



Strengthening Medication Safety in Long-term Care

## Model Policy 6 for Testing

To support LTC Homes in their review and updating of medication management policies

## Drug Destruction and Disposal

### **Purpose:**

This policy outlines the process for safe storage and destruction for both controlled and non-controlled medication waste in the Home to protect residents from ingestion of, or exposure to wasted or unused medications and to reduce the risk of diversion of medication waste by staff.

(See page 9 for Glossary of Key Terms)

### **Scope:**

This policy applies to all personnel involved in medication management processes and includes all medications (controlled and non-controlled), as well as natural health products, nutritional supplements, complementary medicine products, or traditional medicines. Surplus medications result from the following circumstances:

- Order discontinuation
- Resident death/discharge from the Home
- Expired medications
- Altered medications
- Unidentifiable medications
- Unlabelled, or illegibly labelled medications
- Medications ordered withdrawn from use due to a recall
- Medications for which their use is unknown, or the chain of custody is incomplete or unknown

Until the destruction and disposal process occurs, surplus medications must be safely and securely stored within the Home, separate from medications that are available for staff to access for administration to a resident.<sup>1,5</sup>

### **Overview of Process:**

Drug destruction and disposal involves the leadership, the registered staff, and the non-registered staff in the home. Policies and procedures are developed in accordance with the legislative requirements for the destruction and disposal of medications and the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that these policies and procedures are followed rests with the Director of Care.

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Medication Destruction Responsibilities

Provider	Controlled Medications	Non-Controlled Medications	Notes
Home leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides double-locked secure stationary storage containers only accessible to the Drug Destruction Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides secure storage containers for medications awaiting destruction and post destruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All medications for destruction are stored separately from medications for administration</li> <li>Container protects from accidental ingestion and misuse</li> <li>Audits process annually</li> </ul>
Nurse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removes medication from storage area and places in container for destruction with a second nurse</li> <li>Documents on the <i>Controlled Medication Destruction Log</i> the particulars of the medication deposited in container</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies medications requiring destruction</li> <li>Removes medication from storage area, removes packaging and places in destruction pail secured with lid in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process for destruction and disposal is dependent on type of medication i.e., controlled, or non-controlled</li> <li>medication storage area can be cart, medication room, refrigerator etc.</li> </ul>
Destruction Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removes waste medications from double-locked container</li> <li>Documents on the <i>Controlled Medication Destruction Log</i> the medication as the medication is matched with the log entries</li> <li>Removes medications from packaging</li> <li>places medication in destruction container and adds soapy water to make ingestion impossible/improbable</li> <li>Seals the pail and moves to locked staging area awaiting pick-up by medical waste destruction company</li> <li>Both parties document the destruction of each individual drug, the method of destruction, the date and time of destruction and the personnel completing the destruction on the <i>Controlled Medication Destruction Log</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once pail is full, nurse and one other staff member add enough soapy water to render the use of the medication improbable/impossible</li> <li>Seals the pail and moves to locked staging area awaiting pick-up by medical waste destruction company</li> <li>Both parties document the destruction of 1 pail of medications on the <i>Non-Controlled Medication Destruction Log</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Destruction Team for non-controlled medications is a nurse and one other staff member</li> <li>Destruction team for controlled medications is the DOC or designate and a physician or a pharmacist</li> <li>Staging area awaiting pick up must be locked</li> <li>Do not add fluids to the pail prior to the destruction process as this may result in off-gassing.</li> </ul>

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### The Home Leadership

1. Provides infrastructure related to waste medication storage including:
  - Locked medication rooms.
  - Secure storage containers for non-controlled medications awaiting destruction and post destruction.
    - The container must protect the contents from accidental ingestion or misuse.
  - Secure storage containers to store controlled substances awaiting destruction and post destruction. Prior to destruction:
    - The container must be in a double-locked storage area, separate from any controlled medications stored for administration.<sup>1</sup>
    - The contents must only be accessible by the Controlled Drug Destruction Team (see Glossary of Key Terms).<sup>1</sup>
    - The container itself must be secure and fixed to a stationary location.<sup>1</sup>
    - The container must protect the contents from accidental ingestion or misuse.
  - After destruction, the storage container must be sealed to ensure the contents are irretrievable and unusable (denatured).
2. Audits annually at minimum, the controlled and non-controlled medication waste disposal and destruction policy and procedures, and makes and documents improvements in the process where applicable<sup>5</sup>

### Nursing Staff and/or Pharmacy Representative

1. Regularly identifies medications requiring destruction including:
  - Medications discontinued by a prescriber
  - Medications discontinued due to the death of a resident
  - Medications discontinued due to the discharge of a resident from the home, and not sent with the resident
  - Expired medications
  - Altered medications
  - Unidentifiable medications
  - Unlabelled, unclearly, or illegibly labelled medications
  - Medications ordered withdrawn from use due to a recall
  - Medications for which the provenance is unknown or the chain of custody is incomplete or unknown
2. Determines whether the medication to be destroyed is **controlled or targeted** or **non-controlled**.



