

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to define abbreviations that may not be used in the documentation of patient care with in the San Joaquin County EMS system.

AUTHORITY: Division 2.5, California Health and Safety Code, Section 1797.220

POLICY:

- I. Prehospital personnel may utilize the most current edition of *Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary* as a resource for acceptable abbreviations.
- II. The following list of abbreviations has been associated with medication errors and are prohibited on all written orders and patient care records:

Abbreviation	INTENDED MEANING	MISINTERPRETATION	CORRECTION
IU, U, u, UN	International unit	Misread as IV	Spell out "units"
QD or qd	Daily or every day	Mistaken for qid	Write "daily" or "every day"
Q.O.D., QOD, or q.o.d. or qod	Every other day	Mistaken for qd and QD, or QID and qid	Write "every other day"
Zero after a decimal point (1.0 mg)	1 mg	Misread as 10 mg if the decimal point is not seen	Do not use terminal zeros for doses expressed in whole numbers
No zero before a decimal (.5 mg)	0.5 mg	Misread as 5 mg	Always use a zero before a decimal point when the dose is less than a whole unit
MS, MSO ₄	Morphine or Morphine sulfate	Magnesium sulfate	Use the complete spelling for drug names
MgSO ₄	Magnesium sulfate	Morphine sulfate	Use the complete spelling for drug names
µg	microgram	Mistaken for mg when handwritten	Use mcg
H.S. or hs	Half strength or Latin abbreviation for at	Can result in dosing error	Write out "half strength" or "At bedtime"

Effective: **October 1, 2006**

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Supersedes: N/A

Approved: On file
Medical Director

On file
EMS Administrator

Abbreviation	INTENDED MEANING	MISINTERPRETATION	CORRECTION
	bedtime.		
S.C. or S.Q.	Subcutaneous	Mistaken as SL for sublingual	Write out "Sub-Q or subcutaneously.
c.c.	Cubic centimeters	Mistaken for U (units) when poorly written.	Write "ml" for milliliters
A.S., A.D., A.U.	Latin abbreviation for left, right or both ears.	Mistaken for OS, OD, OU (respectively)	Write: "Left ear", "Right ear", or "Both ears"

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