



Operation of Needle and Syringe Programs Procedure

This procedure applies to the operation of Needle and Syringe Programs (NSP) provided by the WA Country Health Service in the Pilbara region, including the following services:

West Pilbara	East Pilbara	Inland
Karratha Health Campus, Karratha <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Department Pilbara Population Health Needle and Syringe Vending Machine (NSVM) 	Hedland Health Campus, South Hedland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Department Pilbara Population Health 	Newman Hospital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Department
Roebourne Hospital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Department 		Tom Price Hospital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Department
Onslow Hospital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Department 		Paraburdoo Hospital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Department
		Marble Bar Nursing Post

1. Related Documents

This procedure is underpinned by the existing WA Health:

- OD0553/14 [Provision of Sterile Needles and Syringes from Rural and Regional Hospitals to People Who Inject Drugs](#)
- OD0554/14 [The Operation and Maintenance of Needle and Syringe Vending Machines \(NSVM\)](#)

2. Aim of the Needle and Syringe Program

The aim of WACHS Pilbara NSPs is to reduce harm and minimise the spread of Hepatitis C, Hepatitis B and HIV among people who inject drugs and the wider community.

3. Person or Class of Persons Operating the Program

Needles and syringes are to be distributed and information disseminated by the administration staff, registered nurses, and any health workers on duty.

4. Hours of Operation

WACHS Pilbara NSP operating hours are as follows:

Needle and Syringe Program (NSP)	Operating Hours
Karratha Health Campus	
Emergency Department	Monday – Friday 4.00pm – 8.00am Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays 24 hours per day
Pilbara Population Health	Monday – Friday (excluding Public Holidays) 8.00am – 4.00pm
Needle and Syringe Vending Machine (NSVM)	Sunday – Saturday, 24 hours per day
Roebourne Hospital	
Emergency Department	Sunday – Saturday, 24 hours per day
Onslow Hospital	
Emergency Department	Sunday – Saturday, 24 hours per day
Hedland Health Campus	
Emergency Department	Monday – Friday 4.30pm – 8.00am Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays 24 hours per day
Pilbara Population Health	Monday – Friday (excluding Public Holidays) 8.00am – 4.30pm
Marble Bar Nursing Post	
Marble Bar Nursing Post	Monday – Friday (excluding Public Holidays) 8.00am – 12.00pm and 1.00pm – 5.00pm
Newman Hospital	
Emergency Department	Sunday – Saturday, 24 hours per day
Tom Price Hospital	
Emergency Department	Sunday – Saturday, 24 hours per day
Paraburdoo Hospital	
Emergency Department	Sunday – Saturday, 24 hours per day

5. Ordering and Distribution of Needles and Syringes

All WACHS Pilbara NSPs are to distribute needles and syringes as a packaged product (FITSTICK®), as supplied by the Department of Health, with the exception of the Needle and Syringe Vending Machine located at Karratha Health Campus, which dispenses FITSTICK® and FITSTICK Plus Pack 3® products.

A summary of product contents is provided below:

FITSTICK®	5 x needles and syringes (BD 29G 1mL) 5 x disposal receptacles
FITSTICK Plus Pack 3®	3 x needles and syringes (BD 29G 1mL) 3 x disposal receptacles 3 x 2mL water ampoules 3 x plastic spoons 3 x alcohol swabs 3 x cotton balls

As part of all the packaged products dispensed across WACHS Pilbara NSPs, a disposal receptacle accompanies the distribution of every needle and syringe.

NSP Site Coordinators and staff should plan to order additional stock prior to current supplies running out, to ensure that sufficient stock is available to provide a reliable and uninterrupted service.

To order additional stock for all WACHS Pilbara NSPs apart from the Needle and Syringe Vending Machine, an email is to be sent to the [Sexual Health and Blood-borne Virus Program](#).

