

**PHARMACY AND POISONS BOARD
HONG KONG
香港藥劑業及毒藥管理局**

Your Ref. :
貴處編號
Our Ref. : PPB 3/2 III
本局編號
Tel. No. : 2527 8418
電話
Fax No. : 2527 2277
圖文傳真

1st Floor, Shun Feng International Centre
182 Queen's Road East
Wan Chai, Hong Kong
香港灣仔皇后大道東182號
順豐國際中心1樓

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To all registered pharmacists in Hong Kong

Dear Sir/Madam,

New Code of Practice for Authorized Seller of Poisons

I write to inform you that the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong (the Board) has recently endorsed a new Code of Practice (COP) for Authorized Seller of Poisons (ASP).

The Board introduced in 1997 a COP for ASP, which sets out the standards for an ASP in relation to carrying out a retail pharmacy business at the registered premises. The purpose of the COP aims to provide practical guidance and direction to the ASPs for them to operate in accordance with the legal requirements of the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (PPO).

In early 2009, a number of incidents concerning pharmaceutical products in Hong Kong had caused public concerns on drug safety. In order to make long term measures to address the matter, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region had initiated a comprehensive review on the existing regime for the regulation of pharmaceutical products (western medicines). A Review Committee on the Regulation of Pharmaceutical Products in Hong Kong (the Review Committee) chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Health with members from the pharmaceutical sector, medical profession, academia, patient groups and consumer representatives was set up in March 2009 and tasked to carry out the review. Subsequently, the Review Committee had made 75 recommendations and some of them were aiming at improving the monitoring of the operation of the ASPs.

To facilitate the implementation of the above-mentioned recommendations of the Review Committee, the Department of Health (DH) had convened a Working Group to review and revise the existing COP for ASP, which had already been used since 1997. After the Working Group had come up with the draft new COP, a six-month consultation exercise was conducted by the Board from July to December

2012, to collect views from all registered pharmacists, all the ASPs listed in the Register of Premises kept by the Board, various pharmacist associations and other stakeholders. Based on the comments received during the consultation exercise, the new COP for ASP was finalized, and subsequently endorsed by the Board at its recent meeting. The new COP for ASP is divided into the following three sections:

- (a) Section 1 on *Premises* sets out the requirements on the premises, dispensing area, equipment and storage of the ASPs;
- (b) Section 2 on *Management and Staff* specifies the relevant responsibilities of the ASPs; and
- (c) Section 3 on *Services and System of Operation* provides guidance on the dispensing of prescription, sale and supply of medicines, procurement of drugs and record keeping of the ASPs.

With reference to the recommendations of the Review Committee, the new COP for ASP has also included the following:

- (a) to store all Part I poisons in locked receptacle in the premises and the key to the locked receptacle should be kept by a pharmacist;
- (b) to sell drugs in the original packing except in accordance with prescription or in the case of pharmacist dispensing drugs to patients;
- (c) to purchase drugs from licensed and/or reputable traders only; and
- (d) to have written records (such as fax or email) for drug orders.

The new COP for ASP in English and Chinese may now be downloaded at the Board's website (www.ppbhk.org.hk). In this connection, please note that the new COP for ASP will replace the existing one with effect from **2 January 2015**, as a condition for Registration of Premises under section 13 of the PPO. Non-compliance with the new COP for ASP may constitute misconduct and the ASP concerned may be subject to inquiry by the Disciplinary Committee under section 16(2) of the PPO.

If you have any enquiries, please feel free to contact the Drug Office of the DH at 2961 8028.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Yours faithfully,



(Miss Maggie CHOW)
Secretary, Pharmacy and Poisons Board