



Are EpiPens and asthma inhalers a must for your first aid kit?



LGIS has consulted with key stakeholders including the Department of Health, LIWA Aquatics and local government representatives regarding aquatic and recreational facilities stocking EpiPens and asthma inhalers for first aid use.

Currently there is no legal requirement for local government aquatic or recreational facilities to stock EpiPens or asthma inhalers. However, in exceptional circumstances and following a robust documented risk assessment process, some local governments may seek to stock this medication for first aid purposes. For example:

- Due to known sensitivities with patrons;
- Environmental risk factors due to location; or
- Limited access to medical assistance.

EpiPens and Salbutamol inhalers are both categorised as Schedule 3 Poisons (S3) as per the Standard for Uniform Scheduling of Medicines and Poisons (*Poisons Standard July 2015*). The Poisons Standard states:

“A person, other than a pharmacist, or a medical, dental or veterinary practitioner, in the lawful practice of his or her profession, must not sell or supply a Schedule 3 poison”

Within both the Poisons standard and the *Poisons Act 1964 (WA)*, medicines under the S3 category are referred to as pharmacist only medicines. Whilst S3 Poisons are available from a pharmacist without prescription ‘over the counter’, this method of supply is intended for private individuals under the guidance of the pharmacist, where there is an established therapeutic need.

An organisation such as a local government, may apply to the Department of Health for a poisons permit to purchase and keep Schedule 3 Poisons for general use in their first aid kits. The permit also comes with the entitlement to purchase the poisons at a wholesale rate. Traditionally, one permit would be required per site; however pursuant to communications with the Department, they have agreed to waive this requirement for local government applicants where there is a need for multiple sites (Eg, more than one facility).


Should a local government member wish to stock EpiPens and Salbutamol inhalers for the purpose of first aid use, we recommend that the appropriate permit be obtained. The permit will provide the local government with a degree of comfort that it is managing the risk with appropriate controls in place, and require compliance to legislative standards. This includes requirements prescribed under Section 35 of the *Poisons Act 1964 (WA)*.

The permit requires the applicant to provide evidence of:

- Adequate training of emergency management of the related condition (e.g. anaphylaxis, asthma),
- A protocol for administration of the poisons, accessible expert backup (such as by a medical practitioner),
- Appropriate incident reporting and documentation following use, and
- Appropriate storage.

In the event of an adverse outcome associated with the poisons, documented compliance with these requirements will allow the local government to demonstrate, to some extent, that they have made reasonable efforts to discharge their duty of care. This may subsequently assist the LGIS Scheme in defending you should circumstances arise.

To access the permit and further information refer to the Department of Health – Medicines and Poisons Regulation Branch, Public Health: http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Application-forms-licences-and-permits-for-medicines-and-poisons

For more information regarding Risk Management practices associated with your aquatic and recreational facilities including the use of EpiPens and asthma inhalers, please contact LGIS on  (08) 9483 8888.