

INTOX DEFINITIONS

GENERAL DEFINITIONS

Agent

A substance or object of natural or man-made origin which may be toxic to a living organism.

Antidote

Any substance that is administered specifically to counteract the toxic effects of a poison.

Authority list

A list of controlled terms used by the INTOX system for data entry and retrieval. In some cases INTOX provides a fixed list that cannot be altered, in others each centre is free to develop its own local authority list.

Case

A record of exposure or potential exposure of an individual to an agent. Each case record contains information obtained through one or more communications.

Communication

An interaction between a poisons centre and one of its clients. Note: A Communication may be made by means of telephone, fax, telex, letter, personal contact, e-mail or any other means and may be incoming or outgoing.

Communication number

A unique number that identifies every Communication. INTOX assigns numbers automatically, and they cannot be altered.

Entity

Something that can enter a human or animal body. It is either a substance or a product or a class of substances or products. .

Exposure

Contact between a living organism and an agent, which may or may not lead to a poisoning.

Incident

An event leading to exposure or potential exposure. An incident has the potential to involve multiple victims (e.g. contamination of a product, fire, spill, volcanic eruption, algal bloom).

Interlocutor

A person making a communication with a poisons centre. An Interlocutor is always an individual person.

Organisation

Any corporate body that has been in contact with a poisons centre.

Poisoning

Clinical condition produced by exposure to an agent in doses considered to be toxic.

Product

A substance or preparation (mixture of substances) placed on the market, normally with a unique designation or brand name.

Request

Any general inquiry that is not related to a specific case or incident.

Risk

The probability of the patient suffering an unwanted effect as a result of exposure to an agent.

Substance

A chemical or pharmaceutical of man-made or natural origin or produced by the biological processes of an organism such as a plant or animal.

Treatment

An intervention with a therapeutic aim.

METHOD OF COMMUNICATION**Incoming (communication)**

Communication received at the centre

Outgoing (communication) -

Communication initiated by the poison centre

Telephone Call

Spoken communication transmitted via a telephone.

Mail

Any form of communication that is received in written or printed form.

Letter

A written or printed communication addressed to a person, company, etc., usually sent by post in an envelope.

Fax/Telex

Written or printed communication transmitted electronically and printed out via a facsimile or telex device.

E-mail

Electronic communication transmitted and read via a computer.

Questionnaire

A set of questions on a form, submitted to an individual or to a number of people with the aim of collecting specific information.

Personal Contact

Personal, eye-to-eye, contact between the interlocutor and Poisons Centre staff.

Other

Any method of communication not mentioned above.

STATUS OF COMMUNICATION**Emergency**

An enquiry which, in the view of the poisons centre, requires a rapid answer.

Non-emergency

Any enquiry other than an emergency enquiry.

Unknown

An enquiry for which the degree of urgency in reply was unknown.

MAIN REASON FOR COMMUNICATION

Case

A record of exposure or potential exposure of an individual to an agent. Each case record contains information obtained through one or more communications.

Incident

An event leading to exposure or potential exposure. An incident has the potential to involve multiple victims (e.g. contamination of a product, fire, spill, volcanic eruption, algal bloom).

Request

Any general inquiry that is not related to a specific case or incident.

Information on Non-Pharmaceutical Agent

A request for general information about a non-pharmacological agent.

Information on Pharmaceuticals and Other Medicinal Agents

A request for information on the therapeutic use of a pharmacological agent.

Information for Education

A request for information to be used for educational purposes.

Information for Prevention

A request for information to be used in poisons prevention activities or programmes.

Information for Medico-Legal Purposes

A request for information to be used for legal purposes.

Information on other Topics

A request for general information of a toxicological nature e.g. general information on the management of poisoning.

Information for Quality Assurance

Request for information for the purposes of internal quality control.

Information for Non-Poisons Information

A request for general information of a non-toxicological nature.

For Analyses

A request for information about laboratory toxicological analyses.

For Antidotes

A request that antidotes be supplied or a request for information about antidotes.

For Identification

A request for the identification of an agent based upon its physical characteristics and/or name.

Other

A communication that is not covered by another category.

