

Computer Generated Schedule 8 Prescriptions

This newsletter covers computer-generated Schedule 8 prescriptions and what constitutes appropriate “quantity and purpose”.

Computer generated Schedule 8 prescriptions

Clause 80 of the NSW Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Regulation 2008 sets out the details which must be included in a valid Schedule 8 prescription: date of issue; name and address of patient; **name and strength of the drug to be supplied; quantity to be supplied in words and figures; adequate directions for use; maximum number of supplies (repeats); repeat interval; prescriber’s signature**; details of the prescriber; any authority number required by the legislation.

This clause states that the **bolded details*** must be written in the prescriber’s handwriting, or in such other manner as may be approved for the time being by the Director-General. The Regulation does not stipulate what this other manner is, but the details are found in the NSW Health *publication [Criteria for issuing non-handwritten \(computer generated\) prescriptions](#)*. This document is also known as the TG184. The current version of this publication is the TG184/10, which replaced the TG184/9 in November 2020.

Some key requirements for both Schedule 4 and Schedule 8 computer-generated prescriptions are that:

- o prescriptions must not be altered by hand after they are printed – if the prescriber wishes to change and of the prescription details, a new one MUST be generated;
- o if the prescription is a private prescription (non-PBS), a duplicate MUST NOT be printed, and for Schedule 8 medications the **bolded details** MUST be rewritten by the prescriber in their own handwriting on the single side which is printed;

In addition, specifically, for Schedule 8 computer-generated prescriptions:

- o if the prescription is covered by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (i.e. an original and duplicate are printed), the **bolded details** MUST be rewritten by the prescriber in their own handwriting on ONE copy of the prescription, which is retained by the pharmacy. Until November 2020 the details were required to be written on ONLY one copy, however the TG184/10 removed the word “only” from this requirement, and it has been clarified that the wording now does not preclude the prescriber from handwriting the required particulars on both copies of a computer-generated PBS Schedule 8 prescription. Therefore, from November 2020, a PBS computer-generated Schedule 8 prescription with the handwritten details on BOTH copies (original and duplicate copy) is no longer invalid.

In practice, if you receive a PBS computer-generated Schedule 8 prescription with the handwritten details on EITHER or BOTH copies (original and duplicate copy), it is valid. If you receive a computer-generated Schedule 8 prescription with NO handwritten details, it is NOT valid.

If you receive a Schedule 8 prescription which is not legally written, it is not valid and you MUST NOT dispense it. You will need to contact the prescriber to obtain a new prescription which has been written validly in order to supply the medication to the patient.

It is worth noting that any computer-generated prescription which has been altered by hand after printing is not valid – in other words, this requirement extends to prescriptions for Schedule 2, 3 and 4 medications as well as to Schedule 8.

There are other requirements outlined in the TG184, and it is strongly recommended that you access and familiarise yourself with this publication.

* The original version of this article included the date of issue, and name and address of the patient in the bolded details, which implied that these details were required to be rewritten in the prescriber's handwriting. This was an error and the Pharmacy Council of NSW apologies for any confusion caused thereby.