

# Guidelines for Issue of RFDS Medical Chest

RFDS medical chests contain a range of pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical items, which enable emergency and non-emergency treatment to be given to people living and working in remote areas. The chests are an important tool to enable RFDS medical practitioners to treat people on-site for many conditions and to provide necessary treatment (e.g. pain relief) for those requiring emergency evacuation. They also provide enormous comfort to those living in the outback.

As such it contains a large number of "prescription only" pharmaceutical items. It is a condition of the provision of the chest that these drugs be used only on the advice of a **Registered RFDS Medical Officer**. The drugs provided are coded using a simple numbering system since the chemical and brand names may vary from time to time. These item numbers are known by RFDS Medical Officers, who are familiar with the contents of the chest and its use.

Items in the chest are in the following categories:

- Analgesics
- Antibiotics
- Antihistamines
- Cardiovascular
- Gastrointestinal
- Obstetric & Gynaecological
- Topical
- Anaphylactics
- Anti-Convulsants / Sedatives
- Burns
- Eardrops
- Genitourinary
- Ophthalmic
- Respiratory

## Entitlement to a Medical Chest

1. Chests should be available to persons living permanently in isolated areas without reasonable access to medical services

An isolated area is defined as one in which the applicant does not live within 80 kilometres of professional medical attention

Reasonable access is defined as meaning that the applicant can in all weather conditions reach a medical centre

Living permanently is defined as having permanent residence or in the case of itinerant workers being in an isolated area for the majority of the year (greater than 6 months)

2. Applicants who have permanent telephone contact with the Royal Flying Doctor Service
3. Chests may be approved for persons who are employed or making their livelihood in Isolated Areas (See paragraph 1 for definition)  
  
This would include field parties' survey teams and the like providing other requirements are met. This would not include persons undertaking a single trip of duration.
4. In the case of applicants living within 80 kilometres of a medical facility but where they are separated from that facility by geographic features which cause inaccessibility they can be construed as not having reasonable access even though they live within 80 kilometre distance.
5. Chests *may* be issued to other applicants providing the above criteria are met however; the chest and contents will be at the applicant's expense. E.g.:
  - Commonwealth Government of State Government Departments or instrumentalities
  - Tourist / Recreational / Demonstration / Educational or similar private activities
  - Mining or Drilling Sites
  - Corporate Companies

*All* applicants are required to meet the cost of the steel container and Non-Subsidised applicants are required to meet all costs including freight (Please see Medical Chest Costing).

6. When the Department does not approve the supply of chest contents at Commonwealth Expense an applicant may be eligible to a non-subsidised medical chest via a subscription plan, provided a need is established and RFDSSE agreeable.

In such event the section must secure an assurance that **the applicant will comply with the procedures for use of the chest involving compliance with State Laws governing drug usage.**

## Medical Chest Costing

1. When a chest application is approved under the Government Subsidy Scheme, the only cost to the applicant is the cost of the metal container.
2. When a chest application is not approved for Subsidy, the applicant is required to subscribe to the Medical Chest Non-Subsidised Subscription Program.

The current costs of the program will be outlined in the agreement sent to the Chest Applicant

3. On payment the chest and contents will be ordered from HPS – our Pharmacy supplier

## Responsibilities of a Chest Custodian

- 1 The RFDS Medical Chest is issued for a particular location and therefore the chest and contents cannot be removed from the approved location without the prior approval of the RFDS
- 2 The applicant will read and sign the Agreement and Declaration form and return to the Broken Hill Base Prior to supply of the Medical Chest.
- 3 The applicant will complete the Medical Chest orientation online within 6 weeks of chest approval. This will take approximately 20 minutes.
- 4 The Chest Custodian is to advise the RFDS if the responsibility of the chest will be handed over permanently to another person, or if the custodian is leaving the property
- 5 **An RFDS Doctor is the only person authorised to prescribe the use of Drugs from the Medical Chest.**
- 6 The contents of the chest are to be kept in the metal cabinet and kept locked when not in use as they remain the property of RFDSSE at all times.  
Items marked with an ® are to be stored in a refrigerated environment.
- 7 The contents of the chest are to be made available at no cost to all persons requiring medical aid when prescribed by the RFDS Medical Officer.
- 8 The contents are to be checked as regularly (at least every 3 months) and expired/used items to be replaced when required.
- 9 A record of chest usage for all prescription only items is to be kept using the Drug Usage Record Form
- 10 The Chest Custodian will report any misuse or theft of the Monitored Drug to the Local Police and the RFDS.