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Disposal of Narcotic Substances Fact Sheet

Narcotic substances (Schedule 8 medicines) are controlled drugs as they are subject to abuse, misuse, and dependence. Narcotic substances can only be destroyed when they are unwanted, used, and expired, and narcotic substances must be disposed in a way so there is no risk to the public of being reused or diverted. There are obligations for authorised persons, including health professionals, and licence holders, for disposal of narcotic substances under Tasmanian poisons legislation.

How narcotic substances (Schedule 8 medicines) are disposed of:

Consumers should return **all** unwanted medicines to a community pharmacy for disposal.

Authorised persons and licenced persons must destroy narcotic substances in accordance with regulation 38 of the *Poisons Regulations 2018*, and all records must be kept for the receipt and destruction in accordance with regulation 18. Licence holders may also be subject to additional conditions for narcotic substances destruction as part of their licence.

All narcotic substances waiting to be destroyed must be stored in an approved narcotic substances enclosure.

A substance is destroyed when it has been rendered unusable, and unidentifiable. This can be practically achieved by crushing tablets, cutting patches, or emptying liquids from ampoules and bottles **AND** dispersing the substances in a manner that prevents subsequent retrieval.

Return Unwanted Medicines (RUM)

Return Unwanted Medicines (or The RUM Project) provides a free and safe method for the disposal of unwanted and expired medicines from consumers via community pharmacies. If a RUM bin, which is intended for subsequent high temperature incineration, is utilised for narcotic substances disposal, the narcotic substance must be rendered unusable and unidentifiable prior to being placed in the RUM bin. This option is only available to community pharmacies.

More information regarding the RUM project can be found at <https://returnmed.com.au>

Disposal kits

Purpose manufactured medicine disposal kits that suspend the narcotic substance in a gel (that contains a chemical denaturing agent) to make the narcotic substance harder to retrieve may be utilised. Disposal kits are intended for subsequent high temperature incineration.

If a disposal kit is utilised for destruction of tablet forms of narcotic substances, these must be crushed prior to adding to a disposal kit.

Secure transfer

While awaiting final disposal, narcotic substances must continue to be held securely to prevent theft or diversion. Storage in an approved narcotic substances enclosure must continue until immediately prior to collection for final transfer to the place of high temperature incineration.

If a disposal kit is utilised, the used disposal kit containing suspended narcotic substances must be stored in an approved narcotic substances enclosure until immediately prior to collection for high temperature incineration. A disposal kit containing suspended narcotic substances is able to be disposed of via RUM project.

If a RUM bin is utilised, the narcotic substances that have been rendered unusable and unidentifiable must continue to be stored in an approved narcotic substances enclosure, and be placed in the RUM bin the day the RUM bin is to be collected, when the RUM bin can be securely sealed to prevent possible retrieval of narcotic substances.

High temperature incineration

This specialised type of incineration may only be carried out by an approved waste management contractor.