

CRITERIA FOR ISSUING PRINTED COMPUTER-GENERATED PRESCRIPTIONS

Background

The particulars to be included in prescriptions in NSW are set out in clause 35 for restricted substances (Schedule 4 medicines) and clause 80 for drugs of addiction (Schedule 8 medicines) of the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008 (the Regulation), under the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966.

Generally, the Regulation requires the prescriber issuing the prescription to include in his/her **own handwriting**:

- a) the date on which the prescription is issued
- b) the name and address of the patient (or if for an animal the name and address of the owner and the species of the animal)
- c) the date of birth of the patient (in force under the Regulation from 1 November 2022)
- d) the name, strength, route for administration (if not apparent) and quantity of the medicine to be dispensed (for a Schedule 8 medicine the quantity to be dispensed must be handwritten in both words and figures)
- e) the number of repeats to be dispensed (if any) and for certain medicines the time interval between repeat dispensing
- f) adequate directions for use
- g) the prescriber's signature.

Criteria for printed computer-generated prescriptions

Clauses 35(2A) and 80(2) of the Regulation provide that where certain criteria are met, not all the particulars above need to be in the prescriber's own handwriting.

The criteria for printed, computer-generated prescriptions for Schedule 4 medicines (in section A) and Schedule 8 medicines (in section B) below:

- apply to printed prescriptions produced in electronic prescription systems by health practitioners in private practice
- apply to printed prescriptions produced in electronic medication management systems in public and private health facilities
- do not apply to a medication chart prescription under clause 35(1A) of the Regulation.

Where a system for producing printed computer-generated prescriptions does not satisfy the criteria the individual approval of the Secretary, NSW Health must be sought.

For uniformity of prescription presentation and completeness of records, prescriptions issued for NON-PRESCRIPTION medicines (Schedule 2, Schedule 3 and unscheduled medicines) should be produced in accordance with the criteria for Schedule 4 medicines in section A.

General Requirements

1. A computer-generated prescription MUST be issued WITHOUT any handwritten alteration to the printed details to ensure both that the computer system record is consistent with the prescription and that the dispensing pharmacist will not be concerned about either accuracy or possible illegitimacy. However:
 - a) prescriptions issued by a dentist, optometrist, podiatrist or veterinary practitioner must be endorsed in handwriting "For dental treatment only", "For optometrical treatment only", "For podiatry treatment only" or "For animal treatment only" respectively if not printed on the prescription.
 - b) The prescriber must confirm any dose that could be regarded as being dangerous or unusual by underlining the dose and initialling the prescription in handwriting in the margin.
 - c) Where a computer-generated Schedule 8 Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) prescription is printed in duplicate, the mandatory prescribing data elements must be written in the prescriber's own handwriting on the prescription copy to be retained by the pharmacy.
 - d) The prescriber must sign the prescription in handwriting.
2. Any additional requirements of the Commonwealth Government may be included for PBS prescriptions.
3. A duplicate copy must NOT be issued for a non-PBS (private) prescription.

A CRITERIA FOR PRINTED COMPUTER-GENERATED PRESCRIPTIONS FOR SCHEDULE 4 MEDICINES

- 1) The system must print the following data fields on the prescription:
 - a) the date on which the prescription is issued
 - b) the name (first name and last name) and full residential address of the patient (or if for an animal the name and address of the owner and the species of the animal)
 - c) the date of birth of the patient (in force under the Regulation from 1 November 2022)
 - d) the name of the substance or the preparation containing it, including the strength when more than one strength is available
 - e) the quantity being prescribed
 - f) adequate directions for use
 - g) the number of repeats authorised if repeats are ordered
 - h) the interval for repeats for substances in Appendix B of the Regulation (see at <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pharmaceutical/Pages/sch4b.aspx>) and also where deemed appropriate by the prescriber.
- 2) The system producing the prescription must be designed so that requires:
 - a) the prescription to be produced by the prescriber only
 - b) the prescriber to sign, in their own handwriting, the paper prescription form as near as practicable below the last medicine prescribed on the form
 - c) the prescription to be printed on a form:
 - i) which is pre-printed with the name and address and contact telephone number of the prescriber, **OR**

