

Safety Alert Broadcasting System

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Functional Sub group Corporate Administration - Governance
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Summary The Safety Alert Broadcasting System (SABS) Policy Directive provides information on a systematic approach to the distribution and management of important patient safety information to the NSW health system. The SABS consists of three documents (Safety Alert, Safety Notice, Safety Information) to provide health services with early warnings and/or notification of issues that may potentially affect patient safety and clinical quality.

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Applies to Area Health Services/Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporation, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations - Non Declared, Affiliated Health Organisations - Declared, Public Health System Support Division, Community Health Centres, Dental Schools and Clinics, NSW Ambulance Service, Public Hospitals

Audience All staff, including managers, clinicians and contractors

Distributed to Public Health System, Community Health Centres, Dental Schools and Clinics, Divisions of General Practice, Environmental Health Officers of Local Councils, Government Medical Officers, Health Associations Unions, Health Professional Associations and Related Organisations, NSW Ambulance Service, NSW Department of Health, Public Health Units, Public Hospitals, Private Hospitals and Day Procedure Centres, Private Nursing Homes, Subscriptions, Tertiary Education Institutes

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NSW HEALTH
Safety Alert Broadcast System (SABS)

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SAFETY ALERT BROADCAST SYSTEM (SABS)

1 INTRODUCTION

The NSW Department of Health, Quality and Safety Branch is made aware of issues affecting patient safety from a variety of sources. These include but are not limited to:

- Incident Information Management System (IIMS) incident notifications
- Reportable Incident Brief (RIB) information and Root Cause Analysis (RCA) reports
- Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) and Coroners reports
- Information from Health Services, the Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC), the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare, and other jurisdictions
- Safety alerts, product recalls and notices issued by organisations including the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), international authorities such as the US Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) and the UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

This Policy Directive outlines the NSW Department of Health's approach to the communication and management of statewide patient safety issues raised through these sources.

1.1 Purpose

The NSW Department of Health Safety Alert Broadcast System (SABS) is the mechanism to provide a systematic approach to the distribution of patient safety information to the NSW health system and includes a mechanism to ensure the required action and management of patient safety issues by health services.

The SABS includes three tiers of notifications to provide NSW health services with early warnings of issues, namely:

- Safety Alert
- Safety Notice
- Safety Information

1.2 Objectives

Objectives of the SABS is to:

- Provide a coordinated approach to the management and distribution of patient safety information within the NSW health service.
- Ensure that SABS notifications have been received by the Chief Executive of each health service and that appropriate distribution of the information occurs.
- Enable NSW health services to initiate risk management strategies and any required actions in response to SABS issued by the NSW Department of Health.
- Monitor NSW health service implementation of risk management strategies.
- Provide a mechanism to ensure the effectiveness of SABS.

1.3 Scope

This Policy Directive applies to patient safety information distributed by the NSW Department of Health that has statewide implications for patient safety from sources including, but not limited to, Reportable Incident Briefs (RIBs), Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC), Coroner's Reports and Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

The SABS policy does not apply to:

- Public health alerts issued by the Chief Health Officer (CHO) about environmental health issues, food safety, or consumer products or public health events related to communicable diseases such as SARS or pandemic influenza; and
- Corporate alerts relating to areas such as equipment (other than medical devices), power supply and information technology.
- WorkCover alerts and notices.

The Policy Directive outlines the safety notifications covered under this policy and describes the responsibilities of NSW health services in response to safety information.

For the purposes of this policy, the term "health services" refers to Public Health Organisations and the Ambulance Service of NSW.

Private Hospitals and Day Procedure Centres should review the information provided in SABS and implement action as appropriate to ensure patient safety.

2 RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTION

2.1 NSW Department of Health, Quality & Safety Branch is responsible for:

- Assessment of information received and production of SABS document,
- Distribution of SABS notifications to NSW health services in a timely manner,
- Provision of Safety Alerts to Corporate Governance and Risk Management Branch for incorporation into the Policy Directive System,
- Monitoring statewide implementation of requested actions,
- Providing reports to the Reportable Incident Review Committee (RIRC) on compliance of mandatory actions with SABS, and
- Reviewing the SABS Policy Document in accordance with [PD2005_481](#), Policy, Guideline and Information Bulletin Distribution System for the NSW Department of Health.

