

# ILLICIT, SUSPECTED OR UNIDENTIFIED SUBSTANCES: MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE<sup>®</sup>

## DOCUMENT SUMMARY/KEY POINTS

- If suspected illicit or unidentified substances/items are found in a patient's possession, the AMO and NUM or their delegate(s) must be notified.
- Follow these guidelines for further notifications and actions.
- Substances that are found (suspected illicit or unidentified) *must* be securely stored within SCHN until the proper authorities are notified to remove the substance from SCHN.

## CHANGE SUMMARY

- Adapted from CHW guideline and is now applicable to SCHN: No major changes have occurred. The CHW version has been rescinded.

## READ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- Clinical staff working in SCHN Mental Health Units and Emergency Departments are to read and acknowledge they understand this document.
- All other staff should be aware of this document, and where necessary, Managers are to identify key staff to read and acknowledge the document.

<b>Approved by:</b>	SCHN Policy, Procedure & Guideline Committee	
<b>Date Effective:</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2013	<b>Review Period:</b> 3 years
<b>Team Leader:</b>	Staff Specialist Psychiatrist	<b>Area/Dept:</b> Hall Ward - CHW

## Management

**Note:** This guideline is to be used in conjunction with "Searching Patients Belongings Practice Guideline".

Staff are required to comply with the [NSW Health Code of Conduct](#) and are obliged to report all illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

This guideline has been developed following consultation with the NSW Ministry of Health and in the absence of a pre-existing document pertaining to the management and disposing of illicit substances/ items in a health setting.

- If suspected illicit or unidentified substances/items are found in a patient's possession, the AMO and NUM or their delegate(s) must be notified.
- Any items found and subsequent actions must be recorded in the patient's medical record and the Incident Information Management System (IIMS).
- The AMO (or delegate) may request Pharmacy and/or the Poisons Information Centre to assist in identifying the substance.
- Any decision to notify the police and parents/ carers/ guardians, and other actions, will be made by the treating team headed by the AMO.
- Consultation with the Executive on occasions may be necessary.
- Notification to the police must be done in liaison with SCHN Security.
- If suspected illicit or unidentified substances are found, it is the responsibility of Security and the Nurse Manager (NM) or Nursing Unit Manager (NUM) to transport and deposit the substances to the Illicit Substance Safe. (see below)
- Consideration should be given to any associated responsibilities and reporting requirements with regard to NSW Health Protecting Children and Young People Policy and the Child Protection Unit consulted if appropriate.

### ***Secure temporary storage of suspected illicit or unidentified substances***

- Substances that are found (suspected illicit or unidentified) **must** be securely stored within SCHN until the proper authorities are notified to remove the substance from SCHN.
- A **safe** is located in the Mental Health Units (MHU) specific for the storage of these substances. The NM or NUM should contact After Hours Nurse Manager for the key to the safe.
- **Illicit or unidentified substances are not to be stored in the S4/8 cupboards.**
- When using the safe to store illicit or unidentified substances, staff and/or other authorities **must sign** a record book when depositing or removing substances from the safe. MHU staff are responsible for maintaining the record book.

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