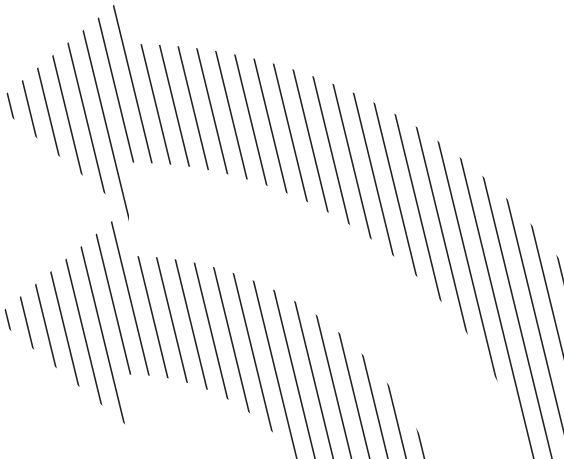


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# Needle Dispensing Machine Policy

## Introduction

This policy relates to the provision and operation of Needle Dispensing Machines (NDM) within the Queensland Needle and Syringe Program. This Policy replaces the previous protocol which governed the operation of NDMs in the pilot period.

NDMs have been proven to successfully increase Injecting Drug User (IDU) access to sterile Needles and Syringes with negligible impost on existing health services. As such they have demonstrated their value as an adjunct to the existing network of NSP providers.

## Supply of machines

Districts are not to purchase their own Needle & Syringe Dispensing Machines (NDM) or alter the machines provided by the Needle and Syringe Program Management Unit (NSPMU). All NDM remain the property of Queensland Health.

## Provision of machines as an adjunct to approved programs

NDM will only be provided by NSPMU to authorised needle and syringe programs (NSP). This means any site proposed for location of an NDM must be approved in accordance with NSPMU policy.

## Machines are provided as a program enhancement

NDM are to be available outside normal business hours (Mon - Fri, 8 am - 5pm) to cater for injecting drug users (IDU) without utilising scarce after-hours staffing resources. Accordingly, machines should be turned on at the close of business and turned off at the commencement of business hours.

In locations where it is not practical or possible to operate the NDM on an after-hours only basis (e.g. small rural locations with mechanical machines) the machine may remain operable throughout business hours, however it is a requirement that IDU continue to have access to free of charge needle and syringes during business hours within reasonable distance to the location of the NDM. Such arrangements shall be negotiated with NSPMU on a case by case basis.

### **Location**

NDM will be sited where they can be easily accessed by IDU without drawing undue attention to themselves.

### **Supervision**

NDM will be in an area discreetly supervised by remote camera or staff to ensure the integrity of the machines and the safety of clients.

### **Disposal facilities**

Safe disposal facilities capable of accepting dispensed sharps containers will be available to IDU in the immediate vicinity of dispensing machines.

### **Signage**

Signage should be placed on or adjacent to the machine specifying the operating hours of the local NSP, the operating hours of the NDM, and instructions regarding what to do in the event that the NDM is out-of-service. Other basic information may also be provided, such as the phone number for the Alcohol and Drug Information Service.

### **Stocking**

To ensure compliance with the Drugs Misuse Act, only persons or classes of persons authorised by the Minister for Health will place injecting equipment into the NDM.

### **Stock levels**

Authorised personnel will ensure that NDMs are stocked and re-stocked as necessary during periods of operation to ensure that the demands of clients are being met. Levels of demand over weekends and times of peak utilisation (e.g. coinciding with a local event) should be monitored and re-stocking practices planned accordingly.

### **Maintenance responsibility**

Basic maintenance tasks (e.g. unblocking machines) may be performed by local authorised personnel. Any more substantial maintenance matters should be promptly referred to NSPMU to ensure that NDM are inoperable for minimal periods of time. Costs incurred for repair callouts to be met by the district from revenues accruing from NDMs.

### **Machine failure**

A contingency plan for responding to NDM out-of-service occasions should be developed by the health service district to suit local circumstances. There should be clear written instructions on or adjacent to the machine advising clients what to do in the event of the machine being inoperable. The fundamental principle of the contingency plan is that any disruption to after-hours access should be minimised. The plan should be supported by NSPMU.

### **Fees**

A fee will be applicable to each NDM occasion of service. During normal hours of operation, NSP clients should be informed about the availability of the NDM and the need to have the correct fee for service.

### **Fee setting**

NSPMU will determine the fee to be levied for each occasion of service and will ensure that each NDM collects this fee.



### Receipts

Appropriate local policy is to be followed for the collection, receipt and dispersal of funds collected from NDMs. 50% of revenues generated by NDMs will be returned to the Division of the Chief Health Officer, cost centre 343187, to assist with the purchase of further NDMs, repairs and the general operation of the NDM network.

### Issues and concerns

Any queries from the media, complaints from NSP clients or other members of the public and any difficulties encountered with the provision of this service are to be referred to NSPMU.

