

Managing Schedule 8 poisons – a reference guide for pharmacists

Storage



Where can you store S8 poisons?

You must store all S8 poisons in your possession (e.g. pharmacy stock, expired, returned) in a lockable drug safe:

- constructed in accordance with Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2017.
- securely fixed to the floor or wall in accordance with MPR (DHHS) guidance document *Managing Schedule 8 poisons – requirements for pharmacists*.

Insufficient storage capacity

You must obtain a larger (or additional) safe if the existing drug safe is insufficient to accommodate all S8 poisons.

Exclusivity

S8 poisons must not be stored with any other items (including cash) except drugs of dependence.

Access



Drug safe keys

Safe keys must be strictly controlled by the pharmacist to prevent unauthorised access and reduce the likelihood of misappropriation.

It is not acceptable to leave the key in the door of the safe or keep it in a hidden location of the pharmacy where it might be located by persons other than pharmacists during and outside business hours.



Management Tip

Consider purchasing an extra small safe for the pharmacy of similar level of security to the drug safe with a combination lock or keypad to store the drug safe keys, the codes to which will be limited to pharmacists.

When can the drug safe be opened?

You must ensure that the drug safe remains locked and secured at all times except when it is necessary to open it to carry out an essential operation in connection with the S8 poisons.

For information:

1. Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981
2. Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2017
3. Victorian Pharmacy Authority Guidelines
4. MPR (DHHS) guidance documents:
 - Dispensing medicines – requirements for pharmacists
 - Managing Schedule 8 poisons – requirements for pharmacists
 - Pharmacists – key requirements in Victoria

Disclaimer: The information provided in this reference guide on managing S8 poisons is by no means exhaustive. Pharmacists should refer to the relevant legislation and guidelines on S8 poisons.

Records



True and accurate records

You must make true and accurate records of all transactions in S8 poisons in the drug register, where possible immediately after the transaction but no later than the same day of the transaction.

You must maintain records in a manner that ensures that the records cannot be altered, obliterated, deleted or removed without detection.

True and accurate balances

You must verify that the drug register shows the true and accurate balance of the S8 poison remaining after each transaction.

Emergency directions from a prescriber

You must record the transaction in the drug register when supply occurs rather than delaying recording until the prescription is received.

Insufficient stock

When only a portion of a prescribed quantity is supplied, the supplied portion is the quantity that must be recorded. Any further part of the remaining portion should be recorded if and when it is supplied. Accompanying notes may be made e.g. 'Part supply' or 'Balance of part supply.'



Management Tips

Schedule regular S8 poisons stock checks to confirm the balance in the drug register as an added compliance measure.

Consider using an electronic register to record S8 poisons transactions.

Readily retrievable

You must retain in a secure place at the pharmacy for 3 years from the date of transaction:

- all S8 poison transaction records in a readily retrievable form.
- S8 prescriptions held separately from other records.

Destruction



Destruction of expired or returned S8 poisons

Witness

You must destroy the S8 poison in the presence of a witness who is a registered pharmacist, medical practitioner, dentist, veterinary practitioner, nurse or midwife.

Records

You must record the details of the destruction in the drug register specifying:

- i. the name, strength and quantity of the poisons destroyed.
- ii. the method and place of destruction.
- iii. the name of the person carrying out the destruction.
- iv. the name of the witness.
- v. reason for destruction.



Management Tips

Use a separate drug register or designated page/s of the drug register to record 'Drugs for destruction,' to accurately account for returned or expired S8 poisons.

Schedule regular destruction sessions to avoid the build up of unwanted S8 poisons and maximise useable space in the safe.

RUM bins

S8 poison disposed of in the RUM bin for high-temperature incineration must be rendered unidentifiable and unrecoverable to prevent it being retrieved.

Notification



Discrepancy in the drug register

You must investigate without delay any discrepancies and notify MPR (DHHS) if the discrepancy remains unresolved.

Loss or theft of a S8 poison

You must notify MPR (DHHS) and Victoria Police after becoming aware of it.

If records kept in relation to S8 poisons are lost, stolen or destroyed

You must notify MPR (DHHS).

How to notify Medicines and Poisons

Refer to DHHS guidance document *Pharmacists – key requirements in Victoria*.