CATEGORY OF INTERLOCUTOR

Health Personnel

A person who works in health care service communicating in an official capacity

Physician

A person legally qualified to practise medicine

Non-Physician, medical

A person with professional or technical qualification who is not a medical doctor

Clerical staff

A member of general office staff who works in a health care service.

Veterinary Personnel

A person who works in an animal (non-human) health care service.

Other personnel

Any other professional communicating in the official capacity

Coroner

A public official responsible for the investigation of sudden, violent or suspicious death.

Social worker

A person with special training whose job it is to try to alleviate the conditions of the poor, aged and mentally ill and to monitor and improve the welfare of children.

Emergency Service Personnel

Person employed to protect the community by responding to emergency situations

Armed forces personnel

A member of the military forces of a nation or nations, including the army, navy, air force, marines, or equivalent force.

Government Agencies Personnel

Person employed in a division of a governmental institution

Educational Worker

An individual who works at a place for teaching, learning and/or instruction

Media Worker

A person who works for one of the mass media.

Legal representative

A person with delegated authority to act on behalf of another person or organisation in a legal process.

Industrial/Commercial Representative

A person acting for or speaking on behalf of a company.

Trade Union Representative

A person acting for or speaking on behalf of a trade union.

Family member

A close relative, especially a grandparent, parent, offspring, spouse, and sibling

Victim/patient

The person who is poisoned or injured or suspected of being so.

Other

A person who is contacting the poisons centre in a non-professional capacity, and who is not otherwise specified.

Unknown

An interlocutor whose classification was not identified by the poisons centre staff, either because the interlocutor was not asked or because they refused to give that information.

LOCATION OF INCIDENT/INTERLOCUTOR

Home and Surroundings

Any type of house, block of flats, boarding house, caravan or boat used as a domestic abode together with its garden, yard, driveway, path, steps and boundaries. NB this includes the outside stairs or steps in a block of flats, garage, garden shed, greenhouse, toolshed. It need not be the patient's home. It includes permanent and voluntary institutions such as homes for the elderly or student halls. It excludes hotels, hospitals, nursing homes and prisons.

Indoor

Not in the open air.

Outdoor

In the open air

Workplace

A place of occupation

Factory

An organisation for large scale manufacture.

Workshop

A small workplace for small-scale light industry, repair or maintenance, including automobile repair.

Agricultural/Horticultural Workplace

An area where agriculture or horticulture is carried out. This may include farmland, greenhouses and market gardens.

Laboratory

A place equipped for conducting scientific or analytical work. This may include a laboratory in a commercial organisation but excludes laboratories in poisons centres, schools and hospitals.

Office

A room for transacting business

Oil Rig/Well

Place fitted with the necessary equipment for extracting oil

Other

A place of work not listed above.

Medical - Hospital

A clinic or institution for health care and treatment, providing temporary accommodation.

Outpatient facility

A place where patients attend for diagnosis and/or treatment but do not occupy an inpatient bed.

Inpatient facility

A place where a patient is admitted for diagnosis and/or treatment

Nursing Home/Hospice

A place of accommodation for the convalescent, disabled, incurable or elderly who require nursing care.

Specialised unit

Any specialised unit for the primary treatment of poisoning such as an intensive care unit, clinical toxicology unit, paediatric intensive care unit, poisons centre unit. Also any unit for secondary treatment such as a psychiatric unit or a transplant unit.

Laboratory

A place equipped for conducting scientific or analytical work.

Pharmacy

A place where drugs are compounded or dispensed

Amenities

Areas providing public facilities

Other

other areas within a hospital otherwise not specified

Medical - Non-Hospital

A clinic or institution for health care and treatment, not providing temporary accommodation.

Primary Health Care Service/General Practice

A community treatment centre including the surgery, waiting room, and offices. This includes premises of doctors and other primary health care personnel.

Public Health Service

Organisation providing preventative health care within a community

Community Pharmacy

A place in the community for dispensing medicines supervised by a pharmacist; NOT a general shop which sells medicines without pharmacist supervision.

Private Consulting Room

A specialist doctor's office and waiting room, not part of a hospital or general practice. This includes a mobile treatment facility but excludes an ambulance.

Ambulance

A vehicle specifically used for the transport of patients by land, sea or air.

