

Legislation changes for veterinary practitioners

Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2022

From **5 November 2026** the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act and Regulation will be replaced by the:

- Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2022 (the Act)
- Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2026 (the Regulation)

The new Act and Regulation support safe, modern healthcare practices and business operations. These laws set clear rules to control the supply of scheduled substances and therapeutic goods in NSW, with the primary goal of protecting public health and safety.

Key changes for veterinary practitioners

Schedule 4D and Schedule 8 medicine changes

Schedule 4D medicine prescriptions will now be valid for 12 months

- This is an increase from the previous period of 6 months. Schedule 4D medicines include those that are anabolic-androgenic steroidal medicines.

Only unexplained losses of Schedule 8 and Schedule 4D medicines to be reported

You must now report only unexplained losses of these medicines to Pharmaceutical Services. However, all losses of Schedule 8 medicines must be recorded in the drug register.

Note: explained losses include residual volume left in the syringe or needle hub, a witnessed and unrecoverable spill etc.

Pentobarbital for use in animals can be stored with Schedule 8 medicines

- A separate drug register must be used for recording transactions with pentobarbital.

Drug registers: stocktake now required every 3 months

You must now record the balance of Schedule 8 medicine in a drug register at least once every **3 months**. Previously, this was only required in March and September.

Note: In private practice an authorised practitioner is responsible for keeping a compliant drug register on the practice premises where Schedule 8 medicines are kept. Please ensure you are aware of any obligations you may have, including compliance to the Electronic Drug Register Standards if relevant.

Wholesale supply of Schedule 2, 3, 4, or 8 substances

Wholesale supply of Schedule 2, 3, 4 or 8 substances between superintendents of licensed veterinary hospitals is now permitted. The supply must be:

- on a written order by the person requesting it
- for the treatment of a single animal at the veterinary hospital
- for a minimum quantity that is necessary for that treated animal

A record of this supply must be kept by both parties.

Urgent use medicines from pharmacies are restricted to registered products or those manufactured under an APVMA permit

- You can only request to obtain scheduled substances for animal use from a pharmacy that are:
 - registered on the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG), or
 - registered with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), or
 - manufactured under an APVMA permit.
- You must supply a written and signed order for the pharmacist to supply the medicine. A record of the supply must be made and kept for two years.
- If you need medicines for non-urgent use, you can continue to obtain these from a wholesaler.
- If you need compounded medicines to treat an animal, you can continue to issue a prescription for the animal for dispensing at a compounding pharmacy.

A unique identifier may now be used on prescriptions for animals without an owner

Prescriptions issued by a veterinary practitioner for an animal without an owner may now include a unique identifier assigned to the animal instead of the animal owner's name and address.

New mandatory Standards are now in force

All health practitioners must comply with following:

- **Medicines Storage Standards** - for the safe and secure storage of Schedule 4D and Schedule 8 medicines.
- **Electronic Drug Register Standards** - for the requirements on the use of electronic drug registers to record transactions of S8 medicines.

Pentobarbital can now be obtained by animal welfare organisations and local councils

Pentobarbital, when for use for the humane destruction of animals, can now be obtained by:

- a veterinary practitioner who works for or is contracted by a local council or animal welfare organisation
- another employee or contractor at a local council or animal welfare organisation who a veterinary practitioner believes is competent of using pentobarbital in the humane destruction of animals.

The local council or animal welfare organisation must have processes in place to ensure access to pentobarbital is limited to these authorised individuals. Pentobarbital must be stored as per Medicines Storage Standards and record-keeping requirements apply.

Other changes

The requirement to endorse prescriptions with "FOR ANIMAL TREATMENT ONLY" has been removed.

Restrictions to medicine samples

Samples of **Schedule 4D and Schedule 8 medicines** are no longer permitted. You must issue a written order for samples for other scheduled medicines or substances.

Labelling requirements are listed in Appendix L of the Poisons Standard

The labelling of scheduled substances is no longer listed in the Regulation. Scheduled substances must be labelled as per the requirements of the Poisons Standard.

A pharmacist will no longer retain the repeat paper prescription for a Schedule 8 or Schedule 4 Appendix D medicine on the pharmacy premises.

Repeats can be given back to the animal's owner to have dispensed at their pharmacy of choice.

Handwritten prescriptions must be legible for the prescription to be valid.

New restrictions on the supply of nitrous oxide

To reduce the harms associated with nitrous oxide misuse; while maintaining access for medical and industrial purposes and legitimate food preparation, new restrictions will apply to the supply of nitrous oxide. These include controls on:

- retail sale
- purchase limits
- sales hours
- online delivery
- product storage
- record-keeping requirements for certain businesses

Detailed information on these new restrictions is available on the Nitrous Oxide Regulations webpage: www.health.nsw.gov.au/nitrous

New offences and increased penalties

The Act and Regulation set out penalties for offences associated with unauthorised activities.

Penalties are classified in 5 tiers and differ for individuals and corporations. They range from 20 – 400 penalty units for individuals and 100 – 2000 penalty units for corporations.

More information can be found in the offences and penalties section of the Act and the Regulation. Further information on compliance notices and penalties will also be available at a later date.

Terminology and definitions

New terminology	Old terminology
Schedule 8 substance or medicine	Drug of addiction
Schedule 4 substance or medicine	Restricted substance
Schedule 4D substance or medicine	prescribed restricted substance, Schedule 4 Appendix D
Nominated Schedule 4 substance or medicine	Certain restricted substance
Schedule 4D substance that is an anabolic-androgenic steroidal substance	Special restricted substance, Schedule 4 Appendix B

Further definitions and terminology can be found at [key definitions and terminology](#).

More information

Supporting information to understand the requirements of the legislation is available on the [Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods legislation](#) webpage.



Disclaimer

The information on this webpage is provided for general guidance only. While reasonable care has been taken to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and currency of the information, users should refer to the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2022 and the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2026 for full and current legal requirements.