### **Controlled or Targeted Medications**<sup>3,4</sup>

#### **The Nurse**

- Identifies a controlled or targeted medication requiring destruction.
- With a second registered staff member, removes the controlled medication from the medication cart, refrigerator, controlled medication storage area, or other storage area.
- Documents the following on a *Controlled Medication Destruction Log*:
  - the date of removal of the drug from the drug storage area
  - the name of the resident for whom the drug was prescribed, where applicable
  - the prescription number where applicable
  - the medication's name, strength and quantity being destroyed
  - the reason for destruction
  - the initials of each of the staff members present
- Transports, along with the second registered staff member, the controlled substance to the secure container for destruction of controlled substances and deposits the controlled substances in the container.

#### **Controlled Medication Destruction Team**

- On a monthly basis, or sooner if the container is full, sets up a time to destroy controlled and targeted medications.
- As a team, opens the storage container and removes the contents for destruction.
- Documents on the *Controlled Medication Destruction Log* as each medication is matched with the form.
- Reviews the *Controlled Medication Destruction Log* for completeness and reconciles any discrepancies.
- Wearing gloves, removes the medication from the packaging to ensure proper destruction.
- Deposits the medication in a destruction pail designated for storing destroyed medications.
- Disposes of /Recycles the packaging as appropriate. Ensures all resident information is removed prior to disposal.
- Adds enough soapy water to the pail to render the use of the contents impossible/improbable.
- Seals the pail.
- Documents on the *Controlled Medications Destruction Log*:
  - The date when the drug was destroyed
  - The names of the Controlled Medication Destruction Team members
  - The manner of destruction
  - Co-signs, along with the Team members, the documentation as in item 3.
- Moves the pail to a secure staging area designated for pick-up by the waste disposal company in a separate area of the Home to where medications are being administered.

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### **Manner of Destruction**

A drug is considered destroyed/denatured when it is altered or denatured to such an extent that its consumption is rendered impossible or improbable.<sup>1</sup>

All medications identified for destruction must be destroyed of safely and securely and in an environmentally appropriate manner.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to remember to document the reason for destruction, the signature of the persons who destroyed the drug as well as the manner of destruction:

For example:

- Ampoules are broken and the contents emptied into a disposal container (broken ampoules placed in sharps container)
- Vials are opened and the contents emptied into a disposal container (open vials are placed in the sharps container)
- Patches are cut and adhered to a container or paper and placed in the destruction container
- Tablets/capsules covered with soapy water or crushed
- Oral liquids removed from original container
- Inhaler canister removed and nozzle placed in expired cream/ointment

### **Non-Controlled Substances**

#### **The Nurse**

- Identifies a non- controlled medication requiring destruction.
- Removes the non-controlled medication from the medication cart, refrigerator, medication storage area, or other storage area.
- Places the non-controlled medication in the secure container, with lid in place, for destruction of non-controlled substances.

#### **The Non-Controlled Medication Destruction Team (nurse plus one other staff member)**

- Once container is full, destroy medications with the addition of enough soapy water to render the use of the contents impossible/improbable.
- Seal the pail and immediately move it to the secure staging area for pick up by the waste disposal company.
  - Document on a *Non-controlled Medication Destruction Log* that the pail of non-controlled medications has been destroyed.



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### Destruction of Insulin

#### The Nurse

- Confirms the discontinuation order, expiry of the insulin, or discharge/death of the resident.
- Removes the insulin from the medication cart and/or refrigerator.
- Denatures the insulin, with a witness, by the end of the shift when the insulin was identified as surplus as follows:
  - Draw up/discharge the insulin into an empty container i.e., urine sample bottle.
  - Add dish soap to the container.
  - Close the container.
  
  - Using a permanent marker, mark the container to ensure further use is avoided.
  - Place the container in the drug destruction pail.

