1. **General Information**

This standard is intended to provide guidance to pharmacists-in-charge appointees under Clause 7, Schedule 7 of the *Health Practitioners Act 2004* (the Act).

**1.1 Pharmacy Proprietors**

The authorised pharmacy business owner must

* not open the pharmacy business to the public unless the owner has appointed a pharmacist to be the pharmacist-in-charge;
* notify on the approved form, the Pharmacy Premises Committee of the appointment as soon as practicable after it is made;
* not appoint more than one pharmacist-in-charge to a pharmacy business; and
* not appoint a pharmacist to be the pharmacist-in-charge of more than one pharmacy.

**1.2 Pharmacy Departments**

The authorised pharmacy department owner must

* not open the pharmacy department to the public unless the owner has appointed a pharmacist to be the pharmacist-in-charge;
* notify on the approved form the Pharmacy Premises Committee of the appointment as soon as practicable after it is made;
* not appoint more than one pharmacist-in-charge to a pharmacy department; and
* not appoint a pharmacist to be the pharmacist-in-charge of more than one pharmacy.

*Nb: The owner of a public hospital pharmacy department is NT Health.*

1. **Pharmacist-in-charge**

The appointed pharmacist-in-charge is responsible for the conduct of the pharmacy business / department for which they are appointed. All pharmacists-in-charge must abide by professional practice standards as set out by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) or the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA). The following non-exclusive list provides practical guidance to the pharmacist-in-charge for compliance of Schedule 7 of the Act.

* 1. **Direct Supervision**

The Act, Schedule 7, Clauses 5 and 6 refer to the direct supervision by a pharmacist. While there is no definition of ‘direct supervision’ under the Act, the Pharmacy Premises Committee, in its opinion defines ‘direct supervision’ to be:

*‘physically on the premises and be personally aware of activities occurring on the premises and be able to consult or intervene at any time’.*

* 1. **Privacy Considerations**

Privacy is of the utmost importance to the general public. Pharmacists-in-charge must in their day to day interactions with clients uphold the value of privacy and implement workflow practices within the pharmacy such that a patient’s privacy is not compromised including:

* Direct staff interactions with clients;
* Disposal of in-confidence materials, including equipment utilised for this purpose;
* Workflow practices to minimise a breach of privacy;
* Maintaining counselling areas; and
* Policy development for all team members.
  1. **Pharmacist Workloads**

# The pharmacy must wherever practicable maintain appropriate safe dispensing workloads for pharmacists in their place of work. Sole practitioner pharmacies should not exceed 150 items per day. Pharmacies having workloads in the region of 150-200 items per day should consider the utilisation of trained dispensary assistants or intern pharmacists. A day is defined as any 8 ordinary work hours which equates to no more than 25 items per hour. Beyond 200 items, the pharmacy should consider additional pharmacists.

Other factors such as new technologies in dispensing should also be taken into account.

# Barcode Scanning

# The pharmacy must have a barcode scanner at every dispensing station. For further detail on the requirements for a dispense station see the Mandatory Equipment List.

The use of scanners at the time of dispensing is an aid in minimising selection errors of medications. Their use is therefore mandated for all dispensing activities where the end point user is a member of the public.

All items that can be scanned must be scanned.

All pharmacists have an obligation to work safely and accurately in their field of practice. Pharmacy owners and pharmacist’s-in-charge are therefore responsible for all pharmacists employed within the business / department including locums.

* 1. **Keeping of a register of premises keys**

Pharmacists-in-Charge must maintain a register of keys for the pharmacy premises in order to uphold Clause 9, Schedule 7 of the Act. The register must state the following:

* Name of the pharmacist;
* Signature of the pharmacist
* Date issued;
* Unique identifier (if embossed);
* If/when returned, the date of return and a second signature of the pharmacist noting the keys return; and
* The register should be stored in a location accessible to all pharmacists.

The pharmacist-in-charge must also have policies in-place in the event of:

* a lost or stolen key; or
* a pharmacist within their employ ceases work permanently and fails to return a key.

* 1. **Keeping of a register of Schedule 8 Safe keys/codes**

Pharmacists-in-Charge must maintain a register of keys for the Schedule 8 safe to maintain pharmacist only access to controlled medicines. The register must state the following:

* Name of the pharmacist;
* Signature of the pharmacist
* Date issued;
* Unique identifier (if embossed);
* If/when returned, the date of return and a second signature of the pharmacist noting the keys’ return; and
* The register should be stored in a location accessible to all pharmacists.
* If an electronic register is utilised – the register must be fit for purpose and legislatively compliant.

The pharmacist-in-charge must also have policies in the event of a:

* Key being lost/stolen, or not being returned by a pharmacist who ceases work permanently.
* Code access being known to a non-pharmacist, or is known to a pharmacist no longer employed at the pharmacy.

**2.7 Keeping of an Alarm Code Register**

Pharmacists-in-Charge must maintain a register of all pharmacists who require an alarm code to access the pharmacy. The register must state the following:

* Name of the pharmacist;
* Signature of the pharmacist
* Date issued; and
* The register must should be stored in a location known to all pharmacists.

The pharmacist-in-charge must also have policies in the event of a:

* pharmacist who ceases work permanently; and
* an access code being known by a non-pharmacist.
  1. **Data integrity and Management**

A proprietor and pharmacist in charge must maintain appropriate levels of information technology in order to maintain the integrity of the data. All pharmacies must be equipped with appropriate firewall software that is maintained and updated regularly.

The pharmacy must also maintain appropriate levels of internet to encompass mandatory access software such as NT Script.

All pharmacists in charge have a responsibility to ensure all pharmacists are able to access NT Script.

1. **Disclaimer:** In case of any conflict or discrepancy between this document and legislation, the legislation prevails.