

# SafeScript

## Frequently Asked Questions – for hospitals

The Victorian Government is taking action to reduce the growing harms, including deaths, from high-risk prescription medicines by implementing SafeScript, Victoria's real-time prescription monitoring system.

SafeScript is computer software that allows prescription records for high-risk medicines to be transmitted in real-time to a centralised database which can then be accessed by doctors and pharmacists during a consultation. The focus of SafeScript is on its use in primary care as in this setting patients are supplied (not administered) high-risk medicines to be taken unsupervised in their homes.

SafeScript will provide prescribers and pharmacists with a clinical tool to make safer decisions about whether to prescribe or dispense a high-risk medicine, and facilitate the early identification, treatment and support for patients who are developing signs of dependence.

### Is SafeScript be available to health professionals in hospitals?

All medical practitioners, nurse practitioners and pharmacists in all clinical settings, including hospitals, have access to SafeScript to review prescription records of patients in their care.

### When will the use of SafeScript be mandatory for hospital clinicians?

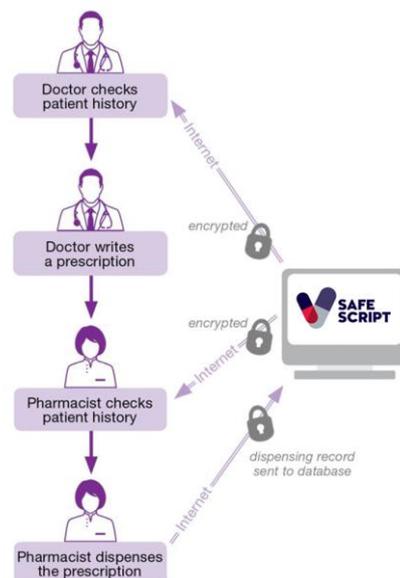
The use of SafeScript will not be mandatory when treating hospital in-patients, because medicines are administered under close supervision.

However, clinicians may still check the system if they would like to view a patient's record to assist with their treatment.

From 1 April 2020, hospital doctors, pharmacists and nurse practitioners will be required to use SafeScript when supplying patients with a monitored medicine for use outside of hospital, that is, to an outpatient or when discharging patients from an emergency department or a ward.

The requirement to check SafeScript will apply to both paper based and electronic prescriptions.

The following diagram outlines use of SafeScript in hospitals when supplying monitored medicines to outpatients or discharging patients from an emergency department or a ward.



### What medicines are monitored in SafeScript?

Austin Health was commissioned to conduct a study of the medical literature and examine local data about harm from prescription medicines, to identify high-risk medicines that are causing the greatest harm to the Victorian community. An expert advisory group reviewed the evidence-based findings and recommended a list of medicines to be monitored through SafeScript. The literature review is available on the SafeScript web page.

These are all Schedule 8 medicines, such as oxycodone (brand names include OxyContin and Endone), morphine (brand names include Kapanol and

MS Contin), alprazolam (brand names include Kalma), methylphenidate (brand names include Ritalin) and dexamphetamine, and all Schedule 4 benzodiazepines such as diazepam, 'Z-drugs' (zolpidem and zopiclone), codeine and quetiapine.

### **Does SafeScript tell me whether I can or cannot prescribe or dispense a medicine?**

SafeScript is a clinical support tool which enables clinicians to make more informed decisions. SafeScript assists clinicians with identifying high-risk circumstances, however, it does not prevent clinicians from prescribing or dispensing a medicine if they consider it to be clinically necessary. The appropriateness of prescribing or dispensing a medicine remains a clinical decision for the doctor and pharmacist.

### **What records does SafeScript collect from hospitals?**

SafeScript is intended to provide clinicians with information on what high-risk medicines have been supplied to patients in the primary care setting.

Work with hospital pharmacy vendors to capture outpatient and discharge prescription records is also underway.

SafeScript does not collect records of medicines administered under close supervision in hospital in-patient settings.

### **How can prescribers and pharmacists in hospitals access SafeScript?**

Access to SafeScript is available at all times by logging into a secure web portal for all hospital prescribers and pharmacists.

An interface is being developed to provide a more integrated user experience for hospital clinicians. However, health services are all at different stages of implementing fully electronic medication systems. This is a complex transition so adoption of the SafeScript interface will be subject to the IT roadmaps for individual health services.

### **How can prescribers and pharmacists in hospitals register for SafeScript?**

Online registration for access to SafeScript is now open. Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) contact details are used to fast-track and automate this process.

### **What training will be provided to hospital clinicians on how to use SafeScript?**

The implementation of SafeScript will include a comprehensive training package for prescribers and pharmacists. The training is being developed by the Victorian Primary Health Networks and NPS MedicineWise and is focused on primary care. Training will comprise online modules as well as face-to-face seminars and workshops.

The training will include content on how to use the system to support safer prescribing and dispensing and respond to the needs of patients.

While the focus of the training will be on upskilling primary care clinicians, the online training modules will also be available to hospital clinicians and can be customised by hospitals to support internal training and programs, i.e. hospital opioid stewardship programs.

### **What are the changes to the Schedule 8 permit and notification requirements for hospitals?**

As part of the legislation to establish SafeScript, a number of amendments were included to reduce the regulatory burden for hospital prescribers when treating patients with Schedule 8 medicines.

Legislative changes that take effect from 1 July 2018 relevant to hospital prescribers include:

- Permit no longer required to treat a patient in a day procedure centre
- Permit no longer required to treat a patient in an emergency department
- Permit no longer required when prescribing up to 7 days' supply on discharge
- Notification of drug dependent person no longer required (for Schedule 8 medicines and Schedule 4 drugs of dependence).

### **When will SafeScript be implemented?**

SafeScript commenced implementation in October 2018, with a focus on the Western Victoria Primary Health Network catchment. The focus of implementation shifts to the rest of Victoria in early 2019.

### **Where can I get further information?**

Further information is available on the [SafeScript website](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/safescript) <www.health.vic.gov.au/safescript>.

The [SafeScript General Enquiries team](mailto:safescript@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <safescript@dhhs.vic.gov.au> can be contacted on 9096 5633 or via email.