed dealers or have any questions on the matter, please do not hesitate to contact us at the following e-mail address: [compliance-conformite@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:compliance-conformite@hc-sc.gc.ca)

Thank you,



Julie Thompson  
Director  
Office of Controlled Substances  
Health Canada