Laboratory

A place equipped for conducting scientific or analytical work. This may include a laboratory in a commercial organisation but excludes laboratories in poisons centres, schools and hospitals.

Other

other areas within a medical non-hospital facility not mentioned above

Veterinary Clinic

A treatment centre for animals.

Poisons Centre

A specialist centre concerned with the management of poisoning which may comprise some or all of the following: an information service, treatment facility and laboratory.

Educational Establishment

A place for teaching, learning and/or instruction

Enclosed Public Place

A public building e.g. a shop, library, bank, hotel, indoor sports facility, enclosed car park, a place for entertainment, relaxation and socialising, or for worship. This excludes a school or other educational establishment.

Shop

A place where the primary purpose is to sell goods

Leisure Facility

A place where people go for relaxation and/or recreation

Transport Building

An access-point for the movement of passengers and goods such as a railway station, airport building, bus station.

Other

Other public building not mentioned above.

Open Space

An outside, uncovered, open-air place.

Land

A solid part of the surface of the earth.

Inland Water

A body of water that is located in the interior of a country or region away from a sea.

River/Canal

A body of fresh water that flows along a natural or man-made course.

Spring/well

A place where water flows naturally or is extracted from the ground.

Sea/Ocean

The mass of salt water on the earth's surface as differentiated from the land.

Mode of Transport

A conveyance by which people or objects are transported, but excluding an ambulance.

Road transport

A mode of conveyance that travels along a private or public way such as a car, lorry or bus

Rail transport

A mode of conveyance whereby a vehicle travels along a permanent track.

Air transportation

Transportation in an aircraft such as an aeroplane, helicopter, glider, or hot air balloon

Waterway/Sea transport

A mode of conveyance in a vessel navigating on water

Other

Mode of conveyance not mentioned above.

Prison

A place of enforced detention

Military base

A place where armed forces are accommodated and/or trained

Other

A location not included in any of the listed categories.

Unknown

A location unidentified by poisons centre staff.

CATEGORY OF LOCATION

Rural

Of or relating to the country, country life or farming.

Urban

Of or relating to a city or town

Peri-urban (Suburban)

A district outside but adjoining a city

CIRCUMSTANCES OF EXPOSURE/INCIDENT

Unintentional

An exposure by any route (or incident) where there was no intention to cause harm.

Accidental

All unintentional exposures (or incidents) not specifically defined below. Most unintentional exposures in children are captured here.

Occupational

An exposure (or incident) that occurred while the victim was working, where the agent involved was part of the work process or the exposure was the result of the work process.

Environmental

A passive non occupational exposure (or incident) resulting from contamination of air, water or soil. The contaminant could be natural or man-made.

Transport Accident

A non occupational exposure (or incident) occurring after a transport accident where there was a release of chemicals e.g. a spill, an explosion.

Fire

A non occupational exposure (or incident) to combustion products released during a conflagration e.g. a house fire, a burning vehicle.

Therapeutic Error

An exposure (or incident) resulting from a medicine used incorrectly by mistake, whether the agent was administered by medical personnel or by a lay person.

Misuse

Unintentional improper or incorrect use of a non-pharmaceutical substance. Unintentional misuse differs from intentional misuse in that the exposure was unplanned or not foreseen by the patient.

Food Poisoning

An exposure (or incident) resulting from ingestion of food contaminated with toxic agents including pathogenic microbes or their metabolic products.

Other

An exposure (or incident) that was known to be unintentional but that does not fit into the categories described above. This category should be avoided if possible.

Unknown

An exposure (or incident) which was known to be unintentional but where no further details are known.

Intentional

Suicide

An exposure (or incident) intended by the perpetrator(s) to cause self-harm. This category should also be used for parasuicide attempts where the perpetrator did not intend to die.

Misuse

An exposure (or incident) resulting from the intentional improper or incorrect use of a substance for reasons other than the pursuit of a psychotropic effect.

Abuse

A deliberate exposure to an agent on which the person is dependent, or in order to achieve a euphoriant or psychotropic effect.

Malicious/Criminal

This category is used for patients who are victims of another persons intent to harm them (or an incident where there was intent to harm).

