

Narcotic & Controlled Drug Storage Guidelines

Prompted by a query to the Office of Controlled Substances concerning the storage requirements for controlled substances, the response was that guidelines exist for hospital pharmacy (see document “Benzodiazepines and Other Targeted Substances” Part 4) but not for community pharmacies. The provincial regulatory body is now responsible for defining storage requirements.

Pharmacies should store narcotic and controlled drug products in the following manner:

1. If significant quantities of narcotic or controlled drug products are kept on hand, the bulk of these products should be kept in a safe or locked cabinet.
2. Narcotic or controlled drug products that are stored in open shelf areas should be dispersed with regular prescription inventory, rather than in one localized shelf area.

The intent of this directive is to prevent or minimize the loss of a significant quantity of product and increase the time necessary to collect the product in the event of a robbery, while not endangering staff faced with such a situation.

This directive does not prevent a pharmacy from choosing to store all narcotic and controlled drug products in a safe or locked cabinet.