This document is designed to provide information for pharmacists on the legal requirements for the destruction of drugs of dependence.

Pharmacists often contact the Drugs of Dependence Unit (DDU) seeking advice on how drugs of dependence are to be destroyed. In particular, this issue is a significant problem facing hospital pharmacies due to the large volume of unused drugs of dependence that are returned on a regular basis.

The Controlled Substances (Poisons) Regulations 2011 (SA) specifies the minimum requirements that must be followed when drugs of dependence are to be destroyed.

Destruction and disposal of drugs of dependence must not pose a risk to public health or safety.

**Receiving drugs of dependence for destruction:**

When a pharmacist receives drugs of dependence they must:

- Give the person who provided the drug(s) a signed and dated receipt for the drug(s) and
- Make the following entries in the Drugs of Dependence Register:
  - Name and address of the person who provided the drug,
  - Name and address of the person who took delivery of the drug,
  - The date the drug was received,
  - The name and amount of the drug (and strength where applicable),
  - The invoice number (if the drug was supplied on order),
  - The total amount of the drug now in stock, and
  - Endorse the entry with their signature.

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1 Regulation 41, Controlled Substances (Poisons) Regulations 2011
Destruction of drugs of dependence:²

When destroying drugs of dependence, the pharmacist must ensure:

- The destruction is witnessed by another pharmacist, authorised officer, police officer, registered health practitioner or veterinary surgeon; and
- The following entries are made in the Drugs of Dependence Register, immediately after the drug has been destroyed:
  - Their full name and signature, and the full name and signature of the witness,
  - The name and amount of the drug (and strength where applicable),
  - The date and time of the destruction, and
  - The amount of the drug (if any) remaining in stock.

Small quantities of drugs of dependence may be destroyed in the pharmacy.

The destruction of large quantities of drugs of dependence is best undertaken using high-temperature incineration through the pharmacy's preferred waste-disposal operator.

When delivering the drugs of dependence for incineration, they must be stored in plain packaging that gives no indication that it contains drugs of dependence.³

To comply with the controlled substances legislation, the pharmacist and witness must remain on-site where the drugs are to be incinerated to ensure their destruction. It is recommended a certificate confirming the destruction be produced by the waste-disposal operator.

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² Regulation 45, Controlled Substances (Poisons) Regulations 2011
³ Part 2, Code of Practice for the Storage and Transport of Drugs of Dependence, December 2012