Abortion

An exposure resulting from an attempt to procure an abortion, either by the pregnant woman herself or by a third party with the pregnant womans consent.

Other

An exposure (or incident) that was known to have been intentional but which cannot be readily categorised using the above. Use of this category should be avoided if possible.

Unknown

An exposure (or incident) that was known to be intentional where no further details are known.

Adverse Reaction

An unwanted effect of a drug, food or other agent occurring after the normal use of that agent.

Drug

A response to a drug which is noxious and unintended which occurs at doses normally used in man for prophylaxis, diagnosis or therapy of disease or for the modification of physiological function. This category should also be used to describe an unwanted drug interaction.

Food

A response to a food which is noxious and unintended following ingestion or other exposure, where the observed effect is not the result of the food being contaminated with toxic or pathogenic agents.

Other

A response to an agent e.g. a plant, household product which is noxious and unintended but which is not the result of abuse, misuse or overdosage with that agent.

Other

A circumstance that does not fit into the above categories. This category should be avoided if possible.

Unknown

An exposure where the circumstances were unknown

POPULATION GROUP**Family**

A social group consisting of parents and their offspring and other blood relatives.

Household

All those who live in one house. This does not include people who were in the house but who did not live there e.g. baby sitter, cleaner.

Institution

An organisation founded especially for a specific purpose, excluding a household, such as a school or other educational establishment, prison, or military establishment.

Educational

A group of people gathered together in a clearly defined area of buildings and/or grounds for the purpose of acquiring or imparting knowledge in a systematic way.

Military

Members and employees of the armed forces who work and/or live together in a clearly defined area of buildings and grounds e.g. a camp, base.

Correctional

A group of people occupying a clearly defined area of buildings and grounds, who have either been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment or who have been accused of crime and are awaiting trial, together with the people who are responsible for their supervision.

Occupational

People with a common business, occupation, profession or trade.

Geographical

People located in the same defined area, such as a street, a town, a field, a park, a valley. This excludes a household, factory or institution.

Ethnic

People sharing the same racial or cultural origin.

Animal

A group of animals. This may include more than one species.

Other

Any group of humans or animals not covered by the categories above.

AGE CATEGORY

Neonate

A newly-born baby up to 4 weeks post birth.

Pre-term

Born at any time before the 37th completed week of gestation.

Full-term neonate

Born at any time from the beginning of the 38th week of gestation.

Infant

4 weeks -12 months

Toddler

1-4 years

Child

5-14 years

Adolescent

15-19 years

Adult

20-74 years

Elderly

>75 years

MARITAL STATUS

Note: The decision about which term to select does not require proof of the patients marital status; it will usually reflect the patients own description of themselves. In some countries same-sex couples can go through a ceremony or registration process after which they may consider themselves to be married even though this does not conform to the usual understanding of marriage.

Single

A person who is not currently living with a marital partner.

Never Married

A person who has never participated in a religious and/or legal union and who does not have a contract which binds them to another person as their husband or wife.

Separated

A person who is currently still married but who is no longer living with their marital partner.

Divorced

A person whose marriage has been dissolved by a judicial process or by an accepted custom and who has not married again.

Widowed

A person whose marital partner has died and who has not married again.

Married

A person who has participated in a religious and/or legal union or has a contract which binds them to another person as their husband or wife, and who is still in that relationship and living with their spouse.

Unknown

A person whose marital status is unknown

PREGNANT

No

The patient is confirmed not to be pregnant.

Yes

The patient is confirmed to be pregnant e.g. by means of a pregnancy test or physical examination.

1st Trimester

The patient is in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

2nd Trimester

The patient is between weeks 13 and 24? Of pregnancy.

3rd Trimester

The patient is between weeks 25 and 36? Of pregnancy.

Trimester uncertain

The exact stage of pregnancy is unknown.

Uncertain

The patient may be pregnant but this status has not been confirmed e.g. the patient may have missed a menstrual period but may not have taken a pregnancy test.

Unknown

The pregnancy status of the patient is not known

OCCUPATION**None**

A person who is not currently in paid or voluntary employment.

Unemployed

A person of working age who is currently out of work.

Retired

A person who has reached the end of their working life and who is not currently working.