- ii) which the system prints on the prescription, **OR**
- iii) which is pre-printed with at least the address and contact telephone number of the practice/hospital **and** the system individually prints the name of the prescriber on the prescription during generation
- d) a statement to be printed on each prescription form indicating the total number of items prescribed on that prescription form, **AND/OR** any unused area on the prescription form to be scored, hatched or marked to prevent any other item being printed in that area
- e) a number which uniquely identifies the prescription, **OR** which uniquely identifies each prescribed medicine's details (the name, strength, route for administration, if not apparent, and quantity of the medicine) to be printed on the prescription and which can be related to the clinical or prescription record of the patient or animal
- f) when the prescriber requires a dose that is less than 1 mL and that dose is recorded as a decimal value, the dose to be printed with a leading zero (that is, 0.3 mL rather than .3 mL)
- g) the particulars of the prescription included in the clinical or prescription record of the patient or animal
- h) the clinical or prescription record of the patient to be preserved for at least two years from the date on which the prescription was produced and can be accessed when required.

B CRITERIA FOR PRINTED COMPUTER-GENERATED PRESCRIPTIONS FOR SCHEDULE 8 MEDICINES

- 1) The system must print the following data fields on the prescription:
 - a) the date on which the prescription is issued
 - b) the name (first name and last name) and full residential address of the patient (or if for an animal the name and address of the owner and the species of the animal)
 - c) the date of birth of the patient (in force under the Regulation from 1 November 2022)
 - d) the name of the substance or the preparation containing it, including the strength when more than one strength is available
 - e) the quantity being prescribed in **both words and figures (numerals)**
 - f) adequate directions for use
 - g) the number of repeats authorised if the prescription is to be dispensed more than once and, if repeats are ordered, the time interval for repeats.
- 2) The system producing the prescription must be designed so that it requires:
 - a) the prescription to be produced by the prescriber only
 - b) the prescriber to sign, in their own handwriting, the paper prescription form as near as practicable below the medicine prescribed on the form
 - c) the prescription to be printed on a form:
 - i) which is pre-printed with the name and address and contact telephone number of the prescriber, **OR**
 - ii) which the system prints on the prescription, **OR**
 - iii) which is pre-printed with at least the address and contact telephone

- number of the practice/hospital **and** the system individually prints the name of the prescriber on the prescription during generation
- d) A statement printed on the form indicating that this is the only item on that prescription form (as only one item may appear on a prescription for Schedule 8 medicine), **AND/OR** that any unused area on the prescription form must be scored, hatched or marked to prevent any other item being printed in that area
 - e) a number which uniquely identifies the prescription, **OR** which uniquely identifies the prescribed medicine's details (the name, strength, route for administration, if not apparent, and quantity of the medicine) printed on the prescription and which can be related to the clinical or prescription record of the person or animal for whom that prescription was issued
 - f) for a type A Schedule 8 medicine under the Regulation (see at <https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2008-0392#sec.122>) the reference number issued to the prescriber by NSW Health (under section 29 of the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 or under Part 8 of the Regulation)
 - g) when the prescriber requires a dose that is less than 1 mL and that dose is recorded as a decimal value, the dose to be printed with a leading zero (that is, 0.3 mL rather than .3 mL)
 - h) the particulars of the prescription included in the clinical or prescription record of the patient or animal
 - i) the clinical or prescription record of the person or animal for whom the prescription was issued to be preserved for at least two years from the date on which the prescription was issued and to be accessed when required.
- 3) The system must prompt that, in addition to the prescribing data elements being produced by the system, the prescriber must rewrite on the prescription, in their own handwriting, all of the remaining mandatory data elements other than the date and the patient's name and address, namely:
- a) the name of the substance or the preparation containing it, including the strength when more than one strength is available
 - b) the quantity prescribed in **both words and figures (numerals)**
 - c) adequate directions for use
 - d) the number of repeats authorised if the prescription is to be dispensed more than once and, if repeats are ordered, the time interval for repeats.
- 4) Criteria in Paragraph 3) immediately above does not apply to prescriptions issued for methadone or buprenorphine for patients enrolled in the NSW Opioid Treatment program, provided that the prescription is sent directly to the patient's dosing supply point and is not provided to the patient.

