

Australian/New Zealand Standard™

Handling and destruction of drugs

AS/NZS 4757:2002

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The following are represented on Committee HE-006:

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Australian Customs Service (Commonwealth)
Australian Federal Police
Australian Government Analytical Laboratories
Commonwealth Department of Health & Ageing
Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions
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New Zealand Police
N.S.W. Police Service
National Crime Authority
Pharmaceutical Society of New Zealand
Queensland Police Service
South Australia Police
Victoria Police
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Department of Public Prosecutions, W.A.
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PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Joint Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand Committee HE-006, Handling and Destruction of Drugs. It stems from a need, expressed by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department (Australia), for a Standard on destruction of drugs.

The objectives of this Standard are—

- (a) to establish an Australian and New Zealand Standard for the seizure, handling, storage, disposal and destruction of drugs and drug related materials;
- (b) to ensure the transparency and integrity of the process followed by the relevant authorities on seizure, handling, storage, disposal and destruction of drugs and drug related materials; and
- (c) to provide a procedure for handling and destruction of drugs, for the use of law enforcement agencies and regulatory agencies including Federal, State and Territory police services of Australia, the Australian Customs Service, forensic laboratories of Australia, the Therapeutic Goods Administration of Australia, New Zealand Ministry of Health, New Zealand Customs Service, the New Zealand Police and Institute of Environmental Science and Research Ltd and private contractors acting with the lawful authority of a relevant agency.

The term 'normative' has been used in this Standard to define the application of the appendix to which it applies. A 'normative' appendix is an integral part of a Standard.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
FOREWORD.....	5
SECTION 1 SCOPE AND GENERAL	
1.1 SCOPE.....	6
1.2 APPLICATION	6
1.3 DEFINITIONS.....	6
1.4 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES	7
SECTION 2 SEIZING	
2.1 DRUGS SEIZURE.....	9
2.2 SEPARATING SEIZED ITEMS.....	9
2.3 BEFORE HANDLING DRUGS AND DRUG RELATED MATERIALS	9
2.4 PRECAUTIONS FOR HANDLING DRUGS AND DRUG RELATED MATERIALS	9
2.5 CONTAINERS	9
2.6 SEALING AND LABELLING	10
2.7 RE-SEALING	10
2.8 ISSUE OF RECEIPT	10
SECTION 3 TRANSPORT	
3.1 VEHICLES AND RELATED EQUIPMENT FOR TRANSPORTATION	11
3.2 STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS	11
3.3 TRANSPORT SERVICE PROVIDERS	11
3.4 SECURITY.....	11
SECTION 4 STORING DRUG SEIZURES	
4.1 DUTIES OF THE SEIZING OFFICER	12
4.2 SECURE STORAGE	12
4.3 DUTIES OF THE DRUG STORAGE OFFICER.....	12
SECTION 5 SAMPLING	
5.1 REASONS FOR SAMPLING.....	13
5.2 SAMPLES	13
5.3 TAKING OF SAMPLES	13
5.4 IDENTIFYING SAMPLES	13
SECTION 6 RELEASE OF DRUGS AND DRUG RELATED MATERIALS	
6.1 GENERAL.....	14
6.2 CONTINUITY RECORDS	14
6.3 RETURN OF RELEASED DRUG SEIZURE.....	14
SECTION 7 DISPOSAL AND DESTRUCTION	
7.1 HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY	15
7.2 PRE-TRIAL DISPOSAL OR DESTRUCTION	15
7.3 NO FURTHER ACTION SEIZURES.....	15
7.4 DRUGS SEIZURES OTHERWISE RETAINED.....	15
7.5 PRE-DISPOSAL OR PRE-DESTRUCTION CHECKS	15
7.6 DISPOSAL AND DESTRUCTION PROCEDURES.....	15
7.7 COMPLETION OF DISPOSAL OR DESTRUCTION RECORD	15

SECTION 8 AUDITING

8.1	INTERNAL AUDITING	16
8.2	AREAS TO BE AUDITED.....	16
8.3	EXTERNAL AUDITING	16

APPENDICES

A	OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY	17
B	STANDARDS, CODES AND LEGISLATION	20

FOREWORD

This Standard has been developed to provide the New Zealand and Australian Governments and other authorized agencies with procedures to minimize the harm associated with the handling, storage and disposal or destruction of drug seizures. The procedures are designed to be applicable in the broadest range of circumstances.

While the Standard has been written for the use of professionals working in this field, the procedures are intended to protect the health and safety of the entire community, reinforce community confidence in the actions of the authorities and meet the needs of the courts in each jurisdiction. In addition to procedures and practical considerations, the Standard also outlines basic principles such as integrity and accountability, security, and continuity of evidence.

Drugs and drug related materials are among the most potentially hazardous substances that law enforcement and regulatory agencies have to handle and store. For example, substances found at clandestine drug laboratories may be toxic, corrosive, volatile, flammable explosive and carcinogenic. It is essential that procedures established for all professionals and agencies working in this field reflect health and safety issues and are structured so that the relevant health and safety standards and legislation can be applied (see Appendix A).

Drugs and drug related materials require the use of secure storage facilities and transparent rigorous accountability practices. Clearly, it is not in the interests of the community or the responsible agencies to store drug seizures for long periods of time. To reduce some of the associated risks and costs, the Standard advocates wherever practical, the taking of samples and destroying or disposing of the remainder of seizures before trial. The legislative requirements for sampling and pre-trial destruction will have to be considered by each jurisdiction.

Ultimately all jurisdictions must meet a range of legislative requirements in relation to drug seizures and this Standard is designed to complement those requirements.

STANDARDS AUSTRALIA/STANDARDS NEW ZEALAND

Australian/New Zealand Standard
Handling and destruction of drugs

SECTION 1 SCOPE AND GENERAL

1.1 SCOPE

This Standard provides a generic procedure for the seizure, handling, storage, disposal and destruction of drugs and drug related materials for law enforcement purposes.

This Standard does not cover the mechanisms of various drug destruction techniques, for example, the details of incineration or mulching.

1.2 APPLICATION

This Standard covers the handling and destruction of drugs and drug related materials in the following circumstances:

- (a) Seizure.
- (b) Transport.
- (c) Storage.
- (d) Analysis.
- (e) Release for use in training and other approved programs.
- (f) Disposal and destruction.

1.3 DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Standard, the definitions below apply.

1.3.1 Agencies

Law enforcement, regulatory and forensic agencies including Federal, State and Territory police services of Australia, the Australian Customs Service, forensic laboratories of Australia, the Therapeutic Goods Administration of Australia, New Zealand Ministry of Health, New Zealand Customs Service, the New Zealand Police and Institute of Environmental Science and Research Ltd and private contractors acting with lawful authority.

1.3.2 Auditing

A process by which the integrity of the overall seizure, handling, storage and disposal or destruction of drug seizures is assessed.

1.3.3 Certificate of analysis

A certificate issued by a person authorized under relevant legislation that is admissible as *prima facie* evidence of the matters in the certificate.