

Chapter 3

Guidelines for Retrieving Multi-User Breast Pumps

Guidelines for Retrieving Multi-User Breast Pumps

The following guidelines should be used when a WIC participant does not return a multi-user electric breast pump by its due date. If these procedures are followed and documented, local agencies will not be financially liable for the pump. When these procedures are not followed, the local agency will be charged according to the depreciation schedule given in Table 2. Local agencies that have experience with multi-user electric breast pumps indicate that only a small percentage may not be returned to the clinic.

MUSTS

To prevent financial liability: The following conditions must be met to prevent financial liability for pumps not returned to your agency.

- **At a minimum, local agencies shall attempt to reach the participant once per week over a four-week period, i.e., a total of four attempts.** Each of the four attempts must be documented on the breast pump log or on the participant's release form.
- **At least one of the four documented attempts to retrieve the pump must be a written letter.** The letter should be in Spanish if being sent to a Spanish-speaking participant. Both English and Spanish form letters are included on pages 38 and 39.
- The following situations can be documented as attempts:
 - There is no answer when you attempt to reach the participant by phone.
 - You talk to the participant, on the phone or in person.
 - You leave a message on an answering machine, via voice mail, or with another person **asking the participant to call the clinic.**
 - You send a postcard **requesting that the participant call the clinic.** Attach any returned postcards to the inventory log, or document a non-response if the postcard is not returned.
 - The participant is not home when you attempt to visit her there.
 - A local agency's retrieval letter is mailed to the participant. If the letter is returned, attach letter(s) to the inventory log. Document a non-response if the letter is not returned.

- If a participant tells you the pump was stolen, document it on the log. No further attempts should be made to retrieve the pump. **Do not lend the participant another multi-user pump.**
- You can contact the person listed as “other contact” on the participant’s release form only to verify the participant’s current phone number and address or to request that the “other contact” ask the participant to call the clinic. Verifying the participant’s current phone number and address **cannot** be counted as an attempt. Asking the “other contact” to have the participant call the clinic **can** be counted as an attempt.
- If the above requirements have been met and the pump has still not been returned, notify your WIC director and the WIC breastfeeding coordinator at DSHS of the loss of the pump within five weeks of its due date. **Your local agency will not be financially liable if all of the above conditions have been met.**

Tips for Pump Retrieval

- Ask the participant if she still needs a pump. If she does, offer to give her a single-user pump (electric or manual) when she returns the multi-user pump.
- If the participant says she will return the pump, ask her when she will do so. Tell the participant you are writing down her promise to return the pump on the schedule, and document the promise on her release form. You can use this information if you need to contact the participant again. (For example: “You said you would return the pump on _____. Is there a problem? Do you have transportation? Do you need us to pick up the pump?”)

MUST NOTS

All local agencies are required to comply with state and federal fair debt-collection practices when attempting to retrieve a multi-user breast pump. Under the fair debt-collection practices, a debt collector:

- may not engage in any conduct whose natural consequence is to harass, oppress, or abuse any person in connection with the collection of a debt;
- may not use false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of any debt; and
- may not use unfair or unconscionable means to collect, or attempt to collect, any debt.

When attempting to retrieve a pump, under no circumstances should you:

- Send a postcard stating you are trying to retrieve a pump
- Leave a message on an answering machine stating you are trying to retrieve a pump.
- Call the “other contact” on the release form stating that you are trying to retrieve a pump.
- Identify yourself as anyone other than a WIC staff member.
- Call the participant at work or home before 8 a.m. or after 9 p.m.
- Continue to call the participant at work after she has asked you not to call her there.
- Continue to call a participant after she tells you a pump was stolen.
- Use a third party, such as a local sheriff’s department or debt collector, to attempt to retrieve a pump.
- Withhold vouchers or services from WIC participants who do not return a pump.

This is not an all-inclusive list of state and federal fair debt-collection practices. Contact the following persons if you have additional questions about appropriate debt-collection practices or retrieval of a pump.

- Local agencies 01, 03, 07, 10, 11, 13, 15, 21, 22, 26, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 46, 48, 51, 54, 56, 58, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 70, 71, 74, 83, 84, 87, 88 should contact Tracy Erickson, WIC breastfeeding coordinator, at (512) 458-7444, ext. 3409.
- All other local agencies should contact their agency’s legal counsel.

Sample Local Agency Breast Pump Retrieval Letter

Dear name of participant,

You received a Hollister Elite breast pump from us on date. You signed a release form when you received the pump stating that you would return the breast pump on due date. It has not been returned as of this date. We have made number attempts to reach you by calling phone number or sending you a letter at address but have been unable to contact you.

The breast pump you were lent is reserved for WIC mothers who have premature or sick babies in the hospital. These babies often do not survive without their mother=s milk. We have a limited number of pumps to lend to WIC moms, so it is important that the pump lent to you be returned.

If you need a breast pump to continue breastfeeding, please let the WIC staff know upon returning the Elite pump. The WIC clinic will most likely have a pump to give you to help you maintain your milk supply.

The breast pump you borrowed is State of Texas property and must be returned. If we do not received a reply by date, we will notify the Texas Department of Health of your failure to return the breast pump. The Texas Department of Health will decide what further actions may be taken.

Please contact WIC staff member at WIC phone number to make arrangements for the return of the breast pump. If you do not have transportation, a WIC staff member can pick it up. It is extremely important that WIC be able to provide breast pumps to mothers who need them.

Sincerely,

This form letter can be modified with the approval from the state breastfeeding coordinator.

Muestra de correspondencia de la Agencia Local para la recuperación de la bomba extractora.

Estimada nombre de la participante / participant's name

Usted recibió de nosotros el préstamo de una bomba extractora de leche de marca Hollister el date/fecha. Cuando recibió la bomba extractora, usted firmó un formulario comprometiéndose a devolverla el fecha/date. Hasta la fecha, todavía no ha devuelto la bomba. Hemos intentado comunicarnos con usted número/number veces llamando al número de teléfono/telephone number o e carta a dirección/address pero no hemos podido encontrarla.

La bomba extractora de leche que le prestamos está reservada para las mamás del programa de WIC quienes tienen bebés prematuros o enfermos en el hospital. Con frecuencia, estos bebés no sobreviven sin la leche de sus mamás. Nosotros tenemos un número limitado de bombas extractoras para prestar a las mamás que participan en el programa de WIC, por lo tanto es importante que nos devuelva la bomba extractora que le prestamos.

Si usted necesita una bomba extractora de leche para continuar alimentando con el pecho, por favor hágase saber al personal de WIC una vez que devuelva la bomba extractora de marca. Es muy posible que la clínica de WIC tenga otra bomba extractora que le puedan prestar para ayudarle a mantener su producción de leche.

La bomba extractora de leche que usted tomó prestada es propiedad del Estado de Texas y debe ser devuelta. Si no recibimos una respuesta para el fecha/date, notificaremos al Departamento de Salud de Texas que usted ha fallado en devolver la bomba extractora de leche. El Departamento de Salud de Texas decidirá que acciones tomará en el futuro en referencia a su caso.

Por favor comuníquese con nombre del empleado de WIC / WIC staff member al teléfono de WIC/WIC phone number para hacer arreglos y devolver la bomba extractora de leche. Si usted no tiene transporte, un empleado de WIC puede ir a recoger la bomba extractora de leche. Es de suma importancia que el programa de WIC pueda proveer las bombas extractoras de leche a las mamás que las necesitan.

Atentamente,

This form letter can be modified with approval from the state breastfeeding coordinator.