In the email, state the:

- site contact person's name
- site's physical address details for supplies to be couriered
- number of boxes required*

* Please note that the minimum order is 1 box. Each box contains 100 fit packs. There are 5 needles and syringes, and 5 individual disposal receptacles in each fit pack.

Ordering of FITSTICK Plus Pack 3® products for the Needle and Syringe Vending Machine at Karratha Health Campus is undertaken by the Nursing Support Officer, or in their absence, the Executive Assistant. The Vending Machine is restocked and funds retrieved by Nursing staff, as directed by the After Hours Clinical Nurse Manager, when required.

6. Cost of Needles and Syringes to the Client

Where sterile needles and syringes are provided free of charge by the Department of Health, they are to be provided at no costs to clients of the NSP.

The cost to clients for the FITSTICK Plus Pack 3® products, as distributed through the Needle and Syringe Vending Machine at the Karratha Health Campus is \$3.00.

Any funds from donations received through the program is to be accounted for in accordance with government accounting policies and procedures and is to be used to improve service delivery. For example, funds might be used to purchase swabs and sterile water for distribution to clients.

7. Return of Loose Needles and Syringes

The provision of needles and syringes via WACHS Pilbara NSPs is not contingent on the return of used needles and syringes.

NSP staff are expected to encourage clients to safely dispose of their used needles and syringes appropriately, and information to this effect should be made available to clients attending the NSP.

Occasionally, some clients may return used equipment to an NSP for safe disposal. The NSP cannot accept a used needle and syringe unless it has been fully exhausted (i.e. it contains no more than a residue of any drug).

In this instance, staff can:

- a) direct clients to an appropriate means of disposal (i.e. sharps disposal unit) or
- b) if appropriate, offer the use of a sharps disposal container.

Clients returning used needles and syringes must place these in an approved disposal receptacle. Staff are not to hold the container while the client is in the process of disposing of used needles and syringes.

Under no circumstances are NSP staff to directly handle used injecting equipment returned by clients.

8. Staff Education

NSP Site Coordinators are required under the *Poisons Regulations 1965* to ensure that all persons participating in the program (i.e. those providing the service) are appropriately instructed and understand its requirements.

All NSP staff are to be supported and encouraged to complete the NSP Online Orientation and Training Package available on [Capabili LMS](#), and additional training provided online from the [Mental Health Commission](#). In addition, staff are to read and be familiar with the guidelines and policies related to the NSP. Staff may also attend additional training in NSP provision offered within the region or through the Sexual Health and Blood-borne Virus Program.

Where training needs are identified, staff should seek the support of the NSP Regional Coordinator to assist with providing training that is imbedded with evidence based best practice strategies.

9. Workplace Safety

Staff are to be aware of relevant occupational health and safety (OSH) policies and procedures.

In the instance of inappropriately disposed equipment being found on site by staff, relevant workplace policies and procedures (for example, Safety Risk Reporting) is to be followed in regard to following up and arranging for disposal of the used equipment.

10. Monitoring and Evaluation Of Program

Under the *Poisons Regulations 1965*, NSP site coordinators are required to submit an annual report and provide details of the service to the Sexual Health and Blood-borne Virus Program. Annual reporting includes the number of referrals made and the type of information/resources distributed to clients.

NSP staff are responsible for recording the number of needles and syringes distributed and assisting with the collection of other basic information as requested. No record is to be made of client names or personal details.

Any NSP service issues are to be reported to the NSP Site Coordinator. NSP Site Coordinator is to attend to any issues emerging from the ongoing operation of the program and report to the NSP Regional Coordinator, and Sexual Health and Blood-borne Virus Program if required.

11. Client Confidentiality

All WA Health (including WACHS) employees are bound by the MP0124/19 [Code of Conduct](#) with regard to confidentiality.

All WACHS Pilbara NSP staff, regardless of their status or job role, are to respect and protect the confidentiality of their clients at all times and whenever possible, prevent this being compromised by others for whatever intent or purpose. Where possible, client confidentiality is to be supported by distributing injecting equipment in an unmarked paper bag.