2.2 Chief Executives are responsible for establishing an efficient and effective process for:

- Receipt, distribution, implementation and effectiveness for SABS notifications,
- Ensuring distribution of SABS notifications to the appropriate people within the health service, and
- Acknowledging receipt of SABS Safety Alerts within 2 working days.

2.3 Directors of Clinical Governance are responsible for:

- Ensuring implementation of nominated action/s, where relevant, and
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the SABS within the health service.

2.4 Clinical Excellence Commission is responsible for:

- Evaluation of compliance with SABS using the Quality Systems Assessment (QSA) Program.

3 SABS NOTIFICATIONS

The SABS notifications provide a systematic three-tiered approach to the distribution, prioritisation and management of patient safety information. This includes a standardised system for monitoring the implementation of required actions by health services.

The three notifications issued under the SABS use the following colour coding to indicate the level of urgency.

1. **Safety Alert** (red)
2. **Safety Notice** (amber)
3. **Safety Information** (green)

Refer to Appendix A.

3.1 Safety Alert

The aim of the **Safety Alert** is to quickly disseminate information to health services about a safety matter needing **immediate attention and action**. The Safety Alert will specify **mandatory** action/s to be taken by health services and the timeframes in which such actions should occur and assign responsibility for action. The colour coding for Safety Alerts is **RED**. This Alert takes precedence over any contrary policy/procedure/guideline contained in a Policy Directive or Guideline. On receipt of a Safety Alert, health services are to ensure local policies/procedures/guidelines comply with the information contained therein.

3.2 Safety Notice

The aim of the **Safety Notice** is to inform health services about potential quality and safety issues requiring **risk assessment at the local level** to determine appropriate action/s regarding any identified problems. The colour coding for Safety Notices is **AMBER**.

3.3 Safety Information

The aim of the **Safety Information** is to disseminate quality and safety information to health services to ensure lessons learned from statewide, national and international sources are shared across the NSW health system in an active manner. The Safety Information may include items such as updates on statewide initiatives implemented under the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program, information about Policy Directives and Guidelines and access to the most current information focusing on clinical quality and patient safety issues and research. The colour coding for Safety Informations is **GREEN**.

Table 1 provides an easy guide to health service responsibilities for receipt and management of a SABS notification.

