



Department for Health and Wellbeing

Vaccine Administration Code

Frequently Asked Questions  
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**OFFICIAL**



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SA Health

## Introduction

The *Controlled Substances (Poisons) Regulation 2011*, sub regulation 18(3) provides authorisation for a registered health practitioner determined by the Minister, to administer vaccine without a medical order. The authorisation is conditional to the administration being in accordance the Vaccine Administration Code (Code) as published by the South Australian Department for Health and Wellbeing (the Department).

To meet all requirements of sub regulation 18(3) a vaccine must be administered by:

- a class of health practitioner approved by the Minister, and
- the health practitioner must have successfully completed an approved immunisation training program, and
- the vaccine is administered by a health practitioner working for an organisation that is approved by the Minister, and
- the vaccine is administered as part of a specified immunisation program.

Who is able to initiate administration of a vaccine in accordance with the authorisation?

Registered nurses, midwives and pharmacists are classes of health professionals recognised in the Code.

What training programs are approved in South Australia?

The approved immunisation training programs for health professionals recognised through the Code are published on the [SA Health website](#).

Registered nurses and midwives must have completed an approved immunisation training program and a COVID-19 vaccination education program to be able to administer COVID-19 vaccines as an approved program.

Pharmacists must have completed an approved immunisation training program and a COVID-19 vaccination education program to be able to administer COVID-19 vaccines as an approved program.

For those health professionals administering specific vaccines, such as the Pfizer vaccine an additional training module will also need to be undertaken.

Why is adrenaline not listed in the Code?

Adrenaline 1:1000 solution for injection is not listed because it is an S3 poison (Pharmacist Only Medicine). The authorisation under regulation 18(3) of the *Controlled Substances (Poisons) Regulations 2011* applies to the administration of S4 drugs.

Can adrenaline be administered without a written or verbal instruction from a medical practitioner?

Yes. A registered health practitioner is able to administer adrenaline 1:1000 injection without a written or verbal instruction from a medical practitioner. The administration of adrenaline injection should be in accordance with the clinical guidelines in the current online edition of the *Australian Immunisation Handbook*.

Who are approved as organisations able to deliver immunisation services?

Incorporated hospitals, SA Ambulance Service, councils and council subsidiaries are recognised health facilities and do not need to apply for approval under the regulations. Other organisations employing authorised registered health practitioners to deliver immunisation programs without a medical order require approval.

How do organisations apply to be approved?

**Pharmacies:**

Pharmacies that wish to be recognised as approved organisations complete the application form '[Application for approval as an organisation delivering immunisation programs](#)' with the proprietor, executive or manager of the organisation signing off the Executive Declaration.

In addition, those seeking approval will need to apply to register with the Australian Immunisation Register. See *How to register as a provider and request access to the AIR*.

Approved pharmacies and organisations are listed on the [SA Health website](#).

**Other organisations**

SA Health is currently reviewing the processes for the approval of other organisations to deliver immunisation programs in South Australia and is not processing applications at present.

What are specified immunisation programs?

Vaccines are to be administered as part of specified immunisation programs. This includes vaccines administered as part of;

- The National Immunisation Program, including the current South Australian National Immunisation Program (NIP) and Annual Influenza Program schedules
- State funded immunisation programs:
  - Meningococcal B Immunisation Program,
  - High Risk Hepatitis B Immunisation Program
- Other specified immunisation programs, which includes:
  - occupational health programs, as listed in the online Australian Immunisation Handbook,
  - Seasonal Influenza Program
  - Pharmacy Vaccination Service (including Pharmacy Influenza Vaccination Program)
  - COVID-19 Immunisation Program

Vaccine administration for the specified immunisation programs must be in accordance with the current recommendations as published in the online Australian Immunisation Handbook.

Can vaccines listed in the Code be administered for the purpose of travel or a tetanus prone wound?

No. Vaccines such as hepatitis A may not be administered for the purpose of travel as this is not from part of a specified immunisation program.

Tetanus containing vaccines cannot be administered for the treatment of a tetanus prone wound as a medical consultation is required.

Can an authorised registered nurse delegate the administration of a vaccine to an unauthorised registered nurse or an enrolled nurse?

No. A nurse (RN or EN) may administer a prescription drug (not being a drug of dependence), e.g. a vaccine, if he or she is acting in the ordinary course of his or her profession as per the *Controlled Substances Act 1984(18(1d)(a)(i))*. This is generally taken to mean that a nurse may administer a vaccine if he or she is acting on an instruction (verbal or written) from a prescriber. An instruction would include an appropriately approved standing drug order.

An authorised registered nurse is not a prescriber (a prescriber is a person who lawfully gives a prescription for a drug). Therefore, an authorised registered nurse cannot delegate the administration of vaccine to an unauthorised registered nurse or an enrolled nurse.

Can students or provisionally registered pharmacists undertake an approved immunisation training program and then practice as an authorised practitioner once they gain general registration with the Pharmacy Board of Australia?

No. While student pharmacists and interns are not precluded from enrolling and completing an immunisation training program, this does not meet the legislative requirements of the Code.

The Code applies to health practitioners who are registered under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law* to practice a health profession, other than as a student.

Can a student nurse/midwife undertake an approved immunisation training program then practice as an authorised practitioner once they gain registration from the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia?

No. While student nurses/midwives are not precluded from enrolling and completing an immunisation training program, this does not meet the legislative requirements of the Code.

The Code applies to health practitioners who are registered under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law* to practice a health profession, other than as a student.

Where can I get more information?

Clinical information and advice is available from expert immunisation nurses in the Immunisation Section, Communicable Disease Control Branch (CDCB). The Immunisation Section can be contacted on 1300 232 272 Monday to Friday 8.30 am – 5.00 pm.