



VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS BOARD
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Use and Management of Controlled Medicines (S8) and Barbiturate Euthanasia Solutions Policy

Controlled Medicines

Controlled Medicines are listed under Schedule 8 of the Commonwealth Poisons Standard. In the ACT, the Health Protection Service (HPS) regulates the safe supply of medicines, poisons and therapeutic goods. You can find more information on Controlled Medicines [here](#).

A veterinary practitioner may write a prescription for a Controlled Medicine for veterinary treatment only, and must endorse all such prescriptions with the words **“FOR ANIMAL TREATMENT ONLY”** as well as all other details which must be legally included on the medicine’s label.

Under Section 2.2 of the Australian pesticides and Veterinary Medicine Authority Prescription labelling code, it is the responsibility of the prescribing veterinarian to give adequate instruction to their client on the safe and effective use of a prescription-only veterinary product when dispensing it. This is usually done after a diagnosis is made or as part of a treatment trial, so the specific indication, appropriate dose, frequency and duration of treatment have already been determined and these details outlined on the label.

The prescribing laws also require, among other things, the label to contain the name and contact details of the prescribing veterinarian and date of the prescription. As with prescription products for humans, this is usually done by sticking a personalised veterinary practice label over the product label, being careful not to obscure any of the details on the main panel, or any of the label instructions the veterinarian wishes to be available as part of their written instructions. A veterinary practitioner must not issue a prescription for, or supply any substance or drug in a quantity or for a purpose that does not accord with the recognised therapeutic standard of what is appropriate in the circumstances.

A Scheduled 8 substance for animal use may be supplied or used only by the veterinary practitioner or by an assistant¹ working under the direct supervision of a veterinary practitioner, following an examination of the animal by the veterinary practitioner.

Storage

Schedule 8 substances must be stored apart from all other goods in a safe, cupboard, or drawer that is securely fixed to the premises and kept locked when not in immediate use.

Recording

All use of Controlled (Schedule 8) medicines must be recorded in a controlled drugs register.

Loss

When a Controlled (Schedule 8) Medicine is lost or the veterinary practitioner suspects that the

¹ For the purposes of this policy an "assistant" is a veterinary nurse or veterinary technician working under the direct supervision of a registered veterinary practitioner.

substance has been lost the veterinary practitioner must tell the ACT chief health officer, in writing, about the loss or suspected loss and how it happened as soon as practicable (but not later than 7 days) after the day the veterinary practitioner becomes aware of the loss or suspected loss.

Theft

When a Controlled (Schedule 8) Medicine is stolen or the veterinary surgeon suspects that the substance has been stolen, the veterinary practitioner must tell the chief health officer and a police officer about the theft or suspected theft

- Orally immediately after the person becomes aware of the theft or suspected theft.
- In writing not later than 24 hours after the person becomes aware of the theft or suspected theft.

Barbiturate Euthanasia Solutions

Barbiturate euthanasia solutions must only be used by a veterinary practitioner, or by an assistant working under the direct supervision of a veterinary practitioner, following an assessment by the veterinary practitioner.

In 2021, the TGA ruled that *Pentobarbital in injectable preparations* should be added to S4 Appendix D S4D (poisons which must be stored in a locked container to prevent unauthorised access) of the Poisons Standard. This was implemented on 1 October 2020.

The Poisons Standard is automatically adopted in its entirety in the ACT under Part 3.3 of the *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2008*. This includes any restrictions mentioned for a substance.

This means that pentobarbital must be stored in a locked container. Whilst there is no definition provided for a locked container in ACT regulations, it is recommended you adopt the same storage requirements that apply to veterinary practitioners for controlled medicines which can be found in section 532 of the [Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008](#).

It is not necessary however to keep a register of use for S4D medicines.