#### Notes:

- ✓ Glass containers must be disposed of in the sharps container.
- ✓ Insulin discharged directly into the destruction pail may cause off-gassing and this practice must be avoided.

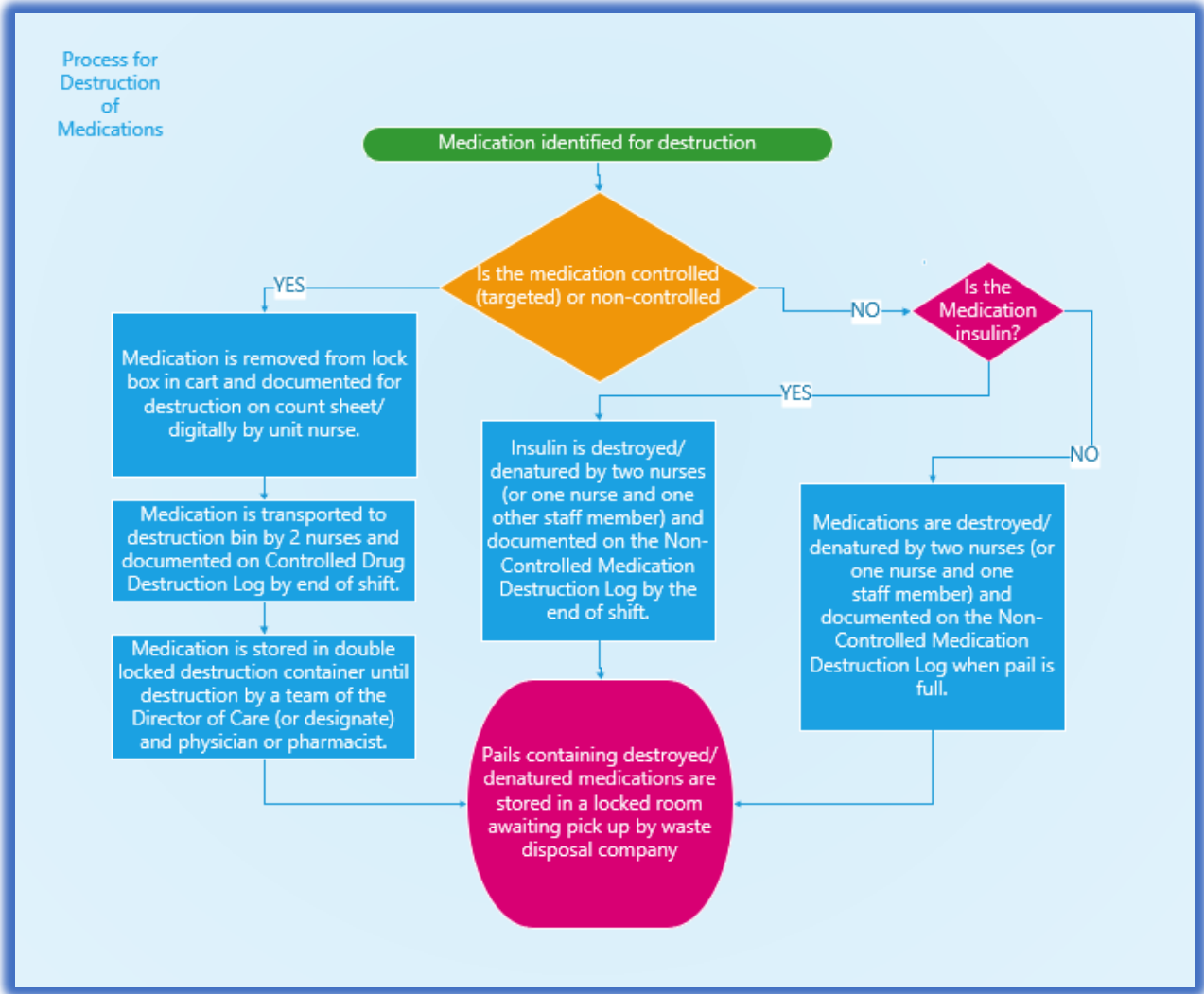
### Pharmacy Service Provider

- Periodically confirms leading practices related to medication disposal.
- Ensures Home policies and practices are concordant with up-to-date practices.
- Participates in all aspects of this policy.
- Participates as a member of the Controlled Medication Destruction Team, where determined by the Home.

