

Precursor Control Legislation

Canada's Drug Strategy is the federal response to the harmful use of substances. These include illegal drugs, alcohol, pharmaceuticals, inhalants and solvents. The Strategy takes a balanced approach to reducing both the demand for, and the supply of, drugs and substances. It contributes to a healthier, safer Canada through prevention, treatment, enforcement, and harm reduction initiatives.

Dismantling the Foundation

Synthetic drugs such as methamphetamine, ecstasy (MDMA and MDA), LSD and PCP, as well as the clandestine laboratories used to manufacture them, pose a serious health and public safety risk to Canadians. The chemicals – known as “precursors” – which are frequently used in the illicit production of these drugs may be explosive, flammable, and/or highly toxic. Because of the risk of fire, explosion and poisonous gas, clandestine labs are dangerous crime scenes and a risk to the public and first responders, such as police. There is also the risk of groundwater contamination and other environmental dangers as these chemicals can be flushed down drains or simply discarded on the ground.

In addition to measures aimed at reducing the demand for these substances, substantial enforcement initiatives are directed at limiting the supply of illegal drugs. To support the efforts of enforcement agencies to limit the supply of these synthetic substances, the Government of Canada has implemented regulations that make it more difficult to obtain the precursor chemicals needed to manufacture them.

Canada's *Precursor Control Regulations*, which were developed under the authority of the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* and implemented in 2003, establish a licensing and registration system to monitor and control the production, distribution, import and export of precursor chemicals.

The Regulations apply to the chemicals that are the essential components of illegal substances, as well as other chemicals, such as solvents, that are part of the manufacturing process. The Regulations are designed to control the production and distribution of precursor chemicals without unduly interfering with legitimate commercial and industrial uses. Among other requirements, legitimate producers and users must obtain proper licensing or registration, keep accurate records, record suspicious or unusual transactions, maintain appropriate security, and report any loss or theft of the chemicals listed in the Regulations.

The *Precursor Control Regulations*, and the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* and its other Regulations, ensure that Canada meets its international obligations as a party to three United Nations drug control conventions. Under these conventions, Canada is required to control certain activities related to these drugs and other substances listed in the schedules to the conventions. This in no way limits Canada's ability to list additional substances that may be of particular concern in Canada. Canada's implementation of the *Precursor Control Regulations* has been commended in international reports.

The Precursor Control Regulations are available on the Justice Canada website:
<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/C-38.8/SOR-2002-359/index.html>

Additional information on the licensing and registration process is also available on the Office of Controlled Substances website at:
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/substancontrol/chem-chim/index_e.html

To learn more about Canada's Drug Strategy, please visit www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cds

Find out what governments, non-governmental organizations, and other partners are doing – National Framework for Action – Visit
www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cds-nfa

