

# Who needs a Veterinary Practice Permit?

## Introduction

This information is intended for veterinary surgeons using scheduled drugs to treat animals in Western Australia (WA).

The controls over supply of Schedule 4 (prescription only) and Schedule 8 (controlled drugs) substances in WA are through the Medicines and Poisons Act 2014 and Medicines and Poisons Regulations 2016. A Veterinary Practice Permit (a Permit) can be issued for the purpose of purchasing scheduled drugs for use in providing veterinary services and the [application form](https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Application-forms-for-Licences-and-Permits) is available on the Department of Health website.

Individual veterinary surgeons do not require a Permit where they are purchasing drugs

* in their own name,
* for their exclusive use and
* where the drugs are stored at the registered veterinary clinic or hospital that is their usual place of practice.

## Veterinary practices and hospitals

A Permit is required if the veterinary clinic or hospital (as a business entity) wishes to purchase scheduled drugs for use by multiple veterinary surgeons at the practice.

The permit holder has overall responsibility for compliance with the Medicines and Poisons legislation at the practice, including the purchase, storage, security and records of the supply and use of the scheduled drugs. It is recommended permit holders ensure written policies and procedures are available so all staff at the practice understand their responsibilities when handling scheduled drugs.

Although a licensed wholesaler can only deliver to the practice address, individual veterinary surgeons working at the practice can use scheduled drugs both at the practice and when treating patients at other locations, such as at the client’s home or at a farm.

When taking drugs away from the practice, the drugs must remain in the veterinary surgeon’s possession at all times. Drugs are to be transported in a “doctor’s bag” or in a locked container attached to the body of the veterinary surgeon’s vehicle.

## Mobile only veterinary practices

A Permit is always required by veterinary surgeons who wish to operate a mobile only veterinary business.

### Storage

* Permits will only be issued with a single storage address, usually the veterinary surgeon’s home address.
* Where the mobile veterinary surgeon takes quantities of drugs away from the storage address to treat their patients, these drugs are to be transported in a “doctor’s bag” or in a locked container attached to the body of the veterinary surgeon’s vehicle.
* At all other times, Schedule 4 drugs must be stored in a locked cupboard or locked room. A locked refrigerator or refrigerator in a locked room may also be required. Schedule 8 drugs must be stored in an [approved safe](https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/S_T/Storage-of-Schedule-8-medicines).
* Other household members must not be able to access the drugs, including accepting deliveries.

### Delivery

* Licensed wholesalers can only deliver to the premises listed on the Permit.
* Mobile veterinary surgeons can [apply](https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Application-forms-for-Licences-and-Permits) to have a colleague’s veterinary clinic or hospital added to their Permit as a “delivery only” location. The Department of Health requires a signed letter from the permit holder for the veterinary clinic or hospital indicating they agree to accept deliveries on behalf of the ordering mobile veterinary surgeon.
* Mobile veterinary surgeons are expected to collect their orders at the earliest opportunity and no later than two business days after delivery for Schedule 4 medicines. Schedule 8 medicines should be collected on the day they are delivered.
* The receiving veterinary clinic or hospital must store the delivered drugs securely until the mobile veterinary surgeon collects their order.
* Both the mobile veterinary surgeon and the staff at the delivery location may be held responsible in the event any scheduled drugs are lost or stolen during the delivery process.

## Veterinary surgeons who only want to treat their own animals

Even where they are not working at or operating a veterinary business (such as after retirement), some registered veterinary surgeons wish to purchase small quantities of scheduled drugs from a wholesaler to treat their own animals.

As the veterinary surgeon is not practising at a registered clinic or hospital, a Permit is required. The situation is similar to a veterinary surgeon operating a mobile veterinary business (see above for details, including use of “delivery only” locations).

The Medicines and Poisons Regulations 2016 require all Schedule 4 and Schedule 8 drugs intended for the treatment of specific animals to be labelled with particular information, including the species of the animal, owner/carer’s surname and directions for use. There are also requirements for clinical records to be kept about the treatment of all animals.

### More information

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