Housewife, Househusband

A woman or man who manages a home and its affairs for her/his children and spouse/partner.

Agricultural worker

A person whose work is growing crops and rearing livestock.

Industrial worker

A person working in the extraction, processing and manufacture of materials whether on a large or small scale.

Cottage industry worker

A person engaged in small-scale manufacturing working from their own homes, often using their own equipment.

Commercial

A person selling or buying goods or services.

Services

A person whose job it is to provide a service to others.

Student

A person following a course of study at an institution.

Other

A person whose work cannot be included in the categories above.

Unknown

Use when information on occupation is not available.

TREATMENT

Treatment is defined as an intervention with a therapeutic aim.

None

No intervention with therapeutic aim provided by medical or non-medical personnel.

Refused

Intervention with therapeutic aim offered but refused by the patient or patient's legal representative.

Dilution

Administration of water or fluids to decrease the concentration of a substance

Neutralising agents

Any agent used to chemically neutralise another substance.

Gastrointestinal decontamination

A procedure to reduce the absorption of an ingested substance from the gastrointestinal tract.

Gastric aspiration

Removal of fluids from the stomach by suction through a tube.

Gastric lavage

A procedure designed to remove the contents of the stomach by administering and then removing fluid via a nasogastric or orogastric tube.

Induced emesis

Induction of vomiting

Induced emesis - Ipecac

Vomiting induced by oral administration of syrup of ipecacuanha.

Induced emesis - other

Vomiting induced by means other than administration of syrup of ipecacuanha

Activated charcoal - single dose

Activated charcoal administered orally or via a naso- or oro-gastric tube with the therapeutic aim of preventing absorption of an ingested substance or substances.

Activated charcoal - additional dose(s)

Activated charcoal administered by two or more doses by mouth or via a naso- or oro-gastric tube during a single acute poisoning with the therapeutic aims of preventing absorption.

Fuller's Earth

Fuller's Earth administered orally or via a naso- or oro-gastric tube with the therapeutic aim of preventing absorption of an ingested substance or substances.

Cholestyramine

Cholestyramine administered orally or via a naso- or oro-gastric tube with the therapeutic aim of preventing absorption of an ingested substance or substances.

Other adsorbents

Adsorbents other than those mentioned above, administered orally or via a naso- or oro-gastric tube with the therapeutic aim of preventing absorption of an ingested substance or substances

Cathartics

Oral administration of a therapeutic agent intended to enhance anterograde movement of intestinal contents. Examples are sorbitol, mannitol, magnesium citrate, magnesium sulphate.

Whole bowel irrigation

Procedure designed to enhance the expulsion of a substance from the gastrointestinal tract that involves administration of large volumes of isotonic fluid given either orally or via a naso- or oro-gastric tube. The fluid is typically polyethylene glycol electrolyte solution.

Endoscopic removal

Removal of an object from the gastrointestinal tract or bronchial tree by endoscopic techniques.

External decontamination

Procedure for removing an agent from skin and external mucous membranes such as eyes

Skin decontamination

Any technique performed to remove a substance from the skin surface.

Irrigation of eyes

Procedure intended to remove a substance from the eye using copious amounts of fluid.

Symptomatic and supportive care

The alleviation of symptoms and signs of poisoning and restoration of normal body function.

Fluids and electrolytes, oral

Fluids and electrolytes given by mouth.

Fluids and electrolytes, i.v.

Fluid and electrolytes given intravenously.

Oxygen, normobaric

Oxygen given at atmospheric pressure

Oxygen, hyperbaric

Oxygen given at pressures higher than atmospheric pressure

Demulcents

Material given with the aim of providing symptomatic relief of oesophageal and/or gastric irritation. Examples are egg white and milk.

Transfusion

An introduction of whole blood or blood components directly into the blood stream.

Warming

Procedures to increase body temperature to normal.

Cooling

Procedures to decrease body temperature

Enteral nutrition

Feeding the patient by the alimentary canal.

Parenteral nutrition

Feeding the patient primarily by the i.v. route.

Intubation

Insertion of an endo-tracheal tube.

Artificial Ventilation

A procedure to support the respiratory function of a patient.

