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| Options available to pharmacists to supply Schedule 4 and Schedule 8 medicines in an emergency in Victoria |
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| **Option** | **Schedule 4 medicines** | **Schedule 8 medicines** | **Quantity** | **Requirements** |
| **Electronic Prescription** | Yes | Yes | As per prescription | * The software used to issue or receive an electronic prescription must be listed on the Register of Conformance by the Australian Digital Health Agency with a current conformance identifier; and must comply with the current version of the Australian Digital Health Agency Electronic Prescribing Participating Software Conformance Profile.
* The electronic prescription must include information that confirms the identity of the authorised prescriber.
* The software used to issue the prescription must manage defined roles with access rights that will only allow authorised persons to issue or receive electronic prescriptions for all medications, and
	+ display the prescription and obtain a final approval from the prescriber prior to issuing a prescription for electronic distribution, and
	+ utilise Electronic Prescribing Conformance Profile requirements to protect against fraud.
* The electronic prescription must comply with other requirements of the Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2017.
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| **Verbal instruction from a prescriber** | Yes | Yes | As per verbal instruction | * A prescriber, who is of the opinion that an emergency exists, may give a verbal instruction to a pharmacist to supply a Schedule 4 or Schedule 8 medicine.
* The prescriber is responsible for ensuring that the written confirmation is sent to the pharmacist.
* The act of sending the written confirmation must be completed within 72 hours. Due to potential for postage delays it is not a legal requirement that the written confirmation be received by the pharmacist within 72 hours.
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| **Digital image of a paper prescription** | Yes | Yes | As per digital image of paper prescription | * A prescriber, who is of the opinion that an emergency exists, may transmit a digital image of an original paper prescription to a pharmacist to supply a Schedule 4 or Schedule 8 medicine.
* The original paper prescription must comply with all relevant regulatory requirements.
* The digital image of the original paper prescription must be transmitted directly to the pharmacist or pharmacy of the patient's choice by electronic means. Electronic means may include secure email, fax, or Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS).
* The digital image of the original paper prescription must not be sent to more than one pharmacy or to a person other than a pharmacist.
* The prescriber is responsible for sending the original paper prescription to the pharmacist or pharmacy within 72 hours of transmitting the digital image of the prescription.
* The act of sending the original paper prescription must be completed within 72 hours. Due to potential for postage delays it is not a legal requirement that the written confirmation be received by the pharmacist within 72 hours.
* Pharmacists may wish to verify a digital image of a paper prescription by telephoning the prescriber.
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| **Continued Treatment** | Yes | No | Quantity supplied must not exceed:* 3 days' supply; or
* if it is not practical to supply a quantity required for 3 days, the smallest commercially available pack
 | A pharmacist may supply a Schedule 4 medicine without a prescription in an emergency if:* the pharmacist considers that the supply is necessary to ensure continuity of treatment; and
* there is an immediate need for the medicine and it is impracticable for the patient to obtain a prescription in time to meet that need; and
* treatment with the medicine has previously been provided for by a prescription issued by a prescriber; and
* the supply would not continue treatment that has already been continued by the pharmacist supplying the medicine under this arrangement.
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| **PBS Continued Dispensing Arrangements** | Limited to certain PBS medicines | No | As per requirements of the [National Health (Continued Dispensing) Determination 2022](https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2022L00884/latest/text) | Before a patient can get medicine under Continued Dispensing, pharmacists must ensure:* the medicine is eligible for supply under Continued Dispensing
* the medicine was supplied to the patient in the last 3 months and their condition is stable
* the medicine is safe and appropriate for the patient
* a pharmacy hasn’t supplied the medicine in the past 12 months as a Continued Dispensing medicine
* there’s an immediate need for the medicine and circumstances prevented the patient from getting a prescription
* it’s not practical to obtain an electronic prescription or communicated supply from the patient's usual prescriber.
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| **Public Health Emergency Order #25****(floods)****(until 10 Feb 2024)** | Yes | No | Quantity supplied must not exceed:* for a medicine that is on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, the standard Pharmaceutical Benefits maximum quantity
* for a medicine that is not on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, the quantity that is contained in the smallest commercially available pack
 | In an emergency a pharmacist may supply a Schedule 4 medicine without a prescription to ensure continuity of treatment if the pharmacist is satisfied that:* there is an immediate need for the medicine and it is impracticable for the patient to obtain a prescription in time to meet that need; and
* the patient’s usual prescriber is unable to be contacted and/or is unable to provide an electronic prescription; and
* treatment with the medicine has previously been provided for by a prescription issued, or a chart instruction written, for the patient by a prescriber in the last three months and the patient’s relevant condition is stable; and
* the medicine has not been supplied under this Order to the patient by any pharmacist within the three months before the requested supply; and
* the patient, or an agent of the patient, or a person who has the care of the patient, or a person who is assisting in the care of the patient, is aware of the appropriate dose of that poison for that patient; and
* supplying the medicine would not represent an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of the patient.
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Further information

### Electronic Prescriptions

<https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/electronic-prescribing>

<https://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2020/GG2020G014.pdf#page=13>

### Verbal order from a prescriber

[Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2017](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/statutory-rules/drugs-poisons-and-controlled-substances-regulations-2017/018) (see Regulation 25)

<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/drugs-and-poisons/medicines-and-poisons-recent-updates> (see document ‘New emergency instruction regulation Mar 2023’)

### Digital image of a paper prescription

[Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2017](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/statutory-rules/drugs-poisons-and-controlled-substances-regulations-2017/018) (see Regulation 25A)

<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/drugs-and-poisons/medicines-and-poisons-recent-updates> (see document ‘New emergency instruction regulation Mar 2023’)

### Continued Treatment

[Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2017](https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/statutory-rules/drugs-poisons-and-controlled-substances-regulations-2017/018) (see Regulation 56)

### PBS Continued Dispensing Arrangements

 <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/education-guide-continued-dispensing-initiative-pbs-requirements>

<https://www.pbs.gov.au/info/general/continued-dispensing>

### Public Health Emergency Order #25

<https://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2024/GG2024S006.pdf>

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