Controlled Drug Factsheet 13

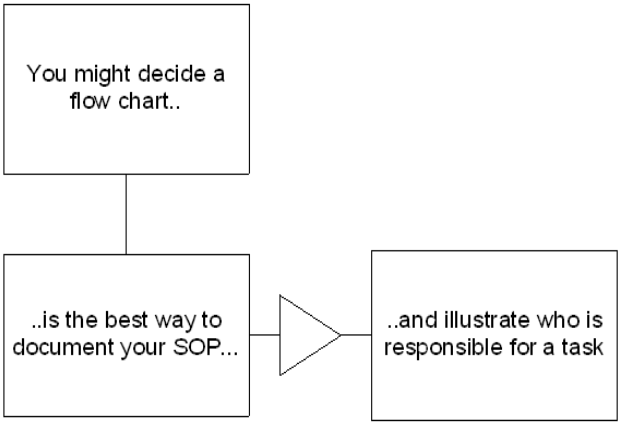
Standard Operating Procedures

Standard operating procedures (SOPs) for activities relating to CDs are a requirement of The Controlled Drugs (Supervision of Management and Use) Regulations 2013.

A SOP is a set of step-by-step instructions created by a business to help workers carry out routine operations. The purpose of a SOP is to achieve efficiency, quality output and uniformity of performance, while reducing miscommunication and failure to comply with regulations.

A SOP should not be confused with a policy or guidance.

Think of a SOP as a cake recipe, instructions for setting up your new TV or assembling flat pack furniture.
SOPs are useful tools for training new staff and guiding staff through potentially unfamiliar tasks.
SOPS protect the practice, staff and patients by detailing what tasks need doing by who and how.



Icons can be used where extra caution is required, an action is legally prohibited, or information needs to be imparted or acquired.

- Bullet points are an excellent way to break down complex processes into manageable bite size pieces.

As a rule, SOPs should:

- Cover accountability, and roles and responsibility of named individuals, who can or can't complete the operation. Consider experience, competence and qualifications.
- Be short and to the point, e.g. one side A4 per task.
- **But also pedantically detailed and specific.**
- **They should not be open to interpretation.**
- Be read and signed by all staff - including non-clinical staff and volunteers, e.g. home delivery driver.
- Have appropriate review and expiry dates.
- Be reviewed at least every two years or after significant events.

Compliance/adherence to SOPs should be audited as part of the review process and deviation from SOPs should be documented.

Most errors reported to the CDAO are caused by a failure to follow a SOP or a failure of the SOP itself.

As a minimum, ensure you have CD SOPs for:
Ordering, receiving, storing, balance checks and reconciliation, clinical check and monitoring the patient, dispensing and checking, handing out, patient returns, expired stock, dealing with errors, incidents and concerns, contacting the CDAO.

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