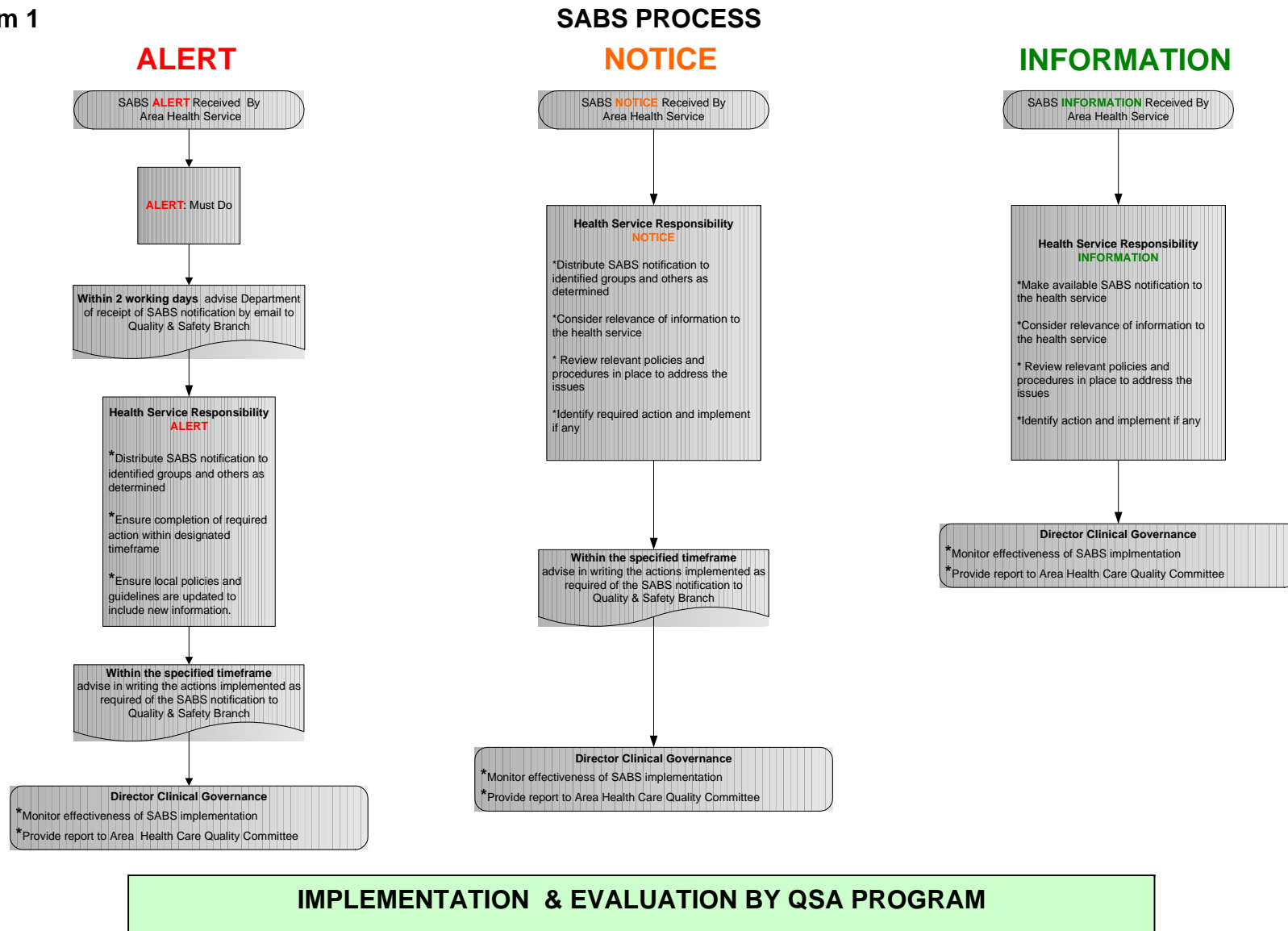
Diagram 1 is a diagrammatic chart of the SABS process.

Table 1: Easy Guide To Safety Alert Broadcast System Notifications: Health Service Responsibilities

SABS document	Aim	Distribution strategy*	Health service response on receipt of SABS document
<p>Safety Alert</p>	<p>Alerts the health service to a safety matter needing <u>immediate attention and mandatory action.</u></p> <p>The colour coding for Safety Alerts is RED.</p>	<p>The Department distributes SABS to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Chief Executive; and the officer responsible for designated action/s (indicated on the SABS) <p>The health service distributes SABS to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> staff identified in the Alert; and other relevant staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge receipt within 2 working days Ensure completion of required action/s within designated timeframe Ensure local policies and guidelines are updated to include new information if required. Submit required responses to the Quality & Safety Branch within the designated timeframe at QUALITY@doh.health.nsw.gov.au
<p>Safety Notice</p>	<p>Informs health services about potential quality and safety issues requiring <u>risk assessment at the local</u> level to determine appropriate action regarding any identified problems.</p> <p>The colour coding for Safety Notices is AMBER.</p>	<p>The Department distributes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Chief Executive; and the officer responsible for suggested action/s (indicated on the SABS) <p>The health service distributes SABS to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> staff identified in the Notice; and other relevant staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider relevance of information to the health service Review relevant policies and procedures in place to address the issues Identify required action/s and implement Submit required responses to Quality & Safety Branch within the designated timeframe at QUALITY@doh.health.nsw.gov.au
<p>Safety Information</p>	<p>Disseminates quality and safety news to health services to ensure lessons learned are shared across health services. May include updates on initiatives implemented under the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program, information about policy directives and guidelines and provide access to the latest information and research focusing on clinical quality and patient safety.</p> <p>The colour coding for Safety Informations is GREEN.</p>	<p>The Department distributes to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Chief Executive and the Director of Clinical Governance. <p>The health service ensures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the availability of Safety Information to all staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider relevance of the information to health service Identify any action/s and implement (if any).

