



# REGISTRATION POLICY

## Temporary Pharmacy Closures

### Introduction

Temporary closure of community pharmacies has the potential to adversely impact patient care and safety. As the role of the pharmacist and the services they provide expands, the significance of temporary pharmacy closures also rises. Pharmacies enter into a contract with patients regarding the provision of their care that includes that the pharmacy will provide the patient with reasonable access to their medication and record when needed and/or requested.

In consideration of the public safety issues associated with temporary pharmacy closures, this policy sets out requirements for pharmacy managers and owners who may need to close the pharmacy temporarily due to the planned absence of a pharmacist or to unplanned events that are outside the control of the pharmacy manager and/or owner.

### Purpose

To direct a pharmacy that is temporarily closing on the actions that it must undertake in consideration of continuity of care, notification of its patients and the public, and security of patient records and medications in its custody.

### Policy

It is acceptable for a licensed pharmacy to be temporarily closed without surrendering its operating licence, provided that the following requirements are met:

#### Temporary Closures - all situations

1. The pharmacy must notify the NSCP of the pharmacy closure at the earliest opportunity by submitting the *Notification of Temporary Pharmacy Closure* form.

2. The public must be advised of the closure by means of signage at the store entrance, a telephone answering machine message, the pharmacy's website and social media pages, as appropriate. The public notification must include the following information:
  - The duration of the closure if known.
  - The name of a partnering pharmacy, if applicable.
  - That patients can access their prescriptions at another pharmacy.\*
  - Emergency contact information for the pharmacy.
  - Other information to assist patients in obtaining necessary pharmacy services during the closure (e.g., prescriptions filled prior to date 'X' are available for pick-up at...).

**\*Note:** During a public health emergency/crisis, prescriptions can be accessed by another pharmacy through the Drug Information System (DIS) as described in the *Standards of Practice: Prescribing (Appendix H)*.

3. In single-pharmacy communities, best efforts should be made to communicate the pharmacy's closure to local prescribers and pharmacies in nearby communities to help ensure continuity of care.
4. Pharmacies providing opioid agonist maintenance treatment (OAMT) need to take the necessary steps to ensure continuity of care for OAMT patients (e.g., partnering with another store and/or working with the patient's care team).
5. For unplanned temporary closures, the pharmacy manager and / or pharmacy owner must have taken all reasonable steps to attempt to secure the services of a pharmacist so that the pharmacy can remain open.

### Temporary Closures - Planned

6. For planned annual / seasonal closures of the pharmacy to the public:
  - Notification includes posting the details of the closure with the pharmacy's *Hours of Operation* and prominent signage notifying passersby of the pharmacy's temporary closure.
  - The registration and licence of the pharmacy remain in place, as well as the associated requirements arising from that licence, including the ongoing responsibility of the pharmacy owner and pharmacy manager for compliance with the *Pharmacy Act* and its regulations.
7. All patients with prepared prescriptions awaiting pickup must be contacted to advise them of the closure and given the opportunity to obtain their prepared prescriptions prior to the start of the temporary closure. If in exceptional circumstances this is not possible, pharmacies are expected to take all reasonable steps to provide patients with their prepared prescriptions, but must continue to do so in compliance with the *Pharmacy Act* and regulations, the NSCP *Releasing Medication to Patients and their Agents* and *Pharmacy Depots* policies.

Unless extenuating circumstances exist, the public must be notified at least 30 days prior to the temporary closure start date (using in-store postings and media announcements).

**Policy Approved:** May 2002

**Revised:** June 2014, Sept 2014, April 2017, April 2020

# Notification of Temporary Pharmacy Closure

**Fax (902) 422-0885 or Email: info@nspharmacists.ca this form to the NSCP**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Pharmacy Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Pharmacy Manager Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Closure (start/finish): \_\_\_\_\_

Arrangements for access to patient records (planned closures) and prescriptions awaiting pick-up:

---

---

---

Details of emergency contact information provided to patients / public (if applicable):

---

---

Additional information as applicable (arrangements made with local prescribers, etc.):

---

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Pharmacy Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date