

Ensuring the availability of internationally controlled drugs in emergency situations

1. In emergency situations arising following natural or man-made catastrophic events there is the need to provide treatment to those affected and ensure the rapid availability of medicines. Many of the needed medicines contain narcotic drugs, such as morphine, and psychotropic substances, such as pentazocine, both of which are under international control. Under normal circumstances, the import and transport of those medications are subject to regulatory requirements. In emergency situations the urgent delivery of medications for emergency humanitarian relief should not be delayed.
2. In case of emergency situation simplified control measures are available for the provision of internationally controlled medicines for emergency medical care. In 1996, INCB, together with WHO, devised simplified control procedures for the export, transport and import of controlled medicines for emergency medical care. The simplified regulations remove the need for import authorizations, provided that the import and delivery are handled by established international, governmental and/or non-governmental organizations engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance in health matters recognized by the control authorities of the exporting countries. Those simplified procedures are available to all States in the Model Guidelines for the International Provision of Controlled Medicines for Emergency Medical Care.
3. National competent authorities may allow the export of internationally controlled substances to affected zones even in the absence of import authorizations or estimated requirements. Emergency deliveries need not be included in the estimates of the receiving country and exporting Governments may consider using parts of their special stocks of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for this purpose.

INCB is the independent, quasi-judicial body charged with promoting and monitoring Government compliance with the three international drug control conventions: the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

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For further information, please contact: INCB Secretariat at Tel: (+43-1) 26060 4163
Email:secretariat@incb.org, Website: www.incb.org.