

PHARMACY PRACTICE POLICY

Disposal of Confidential Patient Information

Introduction

Last year, the Council of the Nova Scotia College of Pharmacists approved a new policy on the Disposal of Confidential Prescription Information. Further to that policy, Council asked the Standards of Care Committee to develop a set of guidelines or "practice tips" for this disposal. Both the policy and the guidelines are listed below.

Policy

Effective immediately, all prescription files, patient medication profiles, personalized patient educational materials, unusable prescription labels/receipts and any other personalized documents must be destroyed on site by means of effective shredding, burning, or in the case of computer hard drives, erasure. Alternatively, arrangements may be made for off-site destruction by effective shredding or burning by a bonded document destruction service.

Guidelines ("Practice Tips")

1. Prescription files, patient profiles, personalized patient information, unused prescription labels, receipts, computer audits, confidential third party information: utilize on-site shredder, or utilize bonded document destruction service, or incinerate
2. Old prescription vials, jars, bottles, blister packs: return to the patient with the explanation that the information is confidential (patient can then dispose), or remove labels manually and destroy, or use black indelible marker to obliterate patient's name before disposing of container
3. Computer hard-drives, computer back-up diskettes, back-up tapes: erase hard drive utilizing assistance of vendor for verification of appropriate process erase or destroy diskettes