

Working with medicines

# Anaesthetic technicians

## Regulations

Anaesthetic technicians, employed by a hospital, for the purposes of assisting an anaesthetist, have various authorities under the Medicines and Poisons Regulations 2016 to hold and use prescription medicines.

## Authority

The following table outlines the authority of these practitioners to use medicines under the Regulations:

| **Practitioner** | **Type of Authority** |
| --- | --- |
| **Obtain (purchase)** | **Possess** | **Administer** | **Supply** | **Prescribe** |
| Anaesthetic Technician  |  | 🗸 | 🗸 under direction of anaesthetist |  |  |

Any authority is limited to the lawful practice of the professional and includes:

* within scope of employment to assist the anaesthetist;
* at the hospital of employment;
* for patients under the care of the hospital, anaesthetist and technician; and
* any relevant restrictions or conditions imposed on the individual technician.

## Purchasing medicines

Medicines must be purchased by an authorised health practitioner (e.g. medical practitioner) or Poisons Permit holder (e.g. hospital), but may be held and handled on their behalf by an anaesthetic technician, in accordance with the Regulations.

## Administration

Anaesthetic technicians may administer a Schedule 4 (S4) or Schedule 8 (S8) medicine in accordance with their authority, when directed by an anaesthetist (authorised prescriber).

## Storage

S4 medicines must be stored in a locked storage facility to prevent unauthorised access. For example: a lockable room, cupboard, cabinet or refrigerator. Precautions must be taken to ensure keys are not accessible to unauthorised staff.

S8 medicines must be stored in a locked purpose-built drug safe. On most hospital wards, a locked hardwood or metal cabinet can be used instead of a safe. Storage of a total of S8 medicines less than of 250 doses requires a small safe and greater than 500 doses requires a large safe. Motion detectors covering the safe are required when more than 250 doses are stored.

## Recording

Anaesthetic technicians must make accurate clinical records of all medicines administered and retain these for at least 2 years for S4 medicines, or 5 years for S8 medicines. In a hospital, the patient medication chart will generally act as the clinical record.

A register of transactions, kept in an approved manner and form, must be maintained for all incoming and outgoing S8 medicines. A monthly inventory must be also performed.

All records must be available to be produced if demanded by an authorised officer of the Department of Health.

## Compliance assessment

Anaesthetic technicians may be required to participate in routine audit assessments to monitor compliance with these requirements.

Non-compliance with the regulations may result in regulatory actions such as restrictions or loss of medicines authorities and/or prosecution under the legislation.

## More information

For more information contact the Medicines and Poisons Regulation Branch on:

* (08) 9222 6883 (Monday – Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm)
* poisons@health.wa.gov.au