



Saskatchewan Health Authority

Policy

Saskatoon & Area - Occupational Health & Safety

Number: 51-003

Title: Chemical Hazard: Cytotoxic Drug Exposure

Saskatchewan Employment Act:

OHS Regulation: 31-5

Date: January 1, 2017

Date Revised/Reaffirmed: December 2, 2021

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Preamble

Cytotoxic Drugs inhibit or prevent function of cells and are manufactured, sold or represented for use in treating neoplastic or other conditions

Objective

To ensure that all SHA workers receive optimal follow-up, referral and education in the event of an exposure to Cytotoxic Drugs, this includes workers who prepare, administer, handle the drug or handle the materials and equipment contaminated with cytotoxic waste.

Definition

“**Cytotoxic drugs**” inhibit or prevent the function of cells and are manufactured, sold or represented for use in treating neoplastic or other conditions. Occupational exposures to cytotoxic drugs may occur through puncture of the skin, absorption through the skin, and contact with an eye, inhalation of drug dust/aerosols or ingestion of a contaminated substance. There is no “safe” exposure level to cytotoxic drugs

Roles and Responsibilities

Employer must ensure:

- Practicable steps are taken to minimize the exposure of workers to cytotoxic drugs or to materials or equipment contaminated with cytotoxic drugs
- A written program developed to protect the health and safety of workers who may be exposed to cytotoxic drugs or to materials or equipment with cytotoxic drugs
- Where workers prepare parenteral cytotoxic drugs on a frequent and continuing bases, the employer must provide and maintain an approved biological safety cabinet (BSC) and ensure it is used safely
- Appropriate waste containers for cytotoxic waste is available
- Personal Protective Equipment is readily available to all workers

Manager/Supervisor must ensure:

- That roles and responsibilities of all workers are being met, as well as applicable legislation and/or standards
- Safe work procedures are written and followed
- Safety devices are used as per guidelines
- Cytotoxic drugs are disposed of in an appropriate waste container (red bags)

- Preparation of parenteral cytotoxic drugs should be done in a Biological Safety Cabinet
- Appropriate PPE is provided, used and maintained: gloves, protective gown, eye protection and appropriate respirator (decontaminating a BSC with the sash raiser, when cleaning up a cytotoxic spill or preparing cytotoxic drugs outside of an approved BSC)

Worker must ensure:

- They dispose of cytotoxic drugs in appropriate waste container (red bags)
- Preparation of parenteral cytotoxic drugs should be done in a Biological Safety Cabinet
- Appropriate PPE is used and maintained: gloves, protective gown, eye protection and appropriate respirator (decontaminating a BSC with the sash raiser, when cleaning up a cytotoxic spill or preparing cytotoxic drugs outside of an approved BSC)
- All processes and policies to maintain preventative and protective measures against an exposure is adhered to
- They report to their supervisor and the Safety Alert System/Incident Report Line any incidents or near misses involving cytotoxic drug exposure

Orientation & Training

- Training in how to identify, store, prepare, administer, handle, use, transport and dispose of cytotoxic drugs and materials contaminated with cytotoxic drugs
- Education and training on how to clean up a cytotoxic spill

Materials

- Nursing Practice Policy and Procedure

Non-Compliance/Breach:

Non-compliance with this policy will result in a review of the incident. A review for non-compliance may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or privileges; fines and /or prosecution of individuals under the Saskatchewan Employment Act and OHS Regulations.

Resources

- [SHR Nursing Manual: Chemotherapy drugs for non-cancer treatment; Administration & Precautions](#)
- [OHS Saskatchewan \(June 2007\) Cytotoxic Drugs](#)

Review Dates:

January 1, 2017

May 14, 2018

December 2, 2021