

Working with medicines

# Pharmacists

## Regulations

Pharmacists, registered with the national board, have various authorities under the Medicines and Poisons Regulations 2016 to purchase, hold and use prescription medicines.

## Authority

The following table outlines the authority of pharmacists to use medicines under the Regulations:

| **Practitioner** | **Type of Authority** | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Obtain (purchase)** | **Possess** | **Administer** | **Supply** | **Dispense** | **Prescribe** |
| Pharmacist | 🗸 | 🗸 | 🗸 1 | 🗸 1, 2 | 🗸 |  |

Notes

1. in accordance with a Structured Administration and Supply Arrangement.
2. to authorised persons in accordance with the Regulations.

Any authority is limited to the lawful practice of the professional and includes:

* within scope of practice / general professional limitations;
* for patients under the care of the health practitioner;
* at usual place of business (the registered pharmacy);
* in the course of operating the practitioner’s business / as part of employment; and
* any relevant restrictions or conditions imposed on the individual practitioner.

Scope of practice for pharmacists is as defined by the Pharmacy Board of Australia.

## Purchasing medicines

Pharmacists may purchase medicines to use, dispense or supply from a registered pharmacy.

## Supply and prescription

Pharmacists may dispense a Schedule 4 (S4) or Schedule 8 (S8) medicine in accordance with their authority, and on the direction of an authorised prescriber via a valid prescription.

A pharmacist may supply a S4 or S8 to an authorised professional (e.g. doctors bag supplies), according to the Regulations. Wholesaling activities are not permitted unless the pharmacy business also holds a Wholesale Licence.

A pharmacist may administer a Schedule 4 medicine in accordance with a Structured Administration and Supply Arrangement (e.g. influenza vaccine).

Any medicine dispensed or supplied must be appropriately packaged and fully labelled according to regulations.

Pharmacists may supply Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 medicines by retail sale, in accordance with their authority.

## Storage

S 4 medicines must be stored in a locked storage facility to prevent unauthorised access. For example: a lockable room, cupboard, cabinet or refrigerator. Precautions must be taken to ensure keys are not accessible to unauthorised staff.

S8 medicines must be stored in a locked purpose-built drug safe. Storage of a total of S8 medicines less than of 250 doses requires a small safe and greater than 500 doses requires a large safe. Motion detectors covering the safe are required when more than 250 doses are stored.

## Recording

Pharmacists must make accurate clinical records (e.g. dispensing records / “prescription book”) of all medicines administered, dispensed or supplied and retain these for at least 2 years for S4 medicines, or 5 years for S8 medicines. All records must be available to be produced if demanded by an authorised officer of the Department of Health.

A register of transactions, kept in an approved manner and form, must be maintained for all incoming and outgoing S8 medicines. A monthly inventory must be also performed.

When S8 medicines are supplied, a summary of clinical records of S8 medicines supplied for the month must be forwarded to the Department of Health, before the seventh day of the following month.

## Compliance assessment

Pharmacies and pharmacists may be required to participate in routine audit assessments to monitor compliance with these requirements.

Non-compliance with the Regulations may result in regulatory actions such as restrictions or loss of medicines authorities, notification to the Pharmacy Board of Australia, and/or prosecution under the legislation.

## More information

For more information contact the Medicines and Poisons Regulation Branch on:

* (08) 9222 6883 (Monday – Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm)
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