



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
BUREAU OF MEDICINE AND SURGERY  
2300 E STREET NW  
WASHINGTON DC 20372-5300

Canc frp: Jan 2009  
IN REPLY REFER TO  
BUMEDNOTE 6150  
BUMED-M3  
11 Jan 2008

BUMED NOTICE 6150

From: Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery  
To: Ships and Stations Having Medical and Dental Department Personnel

Subj: GUIDELINES FOR MEDICAL AND DENTAL ABBREVIATIONS AND INTERIM  
CHANGE TO MANMED CHAPTERS 6, 16, AND 21

Ref: (a) MANMED, Chapter 6, Article 6-113  
(b) MANMED, Chapter 16, Article 16-15  
(c) MANMED, Chapter 21, Article 21-3  
(d) The Joint Commission National Patient Safety Goals

Encl: (1) "Do Not Use" Dose Designations and Abbreviations Revised 12 Dec 06

1. Purpose. To update guidelines for the use of medical and dental abbreviations on medical and dental forms. This notice provides additional guidance to paragraph 5 of reference (a) and supersedes the guidance in references (b) and (c) as follows:

- a. MANMED, Chapter 16, Article 16-15, paragraph (10)(f).
- b. MANMED, Chapter 21, Article 21-3, paragraph (5)(b)9.

2. Background. Inconsistencies in medical and dental abbreviations are a potential source of miscommunication between providers and may result in adverse patient outcomes. All Navy Medical and Dental commands must utilize a standardized set of medical and dental abbreviations to alleviate inconsistencies and errors.

3. Action. Navy Medical and Dental commands will comply with the Navy Medicine "Do Not Use Dose Designations and Abbreviations" List, hereafter referred to as the "Do Not Use List", enclosure (1). This list was developed based on reference (d) requirements and Navy data analysis. In utilizing abbreviations, the following additional guidelines shall be adhered to:

- a. Any medical or dental abbreviations used shall only be from standardized medical and dental terminology references or resources.
- b. Abbreviations and symbols will not be used to record final diagnoses, but are permitted elsewhere in the medical and dental records where they do not hamper communication between practitioners.

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4. Points of Contact. Forward medical questions to CAPT Linda Grant, Joint Commission Clinical Specialist at (202) 762-3704, DSN 762-3704, or e-mail at linda.grant@med.navy.mil. Forward dental questions to CAPT Bart Knox, Dental Health Care Support Specialist at (202) 762-3019 or DSN 762-3019, or e-mail at bart.knox@med.navy.mil. Forward questions concerning completion of forms or filing of forms in medical or dental records to Ms. Ciel Lazo, Registered Records Administrator at (202) 762-3145, DSN 762-3145, or e-mail at cielito.lazo@med.navy.mil.

5. Cancellation Contingency. Retain until incorporated into references (a), (b), and (c).



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Acting

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**IMPORTANT!**

To improve patient safety and avoid future errors and potential harm, Navy has standardized the list of **Do Not Use** dose designations and abbreviations throughout our MTFs. **THESE ABBREVIATIONS AND DOSE DESIGNATIONS** apply to all orders and all medication-related documentation that is handwritten, including free-text computer entry or on pre-printed forms.

<b>“Do Not Use” Dose Designations and Abbreviations</b>			
<i>Dangerous Term</i>	<i>Intended Meaning</i>	<i>Potential Problem</i>	<i>Correction</i>
<b>“Trailing Zeros”</b>	Example: Dose of 1mg written as 1.0mg	Decimal may be misinterpreted or overlooked in handwriting and with the use of carbon and faxed copies resulting in tenfold overdose	<b>*Never</b> use a “trailing” zero!  Warfarin <b>2mg</b>
<b>“Naked Decimals” or Lack of Leading Zero</b>	Example: Dose of 0.5mg written as .5mg	Decimal may be misinterpreted or overlooked in handwriting and with the use of carbon and faxed copies resulting in tenfold overdose	<b>Never</b> use a “naked” decimal! Always use a zero before a decimal  Morphine <b>0.5mg</b>
<b>U or u</b>	Unit	Read as a zero (0) or a four (4), causing a 10-fold overdose or greater (4U seen as “40” or 4u seen as 44”)	“Unit” has no acceptable abbreviation. Write out “unit.”
<b>µg</b>	Microgram	Mistaken for “mg” when handwritten	Use “mcg” or “micrograms”
<b>Q.D., QD, q.d., qd, or Q/D</b>	Every Day or Daily	Mistaken for QID and drug given 4 times daily	Write out “every day” or “daily”
<b>Q.O.D., QOD, q.o.d., or qod</b>	Every other Day	Mistaken for QID or QD	Write out “every other day”
<b>MgSO4</b>	Magnesium Sulfate	Misread as Morphine Sulfate	Use complete spelling for drug names.
<b>MS MSO4</b>	Morphine Sulfate	Misread as Magnesium Sulfate	
<b>I.U. or IU</b>	International Unit	Mistaken as I.V. (intravenous) or 10 (ten)	Write out “International Unit”
<b>T.I.W</b>	Three times a week	Misinterpreted as “three times a day” or “twice a week”	Write out “three times a week”
<b>SS</b>	Sliding Scale or 1/2 (apothecary)	Misinterpreted as “55”	Write out “sliding scale” Use “one-half” or 1/2

**\*Exception:** “trailing zero” may be used only where required to demonstrate the level of precision of the value being reported, such as for laboratory results, imaging studies that report lesion size, or catheter/tube sizes. It may not be used in medication orders or other medication-related documentation. Adapted from the 2007 JCAHO National Patient Safety Goal 2B Standardize a list of abbreviations, acronyms, symbols, and dose designations that are not to be used throughout the organization.