In considering information on Anaesthetic Unit Vaporizers contained in the publication of ‘Abstracts’, January 12, 2001 Vol 25. No.2 in the Health Devices Alert, the Statewide Anaesthesia Reference Group agreed that the following extract should be quoted and circulated for the attention of all anaesthetists:

“DEVICE: Sevotec % Anesthetic Unit Vaporizers

Manufacturer: (1 and 2) Datex-Ohmeda (Medical Systems)
An Instrumentarium Co [347595], 3030 Ohmeda Dr PO Box 7550, Madison WI53707-7550

Abstract: The authors evaluated the relationship amongst actual delivered sevoflurane concentrations, fresh gas flow (FGF), and the vaporizer fill state of 5 Sevotec 5 anaesthesia unit vaporizers with the dial set at 8%. The authors state that the delivered sevoflurane concentrations decreased to, 2% at FGFs of 10L/min in all vaporizers and that these decreases occurred well before the empty mark was reached on the vaporizer. The FGF rate at which a significant drop in delivered sevoflurane concentration was first apparent was 7.5L/min in 1 vaporizer, and 10L/min in 3 vaporizers. The authors conclude that the Sevotec 5 anesthesia unit vaporizer can deliver low output when the fill state is above the minimum level at high flow rates and dial settings near 8% and that careful attention to inspired sevoflurane concentrations and use of lower flows can avoid decreased anesthetic delivery.


An issue relating to Bacterial Contamination of Propofol in the Operating Theatre was brought to the attention of the Group. This issue was reported in the publication ‘Anaesthesia and Intensive Care’, Vol 27 No. 5, October 1999 and accordingly the Group advises as follows:-.

"Bacterial contamination of Propofol has been demonstrated in a recent study. The authors therefore recommend that:

(1) Propofol should be drawn into syringes immediately after opening the ampoule and used as soon as possible"
(2) The syringe should be capped if there is a delay before use

(3) The Propofol should be discarded if there is any doubt about its integrity

(4) Consider cleaning the ampoule neck before opening"

Dr Dorothy Jones
ACTING CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER