



THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

Fact Sheet: Schedule 8 Medicines (Western Australia)

Criterion 5.3.1: Schedule 8 medicines

Our practice ensures that Schedule 8 medicines are stored securely and are only accessed by authorised personnel.

Indicator A

Schedule 8 medicines in our practice are securely stored.

Indicator B

The acquisition, storage, use, transfer and disposal of Schedule 8 medicines in our practice is appropriately documented.

1. What is required of practices for the *Standards* (3rd edition)?

The RACGP *Standards for general practices* (3rd ed) ask that general practices ensure that Schedule 8 (S8) medicines are stored securely and are only accessed by authorised personnel. All sensible security measures need to be taken to prevent unauthorised access to these medicines and practices are encouraged to be familiar with their state or territory legislation regarding the acquisition, storage, use, transfer and disposal of S8 medicines. Appropriate documentation is needed in relation to: the date of administration; details of patient; quantity of medicines coming in; quantity of medicines going out; quantity of medicines still held; comments about conditions prevailing (eg. breakages); and the signature of person(s) entering the data and administering the medicine.

2. The feedback from the consultations

Feedback received during the development of the RACGP *Standards* (3rd ed.) indicated a lack of clarity regarding legislative requirements for the use and storage of S8 medicines in Western Australian (WA) general practices. To assist practices, a summary of the legislation for Western Australia is provided below for reference. This summary has been produced by the RACGP to help clarify the requirements. The legislation is subject to change. General practices are urged to read the legislation documents themselves to determine if they are compliant.



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Acquisition, Storage, Use and Disposal of Schedule 8 Medicines

Acquisition	Authority for prescribed persons to procure and have S8 medicines – section 42 A GP is authorised to obtain and be in possession of S8 medicines for the purpose of his or her profession or employment.
Storage	Storing and securing S8 medicines – section 56 A safe for the storage of a S8 medicine shall be either: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- a free-standing safe weighing at least 500 kilograms, but if the weight is less than 1 tonne, then the safe shall be securely bolted through a concrete floor by a person who is licensed under the Security Agents Act 1976 4 as a security agent or guard to install safes The safe shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- be lockable by means of either a key or a combination lock- have a steel plate door at least 12 millimetres thick, with at least 2 locking bolts that are at least 25 millimetres thick, and- have a manufacturer's recommendation that items with a total value of at least \$30,000 stored in the safe be eligible for insurance cover, or an under-floor safe as follows:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- embedded in concrete by a person who is licensed under the Security Agents Act 1976 5 as a security agent or guard to install safes,- lockable by means of a combination lock;- having a heavy cast, high tensile steel lid that is secured at least 25 millimetres below a steel top plate, and- having the manufacturer's recommendation that items with a total value of at least \$30,000 stored in the safe be eligible for insurance cover. GPs must take reasonable precautions to protect the S8 medicines against theft or loss.



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Use	<p>Form of registers – section 44B A medicine register may be maintained on paper, electronically or in another approved manner.</p> <p>If a register is maintained on paper, all entries in the register are required to be made in ink.</p> <p>When the register is not maintained in a paper format, the information in the register must be recorded or stored in such a way that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- will remain in the form in which it was originally recorded or stored, and- is capable of being reproduced in written form on paper. <p>The GP must make all the S8 medicines registers available for inspection on request by persons authorised under the Act to inspect registers.</p> <p>Entries into a medicine register must not be altered, obliterated or deleted. An error in a register can be corrected by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- by making a marginal or foot note and initialling and dating the note (if the register is maintained on paper), or- in another manner approved by the Commissioner for Health. <p>Inventory of S8 medicines – section 45 An inventory of S8 medicines held in stock shall be made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- at intervals of not more than one month- by a person who is about to relinquish control of S8 medicines, and- on taking receipt of S8 medicines. <p>The result of that inventory is to be recorded in the medicines register. If such an inventory of stock does not agree with the balance recorded in the medicines register, the person required to keep the register shall immediately notify the Commissioner of Health in writing of the discrepancy.</p> <p>Records to be retained for 7 years and available on demand – section 47. All records, registers, prescription books, invoices and other documents relating to S8 medicines shall be kept for not less than 7 years from the latest date of entry. These shall be made available for inspection on demand by an authorised health department officer.</p> <p>If a register is lost or destroyed the owner of the register shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- forward to the Commissioner of Health a statutory declaration concerning that loss or destruction,- shall immediately take stock of all S8 medicines in his or her possession and enter details of those stocks in a new register. <p>A GP, on ceasing to be authorised to obtain or hold S8 medicines shall, if requested by the Commissioner of Health, surrender any records, registers, prescription books, invoices or other documents and stocks of medicines that are in his or her possession to the Commissioner of Health.</p> <p>A GP will ensure that no false entries are made into records, registers, returns, prescription books, invoices and other documents relating to S8 medicines.</p>
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Disposal	Destruction of drugs of addiction and poisons included in Schedule 8 – section 44A S8 medicines must not be wilfully destroyed. Destruction of S8 medicines may only be permitted for the purpose disposal by a GP and witness who can be <ul style="list-style-type: none">- a police officer acting under the <i>Misuse of Drugs Act 1981</i>- a pharmacist authorised to possess and supply poisons included in Schedule 8,- another GP, or- a director of nursing. A person who destroys S8 medicines must maintain a register of the medicines destroyed and record in it, at the time of each destruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the date of destruction,- the name, strength and quantity of the medicine destroyed,- the reason for the destruction,- the name of the witness to the destruction, and- if the register is maintained on paper, to sign (together with the witness) that entry in the register.
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The abovementioned information is based on material in:

Western Australian Poisons Regulations, 1965. Available at:
http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol_reg/pr1965230/. Accessed on 29 November 2005.

The RACGP strongly recommends that practice staff read the legislation.

Further enquiries relating to the Western Australian legislation should be directed to:

Coordinator, Pharmaceutical Services
Health WA
Tel: 08 9388 4980
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NB The term 'S8 medicines' is used in this summary to describe the 'drugs of addiction' referred to in the Western Australian Poisons Regulations 1965.