

**Summary of Requirements for Prescriptions for Schedule 8 Substances (S8s)  
Northern Territory Poisons and Dangerous Drugs Act**

Medication	Prescription content	Requirements for prescribers
<p><b>Non-restricted Schedule 8 substances</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• buprenorphine (except Subutex &amp; Suboxone)</li> <li>• codeine</li> <li>• fentanyl</li> <li>• flunitrazepam</li> <li>• hydromorphone</li> <li>• ketamine</li> <li>• methadone (except liquid)</li> <li>• morphine (including aspirin with morphine)</li> <li>• oxycodone</li> <li>• pentazocine</li> <li>• pethidine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name, professional qualifications, address and telephone number of prescriber;</li> <li>• date of prescribing;</li> <li>• name and address of patient;</li> <li>• signature of prescriber, handwritten or *authorised electronic or other signature;</li> <li>• quantity of substance and quantity for each resupply;</li> <li>• period that is to elapse before resupply;</li> <li>• other requirements as directed by the CHO;</li> <li>• dentists have to write "For dental purposed only";</li> <li>• veterinarians have to write: "For animal treatment only";</li> <li>• directions for the taking, application or administration of the substance;</li> <li>• prescriptions must be written in ink, ball point pen or be produced on a printer: not in pencil or other easily erasable material;</li> <li>• type of preparation;</li> <li>• quantity of substance to be written in words as well as numbers;</li> <li>• prescriptions for other medications not to be written on the same prescription;</li> <li>• a start date for supply if that date is to be different from the date of prescribing; and</li> <li>• the date of birth of the patient.</li> </ul> <p><b>Prescriptions are valid for TWO months.</b></p> <p><b>No more than one month's supply is to be dispensed at any one time.</b></p> <p><b>Private prescriptions may not contain endorsements for repeat prescriptions.</b></p>	<p>Medical practitioners must notify Poisons Control Department of Health and Families (DHF) if they prescribe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• for a period exceeding 8 weeks;</li> <li>• a high initial dose;</li> <li>• a high daily dose;</li> <li>• a high combination dose of different S8s;</li> <li>• a dose increase of 30% or more;</li> <li>• a dose increase within 2 weeks;</li> <li>• for lost or stolen prescriptions;</li> <li>• for 'early' prescriptions;</li> <li>• for a patient who has another S8 prescriber;</li> <li>• for a patient who wants to transfer from another S8 prescriber;</li> <li>• for any patient previously notified, a renewal notification must be made after 12 months if continued supply is intended.</li> </ul> <p>Medical practitioners may notify Poisons Control DHF of any patient that they are concerned about.</p>

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<p><b>Restricted Schedule 8 substances</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dexamphetamine</li> <li>methylphenidate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name, professional qualifications, address and telephone number of prescriber;</li> <li>date of prescribing;</li> <li>name and address of patient;</li> <li>signature of prescriber, handwritten or *authorised electronic or other signature;</li> <li>quantity of substance and quantity of each resupply;</li> <li>period that is to elapse before resupply;</li> <li>other requirements as directed by the CHO;</li> <li>directions for the taking, application or administration of the substance;</li> <li>prescriptions must be written in ink, ball point pen or be produced on a printer: not in pencil or other easily erasable material;</li> <li>type of preparation ie liquid, tablets, etc.;</li> <li>quantity of substance to be written in words as well as numbers;</li> <li>prescriptions for other medications not to be written on the same prescription;</li> <li>a start date for supply if that date is to be different from the date of prescribing; and</li> <li>the date of birth of the patient.</li> </ul> <p><b>Prescriptions are valid for <u>SIX</u> months.</b></p> <p><b>No more than one month's supply is to be dispensed at any one time.</b></p> <p><b>Private prescriptions may contain endorsements for repeat prescriptions.</b></p>	<p>Paediatricians may initiate supply without an authorisation, but must obtain an authorisation for each individual patient if supply exceeds 30 days.</p> <p>Other medical practitioners including psychiatrists, physicians and neurologists need authorisation for each individual patient before treatment commences. Pharmacists are not required to view the authorisation for each patient prior to dispensing.</p> <p>General practitioners may supply only if the initial decision to supply the medication is made by a recognised specialist and if such a specialist reviews the patient at least annually.</p>

