

## Communiqué

21 October 2016

The Victorian Pharmacy Authority (the "Authority") met on 11 October 2016 at the Authority offices.

### **Increased use of S8 poisons requires increased storage capacity**

Because of the introduction of new S8 poisons and new strengths of existing products, larger or additional safes are often needed. In some cases, stock outstrips the safe's capacity and other cupboards or filing cabinets have been used. The specifications for the safes and the approved methods of installation have remained unchanged for many years yet inspectors sometimes see safes more suited to office or domestic use being used to store S8 poisons.

Licensees are reminded that the keys to the S8 safes must be secured at all times. Many pharmacies do not have multiple keys for the S8 safe(s) and it is recommended that a key safe (combination lock) be considered for the secure storage of the keys. The keys must not be left in a locked drawer or hidden in a supposedly secret place, especially when the pharmacy is closed.

The installation of a movement detector sensor to cover the safe is required. If more than one safe is in use, all of them must be covered by one or more sensors. Depending on the design of the pharmacy, the general dispensary sensor may cover the safe but if the safe is outside of its direct range, an additional one will be needed.

### **Sending Schedule 8 poisons by post**

The Authority has written to Australia Post to clarify earlier correspondence on this subject. Australia Post has confirmed previous advice that the supply by post of controlled drugs within the meaning of the *Crimes Act 1914* (in effect, S8 poisons) is illegal. Supply by a private courier company is acceptable.

### **Ransomware scams**

The Authority continues to hear reports of pharmacies being targeted by *ransomware*, a type of malicious software that handicaps computer functionality, for example, through browser hijacking or encrypting personal data, and offers to restore the functionality for a fee, which is a form of extortion.

The Pharmacy Board of Australia previously warned pharmacists about the risks and their obligations to maintain health records securely (available [here](#)).

The Authority recommends pharmacists and stakeholders visit the Australian Government's [Stay Smart Online](#) website which provides online safety and security information. The site provides access to a free Alert Service to explain recent online threats and how they can be managed.

### **Recent Panel Hearings**

The Authority held no Panel Hearings in September.

Toni Riley  
Chair  
21 October 2016