

Scheduled poisons and drugs

The Queensland *Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996* sets out detailed requirements for the use of scheduled drugs and poisons. The system of assigning these substances to one of eight schedules is in accordance with the *Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Drugs and Poisons* (SUSDP) published by the Australian Health Ministers' Council. Where it is necessary to determine the category or schedule of drugs, the SUSDP should be consulted. Alternatively, Chemwatch can be used, however, this can be an unreliable source of information. Copies of the Standard are available for purchase through the Therapeutic Goods Administration website at <http://www.tga.gov.au/ndpsc/susdp.htm>.

The full provisions of the legislation are complex and regulate the manufacture, packaging, labelling, storage, prescription, dispensing, sale/supply and use of these substances. Some key points are highlighted within this policy. Major users of this group of substances should consult the Queensland Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/H/HealDrAPoR96.pdf> for complete details or contact Marshall Butterworth, University Chemical Store Manager or the OH&S Unit for further information.

The specific requirements of the Queensland Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 are summarised below:

SCHEDULE 4 - RESTRICTED DRUGS (I.E. PRESCRIPTION ONLY MEDICINES)

Schedule 4 of the *Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation* relates to Restricted Drugs. In addition to most of the S4 drugs, this schedule also includes 2 sub-categories of drugs:

- S4 Regulated restricted drugs (RRD's)
<http://www.uq.edu.au/ohs/pdfs/listregulatedrestricteddrugs.pdf> (RRD's defined in Part 3 of the Regulation e.g. thalidomide, clomiphene, clozapine); and
- S4 Restricted Drugs of Dependency (RDD's)
<http://www.uq.edu.au/ohs/pdfs/listrestricteddrugsofdependency.pdf> (RDD's defined in Appendix 8 of the Regulation e.g. barbiturates, diazepam).

RDD's follow the same procedures as outlined below for the rest of the S4 drugs (although issues such as keeping usage logs and appropriate storage are particularly important for RDD's). The regulations for RDD's are more similar to those for Schedules 8 and 9 drugs. For the purposes of this guideline, restricted drugs will include RDD's.

Chapter 3 of the Regulation previously provided group authorisations for medical practitioners, veterinary surgeons, dentists, registered nurses, dental therapists, pharmacists and optometrists for the handling of restricted drugs within the normal scope of their professional activities. Section 179A of the Regulation reads that for use in research or teaching at a University, the Vice Chancellor of the University is authorised to –

- (a) **obtain** a restricted drug; or
- (b) **possess** a restricted drug at the University; or
- (c) **supply** a restricted drug to a member of the faculty or staff of the University

This authority may be delegated by the vice chancellor to another appropriately qualified officer of the university who is appropriately qualified (this has been determined by the University as being the chief investigators).

To **order S4 drugs** (including regulated drugs of dependency, but not regulated restricted drugs) through the University Chemical Store, the *Store Authority for S4 Category drugs form* <http://www.uq.edu.au/ohs/pdfs/storeauth.pdf> needs to be completed. If drugs are ordered through external suppliers and a request to see the endorsement is required before the drugs are issued, a draft of a letter advising of the Universities authority under section 179A can be found at the end of this policy, and forwarded on to the supplier.

Restricted drugs must be **stored** in a locked cupboard, dispensary, drawer, fridge, freezer or other part of a place to which the public does not have access. Where a restricted drug needs to be transported or used away from the place where a person works, it must be kept in a secure place under the chief investigator's personal control.

S4 drugs should be **recorded** on the *Schedule Drug Usage Log Form* <http://www.uq.edu.au/ohs/pdfs/userlog.pdf> which maintains records of the date, user's name, experiment, amount of drug received, amount of drug used, balance of drug and user's signature.

Researchers are reminded that an individual authority for the possession and use of **regulated restricted drugs** must be obtained from the Queensland Health Department. To apply for a permit, an 'Application to the Chief Executive – Approval under Section 18(1) of the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996' form must be completed and submitted to the Environmental Health Unit of Queensland Health. Forms available at: www.health.qld.gov.au/industry/poisons_pest/default.asp, at the end of this policy or on the OH&S Unit webpage.

SCHEDULE 7 - REGULATED POISONS

A person obtaining, possessing or using **cyanide** or **strychnine** must obtain a **permit** from Queensland Health for that purpose. [“Cyanide” includes potassium cyanide, sodium cyanide and any other inorganic salt of hydrocyanic acid, but does not include ferricyanide or ferrocyanide salts.] Forms for obtaining permits for cyanide or strychnine are available at the end of this policy, on the OH&S Unit webpage, or at www.health.qld.gov.au/industry/poisons_pest/default.asp .

