

Pharmacy Technician FAQs

1. Can a pharmacy technician perform the final checks for compliance packs?

Yes. A pharmacy technician may perform the final check to ensure the right drug(s) is/are dispensed. However, the pharmacy technician must ensure that compliance packs are not released until a pharmacist has assessed the patient. The pharmacist must assess the patient each time a new prescription or drug order is received, or every 90 days, whichever comes first. Refer to Standards 3.2—3.3 of the Standards of Practice for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians for requirements when a pharmacist delays an assessment in this manner. Ensure your audit trail clearly reflects which regulated member performed the final check and which pharmacist performed the assessment of appropriateness.

2. Can a pharmacy technician perform the final checks for narcotics, controlled drugs, and targeted substances?

Yes. A pharmacy technician may perform the final check to ensure the right drug(s) is/are dispensed. However, the pharmacy technician must ensure that medications are not released until a pharmacist has assessed the patient. The audit trail must clearly reflect which regulated member performed the final check and which pharmacist completed the assessment.

Pharmacy technicians may perform the final checks for triplicate medications, however the “Pharmacy Use Only” section of the triplicate form must be signed by the pharmacist who assessed the patient.

3. Can a pharmacy technician perform the final checks for new and refill medications?

Yes. However, the pharmacy technician must ensure that neither new nor refill medications are released until a pharmacist has assessed the patient. The pharmacist must assess the patient at each patient encounter, including each time a new or refill medication is dispensed. A technician checking another technician’s work is not sufficient for meeting this requirement. The audit trail must clearly reflect which regulated member performed the final check and which pharmacist completed the assessment.

4. Can a pharmacy technician witness the ingestion of methadone or buprenorphine/naloxone?

No. The pharmacist must supervise dosing in order to assess the appropriateness of the treatment, assess the patient for intoxication, and to monitor the patient post-ingestion. This responsibility cannot be delegated to a pharmacy technician or an unregulated pharmacy staff member.

The prescriber directly responsible for prescribing the methadone or buprenorphine-naloxone may delegate another authorized health professional with the appropriate scope and competence to witness the administration. Refer to pg. xiii of the ODT guidelines, Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Dependence: Guidelines for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians for requirements when delegating witnessed dosing.

5. Can a pharmacy technician receive a verbal order?

Yes. However, a technician may not receive a verbal order or document changes to a prescription for narcotic, controlled, or targeted drugs.

6. Can a pharmacy technician transfer prescriptions?

Yes. A technician may transfer prescriptions that may legally be transferred to another pharmacy on behalf of a pharmacist.

7. Can a pharmacy technician act as a witness when a pharmacist destroys unserviceable narcotic or controlled drugs?

Yes. Both the pharmacist and technician must record their names and destruction date on a statement indicating they witnessed the destruction.

Works Cited

Alberta College of Pharmacy. *ODT Guidelines. Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Dependence: Guidelines for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians*. Edmonton: Alberta College of Pharmacy, 1 February 2014. PDF. <https://abpharmacy.ca/system/files/ODTGuidelines.pdf>

Alberta College of Pharmacy. (2011) *Standards of Practice for Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians*. Edmonton: Alberta College of Pharmacy, 1 July 2011. PDF. <https://abpharmacy.ca/nPharmacistResources/StandardsofPractice.aspx>