



Standards for dispensing practitioners

The College of Pharmacists of British Columbia (CPBC) is responsible for the administration of the *Health Professions Act*, and the *Pharmacy Operations and Drug Scheduling Act* and thereby the protection of the public health as it relates to pharmacy services and drug distribution. The following information has been compiled to assist practitioners in complying with basic dispensing standards.

By choosing to dispense medication, a practitioner assumes the responsibilities required of the pharmacist, such as accurately labeling and dispensing medications, maintaining proper records, supplying necessary patient information regarding the proper use of drugs, and maintaining adequate security for drug inventories. The responsibilities may not be delegated. Nurses are not permitted to order drugs from suppliers.

The four principal statutes that govern the distribution of drugs in British Columbia are:

- The *Health Professions Act* and the *Pharmacy Operations and Drug Scheduling Act* (PODSA), Drug Schedules, and the Bylaws of the College of Pharmacists of BC made pursuant to these Acts.
- Food and Drugs Act and Regulations (Federal).
- Controlled Drug and Substances Act (Federal).

The acts and statutes listed above appear in the *BC Pharmacy Practice Manual*, which is posted on the CPBC website at http://www.bcpharmacists.org/resources/bc_pharmacy_practice_manual/

The summary of extracts on the following pages should provide the dispensing practitioner with the guidelines necessary to maintain the required level of drug control.

Summary of standards for dispensing practitioners

Accountability for dispensing prescriptions rests **only** with the pharmacist or practitioner. Practitioners may dispense prescriptions **only to their own patients** (not another practitioner's).

Prescription records

- All drugs dispensed must be recorded on a written prescription form and retained on file for a period of not less than three years.
- Prescriptions for controlled drug substances are filed separately from other prescriptions. Manufacturers' labels identify controlled drug substances with special symbols.
- Other prescription drugs are identified by a special symbol on the label.
- Prescriptions are numbered and filed in chronological order.
- Filed prescriptions must include the following information: the date, patient's name and address, drug name, strength, quantity, directions for use, and practitioner's signature.
- Prescription files shall be accessible to authorized inspectors of the Health Protection Branch and the College of Pharmacists of British Columbia.

Controlled drug substances (including narcotics)

Security from loss and theft: all necessary steps must be taken to protect controlled drug substances from loss or theft. Any loss (including breakage) or theft of narcotic or controlled drugs must be reported within 10 days of discovery to:

Health Canada
Office of Controlled Substances
Compliance, Monitoring & Liaison Division
A.L. 3502B
Ottawa, ON K1A 1B9
Tel: (613) 954-1541

Records of purchase and sale: purchase records are required for all products containing controlled drug substances and their preparations listed in Schedule G to the Food and Drugs Act and Schedule 2 of the Benzodiazepines and Other Targeted Substances Regulation.

Practitioners are required to keep a record of all controlled drug substances furnished to a person for self-administration if the amount exceeds three times the maximum daily dosage recommended by the manufacturer or three times the generally recognized maximum daily therapeutic dosage for that controlled drug substance.

A register should be created and maintained to record sales and purchases of controlled drug substances (including narcotics).

The register must contain the following information:

Receipt of drugs

- Name and quantity of drug.
- Name and address of supplier.
- Date received.

Sale of drugs

- Name and quantity of drug.
- Name and address of patient.
- Date of sale.

Containers

All prescriptions must be dispensed in a container that is certified as a "child-resistant package" by the Canadian Standards Association.

In certain instances, regular closures can be used provided that:

- The person for which the prescription is intended directs otherwise
- In the professional judgment of the practitioner it is not advisable to use a child-resistant package in that particular situation
- A child-resistant package is not suitable because of the physical form of the drug or the manufacturer's packaging is designed to improve patient compliance
- Child-resistant packages are unavailable on the market.

The application of these conditions should be the exception to the rule and not a regular practice.

Prescription labels

All prescriptions must be dispensed with a machine-generated label containing the following information:

1. Name, address, and telephone number of the dispensing practitioner (and institution, where applicable)
2. Prescription number and current dispensing date
3. Patient name
4. Directions for use, including dosage interval, or frequency or maximum daily dose
5. Identification of contents (unless the prescriber wishes otherwise):
 - a. For single-entity products: the generic name of drug, followed by the brand name or the manufacturer's name or Drug Identification Number (DIN)
 - b. For multiple-entity products: the brand name or all ingredients listed, followed by the manufacturer or Drug Identification Number (DIN)
 - c. For compounded preparations: all ingredients
 - d. Quantity and strength of drug

Expiry dates

When the expiry date on a manufacturer's package notes only the month and year, the date is interpreted as the last day of the noted month.

For dispensing purposes, the manufacturer's expiry date is a "consumer-use-by" date, not a "pharmacist-dispense-by" date. Pharmacists and practitioners must calculate the prescription's days supply and ensure that, if used as directed, it will be completed prior to the stated expiry date.

Refrigeration

Upon receipt of drugs, the practitioner should ensure that drugs are stored as directed on the manufacturer's label, and the information needs to be provided to the patient.

Returned drugs

Drugs that have previously been dispensed must not be returned on stock or reused for another patient.

Useful contacts

Prescription regulations, drug schedules, drug security

College of Pharmacists of British Columbia
200 - 1765 West 8th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6J 5C6
Website: <http://www.bcpharmacists.org>

Toll-free telephone 800-663-1940
Telephone 604-733-2440
Fax 604-733-2493
Toll-free fax 800-377-8129

Controlled drug substances (including narcotics) regulations, drug diversion

Health Canada
Health Products and Food Branch Inspectorate
Western Operational Centre
4595 Canada Way
Burnaby, BC V5G 1J9
E-mail: insp_woc-coo@hc-sc.gc.ca

Telephone 604-666-3704
Toll-free 800-267-9675
Assistant telephone 604-666-3895
Fax 604-666-3149

Dispensing fees, labels, economic matters

B.C. Pharmacy Association
1530 - 1200 West 73rd Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6P 6G5

Telephone 604-261-2092
Fax 604-261-2097

PharmaCare

PO Box 9655
Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9P2

Vancouver 604-682-7120
Toll-free 800-554-0225

Drug information, poisoning information, new drugs

Drug and Poison Information Centre
St. Paul's Hospital
1081 Burrard Street
Vancouver, BC V6Z 1Y6

Telephone 604-806-9104
Toll-free 866-298-5909

Child-resistant packages, auxiliary labels, storage files and other supplies

Available from drug wholesalers.