Standard operating procedure (SOP) · HOS-SOP-006 · Version 1.0 · Approved by the ASF Expert Committee

Supports: System S1 (Hospital), criterion S1.6

At a glance

- Use the hospital list of high-alert medicines.
- Every high-alert dose has an independent second check.
- Keep concentrated electrolytes and insulin apart from general stock.
- Label concentrated electrolytes as high-alert on every ward.
- Stop and get help straight away if: a high-alert dose is given without a second check.

1. Purpose

To prevent serious harm from medicines that carry a high risk when wrong (S1.6).

2. Scope

Applies to	Clinical and support staff in the hospital
Locations	All wards, clinics and departments of the facility
When	Whenever the activity described is carried out
Does not apply to	Activities covered by another document listed in section 15

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
High-alert medicine	A medicine that can cause serious harm when given in error, from the hospital list
Second check	An independent check of the dose, the drug and the patient by a second trained person

4. Background

High-alert medicines cause serious harm when given wrongly. An extra independent check and separate storage prevent the most common errors.

5. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility	Competence
Prescriber	Writes the dose clearly	Doctor
Nurse giving the dose	Asks for the second check; gives the dose	Trained
Second checker	Checks independently and records the check	Trained

6. Materials and equipment

Item	Requirement	Condition
Hospital high-alert list	Current	Displayed on each ward
Separate storage for concentrated electrolytes and insulin	In place	Checked on the walk

7. Safety

- Stop and call for help if a patient is at immediate risk. Do not delay urgent care to complete paperwork.

8. Before you start

- Confirm the forms and equipment named in this document are available and current.

9. Procedure

Step 1. Identify.

- Check the medicine against the high-alert list.

Key point: If it is on the list, the second check applies.

Step 2. Second check.

- A second trained person checks the drug, the dose, the route and the patient.
- Both sign on the record.

Key point: The second check is independent, not a glance.

Step 3. Give and record.

- Give the dose.
- Record the check and the time.

Key point: No record, no check.

10. Decision points

- No decision points in this procedure.

11. Special situations

Situation	Action
Out of hours	Follow the same steps. Use the on-call contact on the wall of the area.

12. Escalation

- Any serious problem goes to the duty clinical lead at once and to the clinical director the same day.

13. Monitoring

Measure	Target	Frequency	Owner	If not met
High-alert doses with second check recorded	100%	Monthly	Chief pharmacist	Escalate to chief executive
Separate storage in place	100%	Monthly	Ward pharmacist	Escalate to chief pharmacist

14. Records

Record	Kept in	Retention
Record named in this document	Patient record or the area file	the period set by the facility’s records policy years

15. Training

- Staff are trained in this document at induction and refreshed each year, with a recorded competency check.

16. Related documents

ID	Title	Use
HOS-FRM-005	High-alert second-check record	Record of each check
HOS-POL-001	Medicines management policy	Policy

17. Evidence

Reference	Note
E-007	WHO Nine patient safety solutions (2007).
E-009	Hospital list to be set by the pharmacy and therapeutics committee.
E-006	ASF Policy Framework v1.2. Adapted.
E-009	ASF Expert Committee consensus.

18. Change history

Version	Date	What changed	Approval
1.0	the date of approval	First version	set Expert Committee approval

E-learning for this document

No e-learning course is linked to this document yet.

References

- Accréditation Sans Frontières (2026). ASF Policy Framework v1.2. (E-006)
- Accréditation Sans Frontières (2026). ASF Expert Committee consensus on Standard 1. (E-009)
- World Health Organization (2007). Nine patient safety solutions, including correct patient identification. Geneva: WHO. **Open source** (E-007)

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Related standard

- **Standard 3: Medicines and Pain**

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