

Procedure:	Controlled and Expired Medications	
Owner of Policy:	Manager, Education	
Department/Program:	Southwest Ontario Regional Base Hospital Program	
Endorsed By:	Director, Southwest Centre for Prehospital Medicine	Endorsement Date: May 2025
Original Effective Date:	April 2011	Date Reviewed: May 2026

PURPOSE

This policy details the mechanism for accountability and compliance with the [Controlled Drugs and Substances Act](#).

PROCEDURE

1.0 CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

- 1.1. The controlled substances available for use by paramedics in Southwestern Ontario are diazepam, midazolam, fentanyl, ketamine, morphine, suboxone, and hydromorphone.
- 1.2. The Regional Medical Director (RMD) delegates to paramedics through Medical Directives that permit the administration of controlled substances to patients.
- 1.3. The Employer, whose staff members hold and transport controlled substances, is required to designate an individual as a Designated Administrator. The Designated Administrator is responsible for compliance with the [Controlled Drugs and Substances Act](#).
- 1.4. When the controlled substance inventory requires replenishment, the Designated Administrator will provide the prescribing Medical Director with a summary that accounts for controlled substance use since the previous prescription. The summary should identify the current inventory and account for all use, waste, and disposal through supporting documentation (i.e., daily check sheets, controlled substance inventories, and disposal/waste records). The prescribing Medical Director will issue a prescription for controlled substances (provided there is sufficient evidence that the [Controlled Drugs and Substances Act](#) requirements are satisfied) to a hospital or community pharmacy with which the Employer is affiliated.
- 1.5. Paramedics must follow the local process approved by the prescribing Medical Director to properly document daily inventory, use, and waste. The approved inventory control and validation process must address the maintenance of the security of controlled substances through locked storage and the use of signatures (with witnesses) to validate each step in the chain of use. Paramedics disposing of waste (controlled substance that is expired, contaminated, damaged, or any residual controlled substance remaining after administration from a multi-dose vial, or reconstituted from concentrated form) will follow the local process approved by the prescribing Medical Director and enforced by the Designated Administrator.
- 1.6. The prescribing Medical Director may request supporting documentation regarding controlled substances from the Employer when required as part of an investigation into adverse outcomes secondary to controlled substance use, deviations from a medical directive, or evidence of controlled substance procedural deviations. If the Employer has concerns about potential misappropriation of controlled substances, they are to inform the Medical Director immediately.
- 1.7. Any missing controlled substance will be reported immediately to the prescribing Medical Director and, if necessary, to Health Canada (as required under the [Controlled Drugs and Substances Act](#)).
- 1.8. When a controlled substance vial is opened, the Ambulance Call Report (ACR) documentation must comply with the Ontario Ambulance Documentation Standards medication and intervention documentation requirements and must, in addition to standard documentation elements, include:
 - 1.8.1. name of the patient, the medication was administered to;
 - 1.8.2. dose and route administered; and
 - 1.8.3. name and signature of the paramedic responsible; and
 - 1.8.4. if applicable, the name of the Base Hospital Patch (BHP) Physician is giving the order.

2.0 EXPIRED MEDICATION

- 2.1 Medications must be checked regularly and rotated in order to prevent the use of expired medications and/or to avoid unnecessary disposal.
- 2.2 The Employer/paramedic is responsible for ensuring that the following procedures are adhered to:
 - 2.2.1 Paramedics should follow their Employer's process to ensure medication checks, medication stock, and stock rotation comply with public safety requirements.
 - 2.2.2 Medications are not to be used past the documented expiry date unless written approval from the Medical Director is received.
 - 2.2.3 Medications with only a month and year expiry date can be used until the last day of the applicable month; and
 - 2.2.4 Expired medications will be properly disposed of as per the Employer's policy.

REFERENCES

Controlled Drugs and Substances Act; Subsection 56(1) Class Exemption for Primary Care Paramedics, Advanced Care Paramedics, and Critical Care Paramedics in Ontario
Narcotic Control Regulations, Subsection 8(1)
Benzodiazepines and Other Targeted Substances Regulations, Subsection 2(1)

[Advanced Life Support Patient Care Standards Version 5.4](#)
Emergency Health Services Branch, Ministry of Health

[Ontario Ambulance Documentation Standards - Version 4.0](#)