**Note: For homes using Automated Dispensing Cabinets, please refer to Policy 7 for Drug Destruction Practices.**



Process Maps:



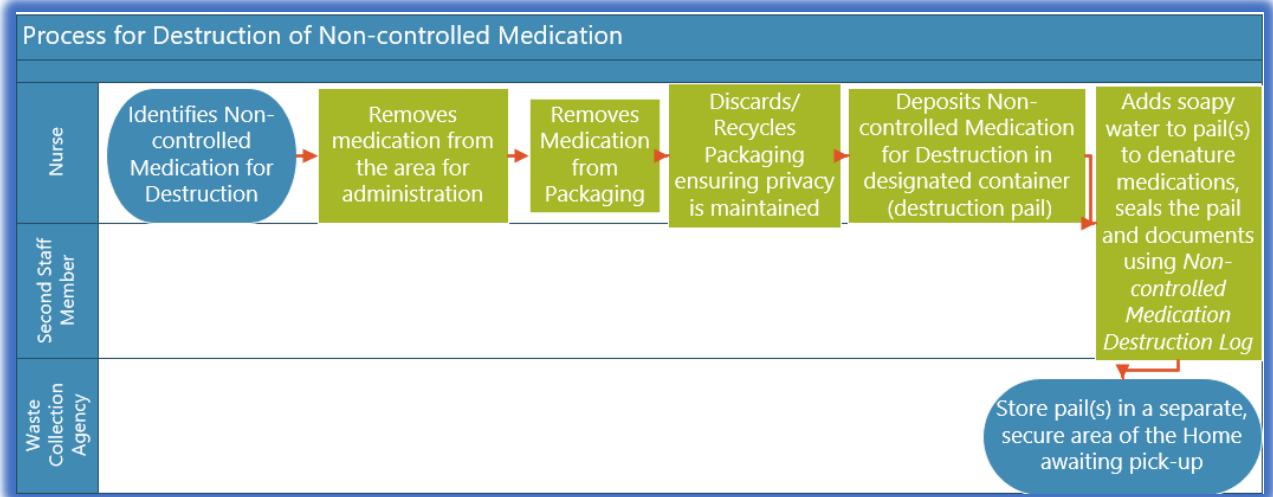
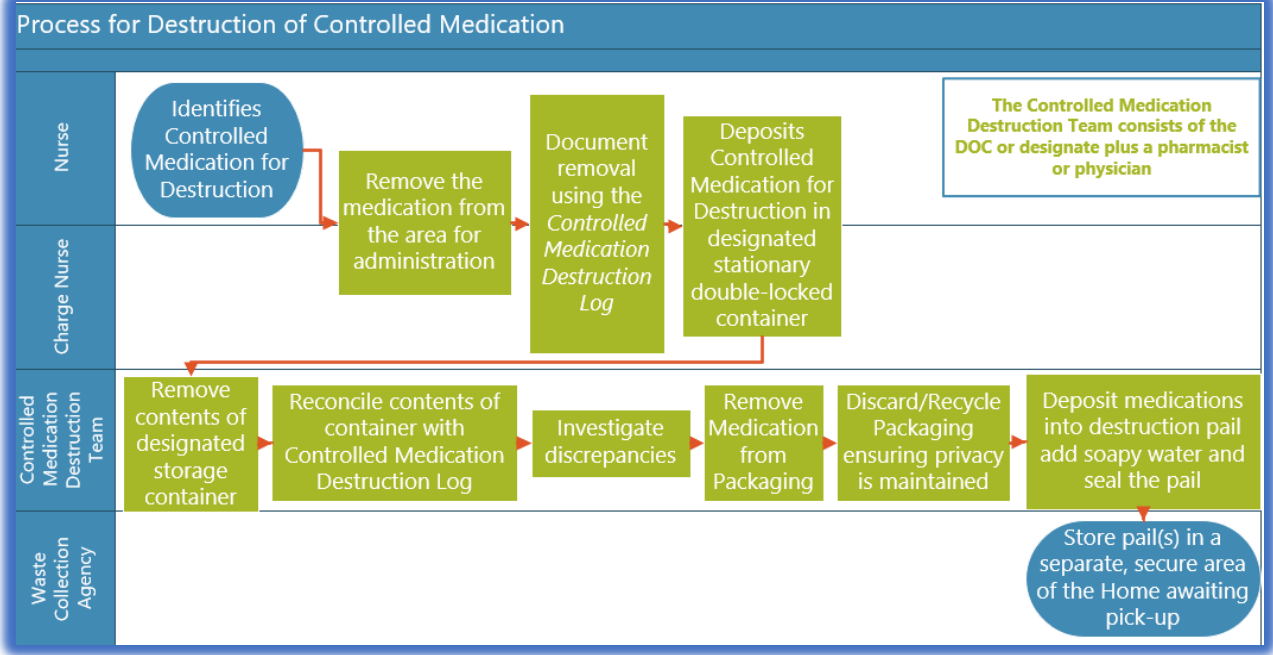
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## Glossary of Key Terms:

