

***"DOING NO HARM"***  
**THE NORTHERN IRELAND DEFECT  
& INVESTIGATION CENTRE  
SAFEGUARDING THE HEALTH OF PATIENTS,  
STAFF AND CLIENTS**

Chief Executive/General Manager  
Health and Social Services Boards  
Chief Executive  
Health and Social Services Trusts  
General Manager  
Central Services Agency  
Chief Executive  
Regional Medical Physics Agency  
Chief Executive  
Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service

Our Ref: PEL(00)3

Date: 2 March 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

**HAZARD NOTICES, ADVICE NOTICES  
AND SAFETY ACTION NOTICES**

**Distribution:**

- Officers with responsibility for setting organisational policy for medical device and equipment management.
- Liaison Officers with responsibility for receipt and distribution of Northern Ireland Defect and Investigation Centre warning notices.
- Risk Managers, Health & Safety Managers/Co-ordinators.
- Nurse Executive Directors and Medical Executive Directors
- Estates Managers

**Action:**

**TO NOTE AN ADDITIONAL SERIES OF WARNING  
NOTICE ENTITLED "ADVICE NOTICES"**

## **Background:**

Hazard Notices have been used for the most immediate communication of safety information to the HPSS for many years. However, we have concluded that this is no longer appropriate, as recent cases have illustrated that although information was available that gave concern, conclusive evidence was not yet available to allow the issue of a Hazard Notice. Therefore, we have decided to introduce an additional series of warning notice entitled "Advice Notice". This will allow advice to be provided based on the information available to us.

## **Levels of warning notices:**

The criteria for the four levels of warning categories will in broad terms be as follows:

**Hazard Notices** are issued: -

- in cases of **actual** death or serious injury, or when death or serious injury **would have occurred**, or in cases of illness or deterioration in health of a patient or user or other person, and
- where the medical device or estates system is **clearly** implicated, and
- where **immediate** action is necessary to **prevent** recurrence.

**Advice Notices** are issued: -

- in cases where there is the **potential** for death or serious injury, or there **may be implications arising from long term use**,
- where the medical device or estate system is **likely** to be implicated,
- where the recipient is expected to take **immediate** action on the advice.

**Safety Action Notices** are used to recommend or inform: -

- where **action** by the recipient will **improve** safety,
- where it is necessary to **repeat** warnings on long standing problems,
- to **support or follow up** manufacturers field modifications.

**Professional Officer Letters** are issued: -

- by the Chief Officer in any of the professional disciplines, e.g. Medical, Nursing, Pharmaceutical, Dental, Engineering, Architectural etc. They are normally used when **faulty use or misuse of equipment has contributed to an occurrence**.

Please note that Hazard Notices and Advice Notices specify immediate actions and it is extremely important that all personnel are instructed in the proper procedures for dealing with safety information and reporting of adverse incidents as provided in PEL(93)35 and PEL(93)36. The procedures to be followed for reporting adverse

incidents and the format of all safety notices are currently being reviewed, but current procedures apply until further notice.

Should you require any further information concerning this letter, please contact;

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Yours faithfully

**S Blayney**  
**Director**