*All SABS Notifications are available on the Department's website at: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs>

Diagram 1



4 DISTRIBUTION OF SABS NOTIFICATIONS TO AREA HEALTH SERVICES

The Director, Clinical Quality and Patient Safety, Quality and Safety Branch will ensure that the SABS notification is distributed by the following processes:

1. Email to all Chief Executives
2. Copy of the email to each Chief Executive nominated person
3. Copy of email to all Directors of Clinical Governance
4. Copy of email to position assigned responsibility for action in the SABS document
5. Copy of email to Director, Private Health Care Branch for distribution to licensed private health care facilities
6. Copy of email to Clinical Excellence Commission
7. Copy of email to Corporate Governance and Risk Management Branch
8. Copy of email to Executive Support Unit.

Available on the Department's website <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs>

4.1 Distribution of Safety Alerts out of normal business hours

The Department will contact the Chief Executive by telephone should there be need to disseminate a Safety Alert or an emergency drug recall out of business hours. The distribution of the formal Safety Alert will be on the first day of the Department's normal business hours.

4.2 Health Service Distribution of SABS notifications

Each SABS notification will include a recommended distribution list for use by the NSW Department of Health. Health services are responsible for ensuring an internal distribution strategy within the health service.

4.3 Health Services request for response from SABS notification

When health services are required to respond back to the Department then it is the **responsibility of the Chief Executive** of the health service to ensure that:

- responses back (where requested) are received within the stipulated timeframe.
- a system is developed so that only **one** response from each health service of the SABS notification is returned back to the Department.

The response should be emailed to Quality & Safety Branch at QUALITY@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

4.4 Health service responsibility for actions arising from SABS notification

When Area Health Services are required to take action resulting from a SABS

notification then it is the **responsibility of the Director of Clinical Governance** to ensure that:

- the nominated actions have been implemented in the stated timeframe.
- a written response has been returned to the Department (where requested) of the actions taken arising from the SABS notification.

The response should be emailed to Quality and Safety Branch
QUALITY@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

- the Directors of Clinical Governance are to report the implementation status of actions arising from SABS notifications to the Area Health Service Quality Committee.

4.5 Review of SABS Notifications

The Department's Corporate Governance and Risk Management Branch will review SABS notifications and organise the promulgation of new or revised policy directives / guidelines where the content of the SABS is considered to introduce a new policy directive or guideline or amend an existing policy directive or guideline. All Safety Alerts will have a mandatory review date consistent with other Policy Directives. This review establishes if the document remains active, requires updating or is obsolete.

The Department's Quality and Safety Branch will review and update all Safety Alerts and Notices as new information becomes available.

5 EVALUATION OF SABS

The Director of Clinical Governance is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the SABS at local level to ensure compliance with the CEC Quality Systems Assessment Program.

6 DEFINITIONS & TERMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

Area Health Services	Organisations constituted under the Health Services Act 1997 that are principally concerned with the provision of health services to residents within a designated geographic area.
CEC	Clinical Excellence Commission A board governed statutory health corporation established under the Health Services Act as part of the NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program (PSCQP). It builds on the foundation work carried out by the Institute of Clinical Excellence established in 2001.
Clinical Governance	Clinical governance can be considered as the responsibility of governing bodies to demonstrate sound strategic and

policy leadership in clinical safety and quality, to ensure appropriate safety and quality systems are in place and to ensure organisational accountability for safety and quality.

Department	NSW Department of Health.
DCG	Director, Clinical Governance.
HCCC	Health Care Complaints Commission.
Health Services	For the purposes of this policy, the term “health services” refers to Public Health Organisations and the Ambulance Service of NSW.
IIMS	Incident Information Management System.
IRR	Information Risk Rating
Private Hospital and Day Procedure Centres	Private health facilities licensed under the Private Hospitals and Day Procedure Centres Act 1988
Public Health Organisations (PHO)	This term refers to an area health service, statutory health corporations or an affiliated health organisation in respect of its recognised establishments and recognised services as defined in the Health Services Act 1997.
PSCQP	Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program (PD2005_608)
QSA	Quality Systems Assessment
RIB	Reportable Incident Brief
RCA	Root Cause Analysis
SABS	Safety Alert Broadcast System
TGA	Therapeutic Goods Administration