Term	Definition
Controlled Medications	All therapeutics approved for marketing in Canada by Health Canada that appear in the Schedules of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Typical examples from the nursing home context include opioids, amphetamine derivatives, cannabinoids. <sup>3</sup>
Non-controlled medications	All therapeutics approved for marketing in Canada by Health Canada that do not appear the Schedules of the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. These medications typically have a Drug Identification Number (DIN) or a Natural Product Number (NPN).
Targeted medications	Therapeutics as defined by the Home, that, although they may not be Controlled Medications, warrant treatment as Controlled Medications due to the potential risks of the drug.
Natural health products, nutritional supplements, complementary medicine products, or traditional medicines.	These therapeutic products encompass all other treatment modalities that are expected to have a physiologic effect. These may also include dietary supplements.
Drug Destruction	A drug is considered to be destroyed when it is altered or denatured to such an extent that its consumption is rendered impossible or improbable. <sup>1</sup>
Controlled Medication Destruction Log	A document that allows for documentation of the provenance, the chain of custody, and certification of destruction of a controlled substance by a nurse and a doctor or pharmacist.
Controlled Medication Destruction Team	Controlled substances must be destroyed by a team acting together made up of one member of the registered nursing staff appointed by the DONPC and a physician or pharmacist. This requirement is subject to any requirements that apply under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (Canada) or the Food and Drugs Act (Canada). <sup>1</sup>
Non-controlled Medication Destruction Log	A document that allows for documentation of the certification of destruction non-controlled medication by container by a nurse and one other staff member.
Non-controlled Medication Destruction team	Non-controlled substances are destroyed by a team acting together made up of one member of the registered staff and one other staff member.



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### References:

1. *Fixing Long-Term Care Act* <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r22246#BK161> Section 148
2. *OPA Best Practice Guidelines for Long-Term Care: Inspections of the Medication Management System, 2020* [cited 2021 Aug 24]. Available from: [www.opatoday.com](http://www.opatoday.com) (membership required)
3. *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (S.C. 1996, c. 19)*
  - Destruction of Narcotics, Controlled Drugs, and Targeted Substances:  
<https://www.ocpinfo.com/practice-education/practice-tools/fact-sheets/destruction/>
  - *Report of the Auditor General Ontario, 2009, Page 411-415*  
<https://www.auditor.on.ca/en/content/annualreports/arreports/en09/410en09.pdf>

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**Attachments**

**Appendix A – Controlled Medication Destruction Log**

**Controlled Medication Destruction Log**

**Home Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Unit:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**DOC/Nurse Destroying:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Pharmacist Destroying:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date of Destruction:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reason for Destruction:**

1. Discontinued
2. Deceased
3. Discharged
4. Expired
5. Altered
6. Unidentifiable
7. Packaging
8. Label Issue
9. Used patch
10. Recalled
11. Provenance Unknown
12. Other (specify)

**Manner of Destruction:**

1. Liquid added
2. Crushed
3. Patches cut
4. Inhaler nozzle dipped
5. Ampoules broken
6. Liquid removed from original container
7. Other (specify)

Date	Prescription Number	Resident Name	Medication Name	Medication Strength	Quantity Destroyed	Prescriber	Reason for Destruction (number)	Initials of Nurse 1 Removing from stock	Initials of Nurse 2 Removing from stock	Manner of Destruction	Initials of Member 1 of Destruction Team	Initials of Member 2 of the destruction Team

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Appendix

B – Non-Controlled Medication Destruction Log

**Non-Controlled Medication Destruction Log**

Date of Destruction	Manner of Destruction	Number of Pails Destroyed	Nurse's Initials	Nurse or other staff member

Manner of Destruction:

1. Liquid added
2. Crushed
3. Patches cut
4. Inhaler nozzle dipped
5. Ampoules broken
6. Liquid removed from original container
7. Other (specify)

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### Revision History:

Revision Number	Effective Date	Reason for Change	Version Number
1			
2			

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