





# Safety Information 003/11

29 November 2011

**Distributed to:**

- Chief Executives
- Directors of Clinical Governance

**We recommend you also inform:**

- Directors of Clinical Operations
- Directors of Pharmacy
- Directors of Nursing and Midwifery

**Expert Reference Group**

Content reviewed by

- Medication Safety Expert Advisory Committee
- Clinical Excellence Commission
- NSW Therapeutic Advisory Group

**Clinical Safety, Quality and Governance Branch**

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## Safe Storage of Accountable Medicines (cont)

➤ **Review workflow**

- Single practitioners should not be accessing a hospital safe alone at any time
- Ensure two person checks can be performed with both people sighting original medication order at the time as selection and preparation of prescribed dose (two person check includes witnessed administration of dose and discarding of unused portion)
- Ensure oral /enteral dispensers are in use for oral liquids
- Check for clutter, review signage
- Add workbench underneath drug safes to reduce breakage
- Eliminate the location of waste bins from under drug safes to reduce losses

➤ **Labelling of shelves and products**

- Shelf labelling may be added including suggested order quantities
- Warning labels may be used for high risk preparations, applied to shelf labels and / or to individual products
- Use of Tall Man lettering for labelling

**Principles for Redesign – New Facilities and Renovations**

- Medication storage areas to be considered in the development or redevelopment of clinical areas for medication safety as well as routine storage/access requirements
- Review number of patients, patient case mix and therefore medication requirements which may inform different storage requirements
  - Increase size of drug safes routinely supplied – depending on the anticipated volume of medication to be stored.
  - To be used for accountable drugs, consider the footprint of automated drug cabinets and ensure they are secured as required under legislation. Ensure adequate bench space surrounding in a low traffic area.
  - Ensure safes are accessible without undue bending or reaching.
  - Ensure larger metal safes have floor reinforcement / supports.

**References**

1. Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) Guidance on the Interdisciplinary Safe Use of Automated Dispensing Cabinets 2011
2. ACSQHC National Tallman Lettering List 2011
3. NSW Health PD 2007\_077 Medication Handling in NSW Public Hospitals

**Recommended actions by Local Health Districts / Networks**

1. Ensure this safety Information is distributed to all relevant staff to ensure they are aware of the recommended steps to minimise risks.