7 RELEVANT NSW HEALTH POLICY DIRECTIVES AND GUIDELINES AND REFERENCES

NSW Health Policy Directives and Guidelines

PD2005_481 Policy, Guideline and Information Bulletin Distribution System for NSW Department of Health

http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2005/PD2005_481.html

PD2005_608 NSW Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program

http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2005/PD2005_608.html

PD2005_609 Patient Safety and Clinical Quality Program Implementation Plan

http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2005/pdf/PD2005_609.pdf

PD2006_030 Incident Management Policy

http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2006/pdf/PD2006_030.pdf

PD2006_070 Lookback Policy

http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2006/PD2006_070.html

PD2006_069 Open Disclosure Guidelines

http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2006/pdf/PD2006_069.pdf

References

Department of Health Safety Alert Broadcasting System (UK) available at <http://www.info.doh.gov.uk/sar/cmopatie.nsf/> accessed 25 September 2006.

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) available at <http://www.mhra.gov.uk> accessed 25 September 2006.

National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA), available at <http://www.npsa.nhs.uk/advice> accessed. 25 September 2006




US Food and Drug Administration FDA available at <http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/safety.html> 25 September 2006.

UK Department of Health Estates Alerts, available at http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/EstatesAndFacilitiesManagement/EngineeringEnvironmentAndTechnology/EngineeringEnvironmentArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4120229&chk=8M4khe accessed 25 September 2006

Quality and Safety Branch Website available at <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/quality> or internally at <http://internal.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/>



8 APPENDIX A

8.1 Safety Alert Template

	
Safety Alert number	
<small>The actions specified are mandatory in accordance with NSW Health Policy Directive PD2006 xxx</small>	
	Title
date	supplementary heading <small>More, if necessary. Resize text box.</small>
Distributed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chief Executives•	Para style
Action required by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chief Executives• Directors of Clinical Governance• Directors of Clinical Operations•	Heading Para text text Heading Para text text.... <small>Adjust the text box as necessary.</small>
For response by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Directors of Clinical Governance•	
We recommend you also inform: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drug and Therapeutic Committees• Area Directors of Nursing• Area Directors of Pharmacy• Directors of Cancer Services• Pharmacists• Nurses• Medical staff	
Deadline for completion of action [date]	
Quality and Safety Branch NSW Department of Health Tel. 02 9391 9200 Fax. 02 9391 9556 Email quality@dob.health.nsw.gov.au www.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/register.html	Action required by Area Health Services <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. text text style step22. text text3. text text
<small>1 of 2</small>	

	NSW HEALTH
date	Safety Alert number
	<small>The actions specified are mandatory in accordance with NSW Health Policy Directive PD2006 xxx</small>
	Title
<p>Para style Heading Para text text Heading Para text text.... Adjust the text box as necessary.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 48px; opacity: 0.5; transform: rotate(-15deg);">template</p>
	<small>2 of 2</small>

8.2 Safety Notice

NSW HEALTH	
	Safety Notice number
date	Title
Distributed to:	
Action required by:	
For response by:	
We recommend you also inform:	
Deadline for completion of action	
Quality and Safety Branch NSW Department of Health Tel. 02 9391 9200 Fax. 02 9391 9556 Email quality@doh.health.nsw.gov.au www.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/register.html	Suggested Actions by Area Health Services
1 of 2	

NSW HEALTH

N

Safety Notice number


date

Title

template

2 of 2

8.3 Safety Information

	<p>NSW HEALTH</p> <p>Patient Safety Information number</p>
<p>date</p>	
<p>Distributed to:</p>	
<p>Quality and Safety Branch NSW Department of Health Tel. 02 9391 9200 Fax. 02 93919556 Email quality@doh.health.nsw.gov.au www.health.nsw.gov.au/quality/sabs/register.html</p>	<p>template</p>
	<p>1 of 2</p>

NSW HEALTH	
	Patient Safety Information number
date	Title
template	
2 of 2	