Schedule 7 pesticides have restricted availability, but may be purchased by primary producers, horticulturists and licensed pest controllers for use according to their registered purpose.

Regulated drugs and poisons must be **stored** in a locked cupboard, dispensary, drawer, fridge or freezer to which the public does not have access. Cyanides and strychnine should be kept in a locked cabinet that meets the requirements stated on the permit issued by Queensland Health. Queensland Health will come out to the site to inspect the facility and storage location.

SCHEDULE 8 and SCHEDULE 9 DRUGS

The *Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation* requires very strict control over the use of Controlled and Prohibited drugs, even those covered by a general authority for their profession.

Where an S8 or S9 drug is being used in any way other than normal therapeutic purposes by a professional (e.g. research) covered by a group authority, an authority must be obtained from Queensland Health. A research group will require a specific authority for each proposed type of use of a controlled drug. The form, ‘Application to the Chief Executive – Approval under Section 18(1) of the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation’ should be completed and submitted to obtain a permit.

Any **purchase order of an S8 or S9 drug must be signed by the School Drugs Officer** (preferably a registered pharmacist, veterinarian or medical practitioner) authorised to purchase controlled drugs.

S8 and S9 drugs must be **stored** in a secure place, as approved by Queensland Health (minimum requirements specified in Appendix 6 of the Regulation). This place must be kept locked at all times except when being accessed by an authorised person. Only an authorised person may have a key to the secure store for controlled and Prohibited drugs.

A drugs log must be kept by the Drugs Officer authorised to dispense controlled and prohibited drugs. The log must record full details of each transaction or use involving S8 or S9 drugs and be signed on each occasion by the authorised user. The *Schedule Drug Usage Form* <http://www.uq.edu.au/ohs/pdfs/userlog.pdf> can be used for this purpose.

Obtaining Permits

Queensland Health have emphasised to the University the importance of compliance with the *Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996*. Departments and centres within the University which use scheduled drugs and poisons must ensure that the legislative requirements for their use of these materials are implemented. In addition to the requirements for secure storage, record keeping and safe handling there are specific authorities or permits which must be obtained for many of these materials.

Specific authorities or permits must be obtained (**and renewed every 2 years**) from Queensland Health for the possession and use of:

- Cyanides
- Strychnine
- Schedule 4 (Regulated Restricted Drugs)
- Schedule 8 substances (controlled drugs) used for non-therapeutic purposes.
- Schedule 9 drugs

The **Drugs Officer position in each school must also be registered** with Qld Health so that legally they can have access to certain drugs (S8, S9, strychnine and cyanide) that are stored collectively at one central location (i.e. in a drugs safe). This approval allows the drugs officer to possess the drugs and then issue them to other persons in the University that have Qld Health approvals to obtain and use the drugs in their research projects. Refer to draft letter at the end of this policy.

Application for authorities should be sent to:

Andrew Hawkins
Drugs & Poisons Services
Environmental Health Unit
Queensland Health
GPO Box 48
Brisbane QLD 4001
ph: 32340349
Facsimile 07-3234 1480

The following information should be supplied with the application:

- Name of substance/s
- Intended use of the substance/s
- Details of ethical clearance for the work (where applicable)
- Name and contact information (business address, telephone number, facsimile number, e-mail address) for the principal researcher

Forms

To assist in the ordering of drugs, applying for permits through Qld Health and maintaining effective logs of drug usage, a number of forms are available to assist Schools and Centres.

To order S4 drugs through the Chemical Store

- Store authority for S4 drugs Form
<http://www.uq.edu.au/ohs/pdfs/storeauth.pdf>

To order drugs through an external supplier where proof of the Universities authority under section 179A of the regulation is required

- Letter to supplier of restricted drugs
<http://www.uq.edu.au/ohs/pdfs/s4-supplier-letter.doc>

To apply to Qld Health for an individual permit for S4 (regulated restricted drugs), cyanide or strychnine, S8 or S9 drugs for the purposes of teaching or research

- ‘Application to the Chief Executive – Approval under Section 18(1) of the Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996’ also at
www.health.qld.gov.au/industry/poisons_pest/default.asp

To register a Drugs Officer position with Qld Health, modify the following letter to suit your Schools purposes

- Registration of the School Drugs Officer
<http://www.uq.edu.au/ohs/pdfs/drugsofficerapprovalrequest.pdf>

To maintain a log or register of all Schedule 4, 7, 8 or 9 drugs

- Schedule Drug Usage Log
<http://www.uq.edu.au/ohs/pdfs/userlog.pdf>

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