Cardiac massage external

Intermittent compression of the heart by pressure applied externally.

Cardiac massage internal

Intermittent compression of the heart by pressure applied directly through an opening in the chest wall.

Pacemaker

A device designed to stimulate by electrical impulses contraction of the heart muscle at a certain rate worn by or implanted in the body of the patient.

Defibrillation

Termination of atrial or ventricular cardiac fibrillation usually by electroshock.

Alkalinisation (plasma)

A procedure to raise the pH of the plasma, usually by means of hyperventilation or by administration of sodium bicarbonate.

Resuscitation, unspecified

Unspecified procedures intended to restore vital functions.

Other

Symptomatic and supportive measures not mentioned above.

Unknown

symptomatic and supported care not described by the interlocutor.

Enhanced elimination

A procedure to remove an agent from the body after it has been absorbed

Activated charcoal, multiple dose

Activated charcoal administered repeatedly by mouth or via a naso- or oro-gastric tube with the therapeutic aim of enhancing elimination of the substance or substances.

Modified diuresis

Procedure intended to enhance elimination of a substance by increasing urine output or changing the urine pH.

Haemodialysis

Method for providing the function of the kidneys by circulating blood past semi-permeable membranes, which allow removal of small molecules across an osmotic gradient.

Peritoneal dialysis

Dialysis technique employing the peritoneal membrane.

Exchange transfusion

Technique in which aliquots of a patient's blood are successively removed and replaced with donor blood.

Haemoperfusion

Extracorporeal adsorption of toxins from blood onto a charcoal or resin filter.

Plasmapheresis

Removal of blood from the body followed by centrifugation to separate cellular components, which are then reintroduced to the body.

Haemofiltration

Use of ultrafiltration techniques to remove excess accumulation of normal metabolic products or toxic substances from the blood.

Hyperventilation

A procedure to increase ventilation with the aim of enhancing pulmonary elimination of certain highly volatile agents.

Antidotes

Any substance that is administered specifically to counteract the toxic effects of a poison.

Antivenom/antivenin

An antitoxin that counteracts a specific venom e.g. a snake venom.

Antitoxins

A preparation for parenteral administration that contains an antibody which will neutralise a specific toxin.

Specialist consultation

Discussion of the case with, or referral to another specialist i.e. an expert in a medical discipline.

Other

Any procedure used in the treatment of a patient not otherwise defined in this list.

Unknown

Any procedure for which sufficient information is available to classify.

TREATMENT PROVIDER**Physician**

A person legally qualified to practise medicine.

Health-care personnel, non-physician

A non-physician with specific training in clinical care e.g. a nurse, a pharmacist, paramedical personnel, a veterinary practitioner, a poison centre specialist.

Non-health care personnel

A person with no specific training in clinical care.

LOCATION OF TREATMENT**Location of poisoning**

Wherever the poisoning incident occurred.

During transportation

During surface, air or sea transport, between the location of the incident and location of treatment.

Health Institution

An establishment where general medical treatment is administered. This does not include specialised units.

Health centre

Premises directly involved in health care, but not an admitting hospital.

Outpatient facility

A place where patients attend for diagnosis and/or treatment but do not occupy an inpatient bed.

Inpatient facility

A place where a patient is admitted for diagnosis and/or treatment.

Specialised unit

Any specialised unit for the primary treatment of poisoning such as an intensive care unit, clinical toxicology unit, paediatric intensive care unit, poisons centre unit. Also any unit for secondary treatment such as a psychiatric unit or a transplant unit.

Veterinary clinic

An institution for the care and treatment of sick or injured animals.

Other

Any known location that cannot be included in the above categories.

Unknown

A location that was not identified by the poisons centre staff because either the interlocutor was not asked, did not know or refused to give that information.

RISK OF POISONING

(Risk is the probability of the patient suffering poisoning as a result of exposure to an agent).

No Risk

No probability that the patient will suffer poisoning e.g. there was no exposure.

Minimal Risk

Low probability that the patient will suffer poisoning if no action is taken to mitigate the exposure.