12. Staff Attitude

NSPs are often the only point of contact that people who inject drugs have with a health service provider. The approach adopted by NSP staff towards clients will likely influence clients' receptivity to offers of information and future access to health services.

WACHS Pilbara NSP staff are to adopt an empathetic, respectful, non-judgemental approach to all clients.

13. Harm Reduction Brief Intervention

Providing harm reduction information to NSP clients may assist to reduce and prevent harms associated with injecting drug use for both the individual and the wider community.

WACHS Pilbara NSP staff are strongly encouraged to interact and build rapport with clients to create opportunities for the provision of harm reduction information and/or referral.

The practice of enclosing relevant print resources with any equipment distributed is encouraged. Resources may provide information on topics such as safe injecting practices, blood-borne viruses (Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV), blood-borne virus testing and treatment, appropriate disposal of injecting equipment or drug treatment and support options. NSP staff seeking suitable print resources to provide to NSP clients are encouraged to contact the NSP Regional Coordinator.

14. Client Referral

Referral of clients for blood-borne virus screening or to drug counselling and treatment agencies are only to be made at a client's request. When making a referral, NSP staff should involve the client and provide a range of options where possible. The final choice is to be left to the client.

15. Juvenile Access to the Program

The *Poisons Regulations 1965* refers to NSP clients only as “person”. That is, there is no limitation placed on the age at which a person may access or be denied access to an NSP. Staff are encouraged to interact with clients who appear to be juveniles to assess their level of knowledge in regards to injecting drug use and associated harms, and are to provide information and referral to youth drug services or other agencies as appropriate.

16. Access by Clients Undergoing Treatment Related to their Drug Use

It is not the responsibility of NSP staff to regulate clients' behaviour in terms of their drug use. Staff are to provide equipment to clients who are known to be on a pharmacotherapy program if refusal to do so is likely to pose a greater health risk to the client. Staff are to provide information to clients in regard to polydrug use and overdose prevention where appropriate.

17. Client Responsibilities

As with other health service clients, NSP clients may occasionally behave inappropriately for a range of reasons. Any disruptive incidents should be responded to and recorded in accordance with workplace risk management policies and procedures. Where necessary, staff may advise clients that disruptive behaviour, injecting in the proximity of the NSP, and inappropriate disposal may jeopardise the overall continuity of the program.

Clients are expected to respect the intention of the program as a harm reduction and illness prevention program. Activities by clients that jeopardise the program, including disruptive behaviour and injecting in close proximity to the NSP, are not to be accepted.

18. Helpful Contacts

Sexual Health and Blood-borne Virus Program

Communicable Disease Control Directorate
 Grace Vaughan House, 227 Stubbs Terrace, Shenton Park WA 6008
 Contact number: (08) 9388 4841
 Email: NSP@health.wa.gov.au

Pilbara Population Health

For provision of sexual health and blood-borne virus screening

Site	Address	Contact Number
Karratha Health Campus	62 Balmoral Road, Karratha	91447833
Roebourne Hospital	42-44 Hampton Street, Roebourne	9182 0241
Onslow Hospital	Second Avenue, Onslow	9184 3211
Hedland Health Campus	2 - 34 Colebatch Way, South Hedland	9174 1321
Newman Hospital	Mindarra Drive, Newman	9175 8380
Tom Price Hospital	Mine Road, Tom Price	9159 5222

19. Standards

[National Safety and Quality Health Care Standards](#)

Standard 1 – Governance for Safety and Quality in Health Service Organisations
 Standard 3 – Preventing and Controlling Healthcare Associated Infections

20. Related WA Health System Policies

OD0553/14 [Provision of Sterile Needles and Syringes from Rural and Regional Hospitals to People Who Inject Drugs](#)

OD0554/14 [The Operation and Maintenance of Needle and Syringe Vending Machines \(NSVM\)](#)

21. Policy Framework

[Public Health](#)

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