

Dealing with Spillages of methadone and other Schedule 2 liquid CDs

As with any spillage, firstly consider the potential health and safety consequences for your staff and customers in all the circumstances. When dealing with the spillage, wear appropriate protective clothing, for example - gloves and an apron - if required and ensure that relevant cleaning procedures are followed.

The Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 requires pharmacists to keep a record of all Schedule 2 drugs obtained and supplied by them in the Controlled Drugs (CD) register and when any Schedule 2 CD stock is destroyed, the register must state the particulars of the date of destruction and the quantity destroyed and must be signed by the authorised person in whose presence the drug is destroyed. It is good practice for a spillage of a Schedule 2 liquid to be witnessed by another member of staff.

The following guidance is intended to help you with recording instances of methadone and other Schedule 2 liquid spillages and which individuals should be notified of such an event:

Methadone bottle damaged in transit from supplier:

If you receive damaged stock, notify the supplier (e.g. AHH, Unichem etc) by telephone at the first opportunity. Annotate the picking list, delivery note or invoice to record that the item was received in a damaged condition before signing to acknowledge receipt. Pharmacists must still make entries in the Receipt section of the CD register as usual. If the CD is unrecoverable, make a footnote in the CD register stating that the item was received damaged. Notify your local Accountable Officer at the Health Board of the breakage.*

Methadone bottle broken by a patient:

Carefully clean up the spillage with paper towels, taking care to avoid direct contact with any broken glass and record as a patient return in the Patient Return Register. The methadone-soaked towels need to be denatured in a CD denaturing kit, with this destruction witnessed by another member of staff (record the destruction in the Patient Returned Controlled Drugs Register). **A new prescription will need to be sourced from the prescriber for a further legal supply to be made to the patient.** Notify your local Accountable Officer at the Health Board of the breakage*

Methadone spilled or bottle broken by a member of staff:

Carefully absorb the spillage with paper towels (as above). Store the methadone-soaked towels inside a plastic bag in the CD cabinet (and within a suitably sized cardboard box if necessary for protection against glass shards) until an authorised witness is available to witness the destruction – make a note on a label: “Evidence of spillage / breakage dated..... awaiting destruction by authorised witness”. Notify your local Accountable Officer of the spillage and to arrange for an appropriate person to witness the destruction*. Determine the volume of methadone spilled as accurately as possible and enter this quantity in the Supplied column of the methadone register; ensure this is signed by a witness and the person who caused the methadone loss and adjust the balance accordingly. Annotate with a footnote: “Evidence in CD cabinet awaiting destruction” and also record when the Accountable Officer was notified.

***NHS Lothian’s Accountable Officer should be notified by sending an email detailing the circumstances to: judie.gajree@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk**

An Accountable Officer’s Log Number will be issued and the corresponding entry in the CD register should be annotated with this number. This highlights to the GPhC Inspector, CDGT Inspector and relevant others that the matter has been reported to the Accountable Officer.

Note also:

- As with all incidents, pharmacies need to review their procedures and put actions in place to prevent re-occurrence where necessary

For any further advice, contact the Controlled Drug Governance Team on 0131 465 7833 or email ControlledDrugGovernance@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk