

FACT SHEET

Forgery: Management and Reporting of Fraudulent Prescriptions

A fact sheet is a plain-language explanation of the legislation that forms the foundation of certain pharmacy practices. It provides useful information and references to help pharmacy professionals understand a particular topic. A fact sheet is an informational resource and is not considered legal advice. Always refer to the legislation for full context.

Legislative References

- [Controlled Drugs and Substances Act](#), 1996 (CDSA)
 - [Controlled Substances Regulations](#)
- [Narcotics Safety and Awareness Act](#), 2010 (NSAA)

Additional References

Definitions

Controlled substance: A substance set out in Schedules I, II, III, IV, or Part 1 of V of the federal *Controlled Drug and Substances Act*. This resource applies to the substances named in Schedule 1 (narcotics), Schedule 2 (controlled drugs) and Schedule 3 (targeted substances) under the *Controlled Substances Regulations*.

Monitored drug: Controlled substances, any opioids that are not listed in the CDSA, and any drug product designated by the Minister of Health as per the *Narcotics Safety and Awareness Act*.

Background

Controlled substances are regulated federally by Health Canada (HC) and the [Office of Controlled Substances \(OCS\)](#). The *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* (CDSA) provides a legislative framework aimed at controlling access to substances that can alter mental processes and produce harm to the health of an individual and/or society when diverted or misused.

Pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and hospitals are obligated to report the theft of controlled substances (narcotics, controlled drugs, and targeted substances) to Health Canada, however any fraudulent prescriptions can be reported as crime.

Management of Fraudulent Prescriptions

Suspected forgeries

When there is suspicion that a prescription may be fraudulent, the pharmacy should attempt to retain the prescription. If its authenticity cannot be confirmed before the “patient” requests to have their prescription back, if possible, create some documentation on the prescription itself. For example, complete missing patient information (e.g. demographics, allergy status, drug plan, etc.) or add the pharmacy’s contact information (handwritten or using an ink stamp). This action itself could thwart an attempted forgery, or if the individual takes the prescription elsewhere, the other pharmacy will be alerted to the suspicion of its validity.

Once a forgery is identified or confirmed

1. Use a delaying tactic to stall for time. This generally frustrates perpetrators who are usually in a hurry and do not want to come back. Even if they do not seem rushed, waiting a long time or having to return later may make them abandon their attempt, thinking that the forgery has been detected.
2. Notify the police.
 - a. Use the emergency number 9-1-1 if the suspect is still in the pharmacy and advise the operator that the suspect is at the pharmacy and that there is a forgery *in progress*.
 - b. If the suspect has left, report the offence to your regional non-emergency police number. Advise the police if the suspect is expected to return to pick up the prescription so they can arrange to be present. Some police service websites will accept fraud reports via online reporting.
3. Do not attempt to physically restrain the suspect. This jeopardizes your safety, and possibly the safety of your staff, patients, and customers.
4. Make note of the suspect’s description and, in the event the suspect leaves, note their direction of travel and, if in a vehicle, try to obtain the license plate number, make, model and color.
5. Preserve the evidence.
 - a. Whenever possible, retain the prescription, or, if that is not possible, make a copy of it.
 - b. Minimize handling the forged prescription to preserve fingerprints left by the suspect by placing it in a plastic “Ziploc®” type bag. (If the prescription is wet, do not place in plastic; if possible, place in a paper bag instead.)
6. If the suspect demands the return of the prescription, comply with this request in the interest of safety.
7. Contact other pharmacies in the area to inform them of the situation.

Reporting Requirements

- Report a prescription forgery to the [Ontario Drug Benefit program](#) by emailing the following information to drugprogramsdelivery@ontario.ca:
 - The prescriber details including prescriber name, address, phone/fax number;
 - The name(s) of the drug(s) mentioned; and

- Attach a copy of the prescription and any additional forged prescription pages you may have.
- Report a prescription forgery for a controlled substance as a theft *only if it has been dispensed*, either partially or fully, to Health Canada's Office of Controlled Substances within 10 days of its discovery: [Reporting Loss or Theft](#).

Contact Information

Health Profession Regulators of Ontario

www.regulatedhealthprofessions.on.ca/professionscolleges.html

Office of Controlled Substances

Health Canada National Compliance Section

Tel: 613-954-1541

hc.ocs.reporting-rapporteur.bsc.sc@canada.ca

Ontario Public Drug Programs

ODB Pharmacy Help Desk Tel: 1-800-668-6641

drugprogramsdelivery@ontario.ca

External Resources

- Health Canada:
 - [Abuse and Diversion of Controlled Substances: A Guide for Health Professionals](#)
 - [Guidance Document: Reporting Loss or Theft of Controlled Substances and Precursors \(CS-GD-005\)](#)
 - [Loss or Theft](#)
- Information and Privacy Commissioner Fact Sheet – [Disclosure of Personal Information to Law Enforcement](#)
- [Ontario Drug Programs reference manual](#) (Section 13: Prescription Forgery; Section 15: Narcotic Monitoring System)
 - Executive Officer Notice: [Forgery Notification Alerts in the Health Network System \(HNS\), including the Narcotics Monitoring System \(NMS\)](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

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Revision History

Version #	Date	Action
1.0	July 2013	Published as "Narcotic Reporting of Forgeries and Losses"

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Version #	Date	Action
2.0	May 2019	Title change; revised to include all controlled substances; minor updates to content and references
3.0	March 2020	Update Health Canada reporting requirements
4.0	November 2020	Reformatting; add NMS, reporting changes and revision history
5.0	July 2021	Updated reporting information
5.1	September 2021	Changed NMS Reference Manual to ODB Reference Manual
5.2	October 2026	Revised to reflect Controlled Substances Regulations coming into effect