

**PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES
SECURITY IN DRUG DISTRIBUTION
FOR NARCOTIC AND OTHER PSYCHOACTIVE DRUGS**

These guidelines were prepared by the Committee on Security in Drug Distribution comprising representatives of the Bureau of Dangerous Drugs, Bureau of Drug Surveillance, and Senior Consultant Pharmacy, Health Protection Branch, Department of National Health & Welfare and representatives of the Provincial Pharmacy Registrars, the Canadian Pharmaceutical Association and the Canadian Medical Association.

N.B. While the guidelines were prepared to be of assistance to pharmacies, they should also be useful to practitioners, hospitals and other locations where psychoactive drugs are available for medical use.

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SECURITY IN DRUG DISTRIBUTION

PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

PRINCIPLES

1. To reduce diversion of legal drugs to the illicit market.
2. To protect the life and property.
3. To assist law enforcement agencies, including police, colleges or associations and governments in performing their duties.

GUIDELINES

Physical Security

The pharmacist should take those steps that are deemed appropriate to protect drug supplies for which he or she is responsible. The following suggestions should aid in meeting this goal.

The pharmacist should ensure that:

1. the pharmacy has adequate alarm systems that will protect the total building or premises as well as the drug storage areas. Signs should be located at all entrances advising public that premises are protected by an alarm system.
2. drugs are to be stored in a secured manner.
3. adequate daytime surveillance regarding drug security is maintained.
4. containers of drugs liable to abuse and misuse are marked with the Operation Provident Number.
5. there is adequate lighting and the internal floor plan of a pharmacy and storage of drugs are such as to discourage the "grab and run" technique of thieving drugs. This technique frequently involves two persons, one of whom diverts the pharmacist from the dispensary while the other grabs the drug from stock.
6. close control is exercised on quantities of drugs kept in stock and staff members should be aware that routine stock checks are being performed.

7. access to drug storage areas is limited to authorized persons. Unsupervised access to the dispensary and other drug storage areas by non-dispensary staff is prohibited.
8. when a narcotic drug is about to be dispensed, it is obtained from its place of storage as unobtrusively as possible, with the label turned away from the public view and, if advisable, by a person other than the person who received the prescription. During the dispensing operation, the drug container should not be left on a counter in open public view or reach. After the dispensing, it should be returned to the storage area as soon as convenient.

Armed Robbery:

1. Do nothing to endanger yourself or others.
2. Comply with the requests of the robber (i.e., give him the money or drugs).
3. As soon as it is safe to do so, make notes on the description of assailant, getaway vehicle and name and quantities of drugs taken.
4. Do not endeavor to forcibly detain the person.
5. At first safe opportunity, notify police department.
6. Be cautious of after hour call backs to the pharmacy.
7. Report any suspicious vehicles around house or store (licence number, color, make, year, special identifying marks, etc.).
8. After robbery, do not touch anything --- lock your store and dispensary until police arrive.

Guidelines if taken hostage (extortion or intimidation):

1. Don't be a hero. Accept your situation and be prepared to wait.
2. The first 15 to 45 minutes are the most dangerous for all concerned. Follow the instruction of your captor. The longer you are together, the less likely the captor will hurt you.
3. Don't speak unless spoken to and only if necessary.
4. Try to get rest. Sit if you can. If the situation goes for a long period of time, try to sleep if you can.

5. Don't make suggestions to the hostage taker. If your suggestion goes wrong, he may think you planned it that way.
6. Don't try to escape unless you are absolutely sure you can make it, and even then, rethink if before you try.
7. If anyone needs special medication, inform your captors.
8. Be observant of everything you see and hear. Try to memorize the number of captors, their description and conversations, weapons carried, etc. Also number and identities of other hostages, you may be released and your information will help the police.
9. If you are permitted to speak on the phone, be prepared to answer yes or no to questions asked by police.
10. Don't be argumentative to captors or other hostages. Put forth a cooperative attitude.
11. Don't turn your back on your captors unless directed to do so. But don't stare at the either. Eye contact can be good. People are less likely to harm someone that they are looking at.
12. Be patient, even though the Police may appear to be doing nothing, they are engaged in a complete program designed to rescue you unharmed as soon as possible.

Prescription Forgeries:

1. Pharmacists should know the telephone number of the local police who would have the responsibility for investigating forgeries or suspected forgeries. This could be determined through the development of liaison with the local enforcement agency.
2. All prescriptions for drugs that are known to be abusive drugs in your area should be scrutinized carefully.
3. Assess technical accuracy of prescriptions --- a slight spelling error could indicate forgery.
4. Don't become rattled by a rush requested to dispense a prescription --- this is often a planned maneuver in the hope that the pharmacist will overlook the aspect of forgery.

5. If you suspect forgery, delay the dispensing of the prescription until authenticity can be checked. Never call the telephone number listed on the prescription, use a telephone directory.
6. If a prescription is a forgery, police should be notified and the prescription retained with a minimum of handling; record as complete a description of the passer as possible, along with the name or the pharmacist who accepted the prescription.
7. Do not try to detain a person who is attempting to pass a forged prescription. If the person wants the prescription back, mark it with the store name or your initials before giving it back.
8. Be cautious about giving information regarding inventory levels of abuse potential drugs. Such information could lead to your pharmacy becoming a target for future break and entry or daytime theft activity.
9. Verbally-received prescriptions should be checked by call-back to the prescriber using the physician's telephone number as personally known to the pharmacist or available from a telephone directory, or other authentic source. Physician's numbers given by an unknown caller should not be used.
10. Strict control over prescription pads should be exercised and encouragement should be given to practitioners, hospitals, clinics, etc., to do likewise.

Break and Entries:

1. Wherever possible when a break, entry and theft is discovered, touch nothing and do not let unauthorized persons into the store or premises.
2. Notify the police as soon as possible.
3. If you come across a break and entry in progress, do not interfere – notify police – take description of any vehicles in area (if you can safely do so) – wait for police.

Liaison with local enforcement agency:

1. Many police forces have designated Crime Prevention Officers who can offer much assistance to small business operators including pharmacies in the matter of developing preventive techniques.
2. Local commercial security associations are active in some cities and pharmacists are encouraged to make contact with them.

Reporting of drug losses to Health Protection Branch:

1. Upon discovery of drug losses due to theft or forgeries, the Regulations require that such losses be reported to the Minister of National Health & Welfare within 10 days of the discovery thereof. It is recommended however, that thefts be reported as soon as possible. Other types of losses or non-accountability of narcotic and controlled drugs should be reported in a similar manner.
2. The requirement for reporting to the Minister of National Health & Welfare is that all such reports be made in writing setting forth, as accurately as possible, inventory of narcotic and controlled drugs which were lost, stolen or non-accountable. This report should be forwarded to the Drug Control Unit of Health Canada.
3. Any losses of Schedule "F" drugs could be included in written reports of narcotic and controlled drug losses if applicable.
4. Many pharmacists have found that any inventory of narcotics and controlled drugs, renewed at regular intervals, has greatly facilitated the reporting of drug losses.