Moderate Risk

There is a probability that the patient will suffer poisoning if no action is taken to mitigate the exposure

High Risk

There is a high risk that the patient may suffer poisoning if no action is taken to mitigate the exposure

Established Poisoning

The patient shows signs or symptoms consistent with exposure, or has laboratory confirmation of such.

SEVERITY

(Refer to the IPCS/EC/EAPCCT Poisoning Severity Score)

None

No symptoms or signs. Vague symptoms judged not to be related to poisoning.

Minor

Mild, transient and spontaneously resolving symptoms.

Moderate

Pronounced or prolonged symptoms.

Severe

Severe or life-threatening symptoms.

OUTCOME

Full recovery

Return to previous health without any sequelae.

Full but delayed recovery

Return to previous health without sequelae, where recovery is not immediate e.g. recovery from liver damage after paracetamol overdose.

Sequelae

Any persistent disability.

Death

The permanent end of all functions of life.

Directly related

Death was directly the result of the toxic actions of the agent(s).

Indirectly related

Death was due to an event which, while not caused directly by the agent, would not have occurred but for the some other action of the agent(s) e.g. death resulting from respiratory insufficiency consequent upon aspiration of vomit.

Unrelated

Death was unconnected in any way with exposure to the agent(s).

Unknown

The outcome of the exposure to the agent(s) was unknown.

TYPE OF EXPOSURE

Acute

Exposure to an agent over a short period of time e.g. 24 hours.

Single

A single or continuous exposure to an agent over a short period of time e.g. for 24 hours.

Repeated

Multiple exposures to an agent over a short period of time e.g. 24 hours, where there may be accumulation.

Chronic

Continuous or repeated exposure e.g. for more than 24 hours.

Acute on chronic

An acute exposure against a background of chronic exposure to the same agent.

Unknown

The type of exposure was unknown.

ROUTE OF EXPOSURE

(Note: In this authority list the route of exposure does not necessarily mean the route of absorption)

Ingestion

Intake of an agent through the mouth or nose and subsequent swallowing.

Inhalation

Intake of an agent through the mouth or nose by breathing in.

Cutaneous

Exposure of the skin to an agent.

Ocular

Exposure of the eye(s) to an agent.

Otic/Aural

Exposure of the ear to an agent.

Bite

Introduction or possible introduction of a toxic agent into the tissue by the biting parts of an animal.

Sting

Introduction or possible introduction of a toxic agent into the tissue caused by the stinging device of certain animals or plants.

Injection

Introduction of an agent through the skin by means of a needle or other mechanical means/instrument

Subcutaneous

Introduction of an agent beneath the skin by means of a needle or other mechanical means/instrument

Intramuscular

Introduction of an agent into the muscle by means of a needle or other mechanical means/instrument.

Intravenous

Introduction of an agent into a vein by means of a needle or other mechanical means/instrument.

Intraarterial

Introduction of an agent into an artery by means of a needle or other mechanical means/instrument.

Intra-ocular

Introduction of an agent into the vitreous humour of the eye by means of a needle or other mechanical means/instrument.

Intrathecal

Introduction of an agent into the subarachnoid space of the spinal cord by means of a needle or other mechanical means/instrument.

Intracardiac

Introduction of an agent into a cavity of the heart by means of a needle or other mechanical means/instrument.

Peritoneal

Introduction of an agent into the abdomino-pelvic cavity by means of a needle or other mechanical means/instrument.

Other

Introduction of an agent into a tissue, organ or cavity not mentioned above, by means of a needle or other mechanical means/instrument.

Mucosal

Exposure to an agent via the mucous membrane -

Buccal

Exposure of the mucous membrane of the cheek to an agent, where the agent is not swallowed. Note: This term should be used for oro-pharyngeal exposure

Conjunctival

Exposure of the conjunctival membranes.

Nasal

Exposure of the mucous membrane of the nose to an agent, where the agent is not inhaled.

Rectal

Exposure of the mucous membrane of the rectum (distal portion of the large intestine) to an agent.

Sublingual

Exposure of the mucous membrane beneath the tongue to an agent, where the agent is not swallowed.

Vaginal

Exposure of the mucous membrane of the vagina to an agent.

Urethral

Exposure of the mucous membrane of the urethra to an agent.

Placental

Transfer of an agent from the maternal to the foetal blood circulation via the placenta..

