

# Controlled Drug ePrescriptions

Since the introduction of NZePS, there has been some confusion about the requirements for prescribing controlled drugs. Controlled Drugs (Class A, B and C) are defined by the Misuse of Drugs Act, which the Director-General does not have the authority to waive. These medicines are NOT covered by the NZePS waiver provisions of the Medicines Regulations 1984 and must still meet the regulations:

- **NZePS Class A, B and Class C** (barcoded) prescriptions must be:
  - Printed and require a wet ink signature.
  - Either faxed or scanned to email to the pharmacy.
  - Signed original prescription must be received by the pharmacy within 2 working days of the prescription date (unless it is an exempt or partially exempt Class C Controlled Drug)
- **Non-NZePS Class B** prescriptions (no barcode on prescription):
  - Require the Controlled Drug triplicate form to be completed and sent to pharmacy

Table: Summary of requirements to help make prescribing and dispensing Controlled Drugs simpler.

	Medication classification	Examples of medicines	Is a WET INK signature required on the eScript copy received by fax or email	Is an original hardcopy of prescription required by pharmacy
<b>NZePS downloaded prescription</b>	Class A, B and C (except exempt or partially exempt)	<u>Class B:</u> Morphine, Oxycodone, Fentanyl Methadone <u>Class C:</u> Buprenorphine with naltrexone, codeine, dihydrocodeine, phenobarbitone and Benzodiazepines (Class C5)	YES	YES
	Exempt or partially exempt Class C	Pholcodeine Paracetamol+Codeine combination products	NO	NO
	Prescription medicine (NON controlled drugs)	Zopiclone, Tramadol (not classified as controlled drugs)	NO	NO
<b>Methodone OST prescribing:</b> See link for information about how a script needs to be completed to avoid any problems for the dispensing pharmacy <a href="https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/getting-started-guide-23jul20.pdf">https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/getting-started-guide-23jul20.pdf</a>				

### Practice Point:

Remember that all Class C medicines (unless exempt or partially exempt) **must** have a wet ink signature on the prescription. One way to make sure this occurs is to prescribe these items individually on a single page, separate from other regular prescription medicines.

### References

- MOH, New Zealand ePrescription Service.
- <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/digital-health/other-digital-health-initiatives/emedicines/new-zealand-eprescription-service>
- MOH, Signature Exempt Prescriptions and remote prescribing. Frequently asked questions.  
[https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/remote\\_prescribing\\_faqs\\_-\\_15\\_june\\_2022.pdf](https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/remote_prescribing_faqs_-_15_june_2022.pdf)
- PSNZ, Pharmacy Practice e-Handbook, July 2022.  
<https://www.psnz.org.nz/practicesupport/everydayresources>
- PSNZ, Sending Prescriptions to a Pharmacy electronically, March 2022  
[https://www.psnz.org.nz/Folder?Action=View%20File&Folder\\_id=227&File=COVID-19%20Prescription%20Waivers%20Summary%20-%20FINAL%20-%202022%2003%2022.pdf](https://www.psnz.org.nz/Folder?Action=View%20File&Folder_id=227&File=COVID-19%20Prescription%20Waivers%20Summary%20-%20FINAL%20-%202022%2003%2022.pdf)
- PSNZ, Electronic prescription waivers and suspension notices during the COVID-19 pandemic  
[https://www.psnz.org.nz/Folder?Action=View%20File&Folder\\_id=96&File=Summary%20of%20Electronic%20Prescription%20Waivers%20and%20Suspension%20Notices%20-%20UPDATED%20-%202020%2012%2022.pdf](https://www.psnz.org.nz/Folder?Action=View%20File&Folder_id=96&File=Summary%20of%20Electronic%20Prescription%20Waivers%20and%20Suspension%20Notices%20-%20UPDATED%20-%202020%2012%2022.pdf)