

## **Overdoses**

### **Non-fatal overdose**

When you attend the scene of a non-fatal drug overdose you are encouraged to exercise your discretion to not take action for self-administration offences and minor possession offences (for the victim and anyone else at the scene). Exercising your discretion might remove the fear of prosecution and encourage people present at overdoses to call for assistance without delay.

Your primary role is to ensure the safety of ambulance officers, the victim and anyone else present. You are to seize any prohibited drug which is obviously present and deal with it as per normal exhibit procedures and ensuring appropriate PPE is worn to prevent contamination by substances. After this and obtaining brief particulars it is usually appropriate to leave.

In exercising your discretion, you will obviously consider the circumstances of each case.

To ensure accountability, record your attendance on COPS. Select the 'Associated factor option – Drug related – and then the further classification non-fatal drug overdose. Record any exercise of your discretion in the narrative.

### **Fatal overdose**

At a fatal drug overdose or where death is imminent from a drug overdose investigate the matter as for any other sudden or suspicious death (refer to Coroner's matters guideline). Seize any drugs, articles or other exhibits which might help your investigation whilst ensuring appropriate PPE is worn to prevent contamination by substances.

You may still exercise your discretion for minor drug offences as indicated for non-fatal overdoses.

To ensure accountability, record your attendance on COPS. Select the 'Associated Factor' option – Drug Related – then the further classification Fatal Drug Overdose.