Sample prescription for a Schedule 8 medicine

Prescriber's name
Prescriber's address
Prescriber's telephone number ^{1 2 3}

9999902 ^{7 or 7a}

PBS/RPBS ⁶

Barry Patient
41 High Street
Anytown
Date of birth: DD/MM/YYYY ¹⁰

Rx Item 10mg
Quantity: 20 (twenty) tablets ¹³
Repeat 6 times at intervals of 10 days ^{8 11}
Directions: One in the morning and at bedtime when required for pain ⁹

^{12 14}

Rx Item 10mg
20 (twenty) tablets
Repeat six times at intervals of 10 days
Sig Tm et hs prn for pain

Anthony Decker ⁴


Prescriber's Name ^{1 2 3}

Date: 6/5/22 ¹⁵

Number of medicines = 1 ⁵

¹⁻¹⁴ Refer to KEY on Page 7 for explanation

Sample prescription for OTHER THAN a Schedule 8 medicine

Prescriber's name	
Prescriber's address	
Prescriber's telephone number ^{1 2 3}	
9999901 ⁷	PBS/RPBS
	6
John Patient	
41 High Street	
Anytown	
Date of birth: DD/MM/YYYY ¹⁰	
Rx Medicine A tablets 40 mg	8888002 ^{7a}
Quantity: 100 Repeat twice ⁸	
Directions: 1 tablet three times a day after food ⁹	
Rx Medicine B Schedule 4B tablets 5 mg	8888003 ^{7a}
Quantity: 50 Repeat once in 25 days ^{8 11}	
Directions: One tablet twice a day	
Rx Medicine C cream 1%	8888004 ^{7a}
Quantity: 10 g tube Nil repeats ⁸	
Directions: Apply to the left thumb once a day	
	<i>Anthony Decker</i> ⁴
	Prescriber's Name ^{1 2 3}
Number of medicines = 3 ⁵	
	Date: 6/5/22 ¹⁵
	

1-11 Refer to KEY on Page 7 for explanation

KEY

- 1 The name and address and contact telephone number of the prescriber pre-printed on the prescription **OR**
- 2 The name and address and contact telephone number of the prescriber which the system prints on the prescription **OR**
- 3 The name and address and contact telephone number of the prescriber where at least the address and contact telephone number of the prescriber is pre-printed on the prescription and the system prints the name of the prescriber on the prescription.
- 4 Prescriber's handwritten signature (below the final medicine).
- 5 The total number of medicines on the prescription and/or score out the balance of the form.
- 6 Commonwealth requirement under the National Health (Pharmaceutical Benefits) Regulations 2017 with any other Commonwealth requirements.
- 7 A number which uniquely identifies each prescription form or each medicine^{7a} and which relates to the patient's clinical or prescription record, which must be kept for 2 years.
- 8 Number or repeats. Recommendation is to endorse "Nil repeats" if none are required, as a safeguard to alteration.
- 9 Underline and initial any unusual or dangerous dose.
- 10 Patient's name, address and date of birth (in force under the Regulation from 1 November 2022).
- 11 Intervals for repeats may, and in some cases must (for Schedule 4 Appendix B and Schedule 8 medicines), be specified.
- 12 Must be in the prescriber's own handwriting as well as being produced by the system (the system should remind the prescriber of this).
- 13 Quantity in both words and figures (numerals).
- 14 A Schedule 8 medicine as the only medicine on the prescription.
- 15 The date the prescription is issued.

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