Other

Introduction of an agent into the body by a route not otherwise specified.

Unknown

Introduction of an agent into the body by an unknown route.

PRODUCT LEGAL CATEGORY

Note: This is a locally-generated authority list with some suggested entries. Definitions for these entries are given below. Some of these categories will not be applicable in all countries and poisons centres should change the entries as required, ensuring that they have defined each entry before introducing it.

Prescription Only Drug/ Medicine

A medicinal product which may only be supplied in accordance with a written or verbal prescription provided by a registered health professional.

Special Prescription Only Drug/Medicine

A restricted class of medicinal products which may only be prescribed by designated medical practitioners. This excludes controlled substances.

Non Prescription Drug/Medicine

A medicinal product which does not require a prescription for its supply.

Controlled Substance

A medicinal product access to, or the use of, which is controlled by statute because it may cause physical or psychological dependency.

Illegal Drug/substance

A drug or substance access to, or the use of, which is forbidden by law.

Unknown

A product for which the legal category is unknown.

None

A product for which there is no legal category.

PRODUCT - MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO SAFETY

Note: This is a locally-generated authority list with some suggested entries. Definitions for these entries are given below. Some of these categories will not be applicable in all countries and poisons centres should change the entries as required, ensuring that they have defined each entry before introducing it.

Product Labelling

A product legally required to be labelled in a prescribed manner. Note: a label is any printed written, graphic or other information fixed to or accompanying a product.

Product Packaging

A product legally required to be packaged in a prescribed manner. Note: æpackageÆ may describe the container closest to the product or may include inner and outer containers. It also includes the closure. EXAMPLE a product may be required to be in child-resistant packaging.

Product Storage

A product legally required to be stored in a prescribed manner. EXAMPLE: a product may be required to be stored in secure conditions i.e. locked up.

PRODUCT- HAZARDS AND CONTRAINDICATIONS

Note 1: The following terms are currently in the Product Safety Requirements authority list but should more appropriately be in this authority list.

Note2: This is a locally-generated authority list with some suggested entries. Definitions for these entries are given below, together with suggested additions to the list.

Not classified

A substance which if it is inhaled or ingested or it penetrates the skin is unlikely to result in harmful effects to an organism. (Alternatively: an agent which has an oral LD50 for the rat of > 2000mg/kg body weight - EC).

Harmful

A substance which if it is inhaled or ingested or it penetrates the skin may involve limited health risks. (Alternatively: an agent which has an oral LD50 for the rat of 200 - 2000mg/kg body weight - EC)

Toxic

A substance which if it is inhaled or ingested or it penetrates the skin may involve serious acute or chronic health risks and even death. (Alternatively: an agent which has an oral LD50 for the rat of 25 - 200mg/kg body weight - EC)

Very toxic

A substance which if it is inhaled or ingested or it penetrates the skin may involve extremely serious acute or chronic health risks and even death. (Alternatively: an agent which has an oral LD50 for the rat of <25mg/kg body weight - EC)

Corrosive

Any substance which destroys tissue on direct contact. (IPCS)

Irritant

Any substance causing inflammation following immediate, prolonged, or repeated contact with skin or mucous membranes. (IPCS)

Explosive

A solid or liquid substance (or mixture of substances) which is in itself capable by chemical reaction of producing gas at such a temperature and pressure and at such a speed as to cause damage to the surroundings. Pyrotechnic substances are included even when they do not evolve gases. (IMO)

Oxidising

A substance which, although not in itself necessarily combustible, may either by yielding oxygen or by similar processes increase the risk and intensity of fire in other materials with which they come into contact. (IMO)

Highly flammable

A substance which:
may become hot and finally catch fire in contact with air at ambient temperature without any application of energy; is a solid and may readily catch fire after brief contact with a source of ignition and which continues to burn or to be consumed after removal of the source of ignition; is gaseous and flammable in air at normal pressure; in contact with water or damp air evolves highly flammable gases in dangerous quantities, or is a liquid having a flash point below 21 degrees Celsius

Extremely flammable

A liquid having a flash point of less than 0 degrees Celsius and a boiling point of less than or equal to 35 degrees Celsius.