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<p><b>Restricted Schedule 8 substances</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• buprenorphine sublingual tablets (Subutex &amp; Suboxone)</li> <li>• methadone liquid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name, professional qualifications, address and telephone number of prescriber;</li> <li>• date of prescribing;</li> <li>• name and address of patient;</li> <li>• signature of prescriber, handwritten or *authorised electronic or other signature;</li> <li>• quantity of substance and quantity for each resupply;</li> <li>• period that is to elapse before resupply;</li> <li>• other requirements as directed by the CHO;</li> <li>• directions for the taking, application or administration of the substance;</li> <li>• prescriptions must be written in ink, ball point pen or be produced on a printer: not in pencil or other easily erasable material;</li> <li>• type of preparation ie liquid, sublingual tablets, etc.;</li> <li>• doses of substances to be written in words as well as numbers;</li> <li>• prescriptions for other medications not to be written on the same prescription;</li> <li>• a start date for supply if that date is to be different from the date of prescribing;</li> <li>• an expiry date;</li> <li>• the date of birth of the patient;</li> <li>• the name of the pharmacy from which the substance is to be dispensed;</li> <li>• the dosage regimen clearly and precisely specified (eg. dose intervals, specific days of the week for dosing); and</li> <li>• the nature of any takeaway privileges.</li> </ul>	<p>Medical practitioners providing pharmacotherapies need to complete a prescriber course and follow the approved pathway outlined in the Guidelines.</p> <p>An authorisation to supply buprenorphine, buprenorphine/naloxone or methadone is required for each individual patient. Pharmacists are not required to view the authorisation for each patient prior to dispensing.</p> <p><b>Takeaway doses</b> Takeaway doses may be prescribed for stable clients who have reduced or stopped their use of illicit opioids and have provided urine samples free of illicit opioids.</p> <p>The maximum takeaway doses to be prescribed are <u>three</u> per week for people on daily doses, or <u>one</u> per week for people on alternate day buprenorphine or buprenorphine/naloxone, unless authorised by the CHO.</p> <p>There are provisions in the Guidelines for packaging and labelling of takeaway doses and for dealing with clients who have missed one or more daily doses.</p>

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**A prescription remains in effect for three days from the date of prescribing or of the start date if that is different from the date of prescribing (inclusive of the date of issue or the start date).**

**Prescriptions not presented to a pharmacy within three days of the date of prescribing or the start date are invalid.**

**Prescriptions for restricted substances buprenorphine, buprenorphine/naloxone and methadone may only allow for a total supply period of TWO months.**

**The substance is to be dispensed one day at a time and consumed in front of the dispensing pharmacist, nurse or doctor (subject to takeaway doses). This is a requirement for all circumstances and does not need to be written on the prescription.**

**Labelling of takeaway doses**  
The label for buprenorphine, buprenorphine/naloxone and methadone must contain:

- the name, strength and dose form of the substance;
- the quantity contained in the container;
- specific instructions for use;
- the name of the person receiving the takeaway;
- the name, address and telephone number of the supplier;
- a warning of drowsiness and concurrent use of alcohol or other sedating medication; and
- a warning to keep out of reach of children.

**Method of supply of takeaway**

- use child-resistant containers;
- use a separate container for each daily dose;
- containers may not be re-used for that purpose; and
- each daily dose of methadone liquid must be diluted with water to a total volume of 200ml.

**Missed doses**

- A doctor may describe on a prescription the actions to be taken if doses are missed; otherwise
- if a client misses a daily dose on three consecutive days; or
- if a client is on alternate day dosing of buprenorphine or buprenorphine/naloxone and does not attend on two consecutive scheduled dosing days, the prescription becomes invalid and is not allowed to be filled.

\* The Chief Health Officer (CHO) may approve an electronic or other representation of the signature.