

Tramadol – Frequently Asked Questions

Tramadol will become a Schedule 3 Controlled Drug on 10th June 2014

NHS Contractor Services

Prescribers are legally permitted to be in possession of CDs and to supply them to others who are legally permitted to be in possession of CDs. This means that a doctor or non-medical prescriber who orders stock can use that stock for administration directly to a patient, can direct another person to administer to a patient or can supply to the patient for them to take at a later date.

Pharmacists can legally be in possession of CDs and can supply them to others in the situations stipulated by the law, e.g. supply from a prescription or in response to a legal requisition.

When tramadol is a schedule 3 controlled drug, will it need to be stored in the CD cabinet?	NO – there are no safe custody requirements for tramadol.
Will records for tramadol need to be kept in CD register?	NO
What prescription writing requirements will apply on 10 th June for Tramadol?	<p>Tramadol prescriptions must state:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient name and address, • prescriber's name and address, • be dated and signed and • specify the drug name, • strength, • form, • total quantity in words & figures and the dose • dosage instructions* • instalment quantities must be included if to be supplied instalments e.g. weekly <p>(*note 'as directed' is not acceptable 'one as directed' is allowable).</p>
What if the prescription written on or after 10 th June does not comply with the requirements?	<p>We are aware GP computer systems may not be compliant with the prescribing writing requirements for tramadol by 10th June. The general advice is to treat as you would any other controlled drug prescription which is not completed legally.</p> <p>Pharmacists are legally able to amend CD prescriptions for minor typographical errors – this includes adding the total quantity in words if the prescription only specifies the total quantity in figures. In such cases provided the pharmacist is confident that the prescription is legitimate and unambiguous they may amend the prescription.</p>

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	<p>Otherwise it will require to be amended by the prescriber.</p> <p>Dispensing practices will require to ensure that all prescriptions are legally compliant from 10th June 2014.</p>
Can tramadol be issued as an <u>urgent</u> supply?	NO - The current Patient Group Direction (PGD) for Urgent Provision of Repeat Prescribed Medicines (CPUS) is being reviewed. From 10 th June tramadol, as a schedule 3 CD, cannot be issued as an urgent supply by a community pharmacist.
Can tramadol be issued as an <u>emergency</u> supply?	NO - Emergency supply can be at the request of a patient or a healthcare prescriber. Schedule 3 CDs cannot be supplied in an emergency except phenobarbitone or phenobarbitone sodium for epilepsy.
Can tramadol be issued on serial prescriptions?	NO - From 10 th June tramadol, as a schedule 3 CD, cannot be issued as a serial prescription.
What should be done about current serial prescriptions containing tramadol?	<p>A new tramadol prescription must be issued.</p> <p>Tramadol should be removed from the serial prescription system.</p> <p>Patients should be informed of the changes and the implications for obtaining future supplies.</p>
Can pharmacists dispense a tramadol prescription for more than 30 days supply?	YES – it is a good practice requirement that CD prescriptions should be for a maximum of 30 days. This is however not a legal requirement. Prescribers should review quantities and reduce, documenting in patient notes circumstances where they wish to continue to supply >30 days quantity. Prescribers who prescribe more than a 30 day supply should be prepared to justify their decision.
Can tramadol be supplied in a dosette box or be dispensed on a weekly basis?	YES –however as a schedule 3 CD with prescribing writing requirements and prescription will have to comply with instalment requirements –i.e. the quantity to be supplied at each instalment must be stated as well as the interval to be observed.
How long is a tramadol prescription valid for?	28 days – from 10 th June tramadol prescriptions will be valid for 28 days from the date signed, or the appropriate date if specified.
Can pharmacists dispense a balance for tramadol after 28 days?	NO – all balances must be dispensed within the 28 days validity period

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Is an instalment prescription for tramadol that lasts for longer than 28 days allowable?	YES – the first instalment must be dispensed within the 28 day period after that the following instalments can be dispensed after the 28 day period
How should a GP order tramadol for their emergency bag?	GP10A – however this should be on a separate GP10A from other non-CDs. The quantity ordered should be in words and figures. This completed GP10A must be submitted to PSD and the pharmacy should keep a copy of the original requisition.
How should a doctor order for private business?	CDRF – should be used however these are not currently mandatory and headed note paper with full requisition requirements will comply with legal requirements. This completed requisition must be submitted to PSD and the pharmacy should keep a copy of the original requisition.
Can a prescriber issue a private prescription for tramadol on headed note paper?	NO – from 10 th June as a schedule 3 CD, tramadol must be written on PPCD (private prescription controlled drugs) prescription pad if it is being supplied as a private prescription.
Can a patient's representative collect tramadol for them?	YES
What needs to be recorded by the pharmacy when tramadol prescription is collected?	The patient/representative should be asked to sign the back of the prescription form stating they have collected the CD item.
Can pharmacists dispense a prescription for tramadol written by a doctor from outside the UK?	No – the address of the prescriber must be within the UK for schedule 3 CDs.
How should I destroy out of date/no longer required stock of tramadol or patient-returned tramadol?	Schedule 3 CDs must be denatured before disposal – denaturing kits are recommended followed by disposal in pharmaceutical waste bin. Destruction does not need to be witnessed by Authorised Witness. No records need to be kept in the CD register.

Further information is available from: The Royal Pharmaceutical Society - Controlled drug changes to the legal classifications of tramadol, lisdexamfetamine, zopiclone and zaleplon - professional guidance and frequently asked questions (<http://rpharms.co.uk/EQ-2HKM5-EF6A3L1C1/cr.aspx>)

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NHS Managed Sector

The legislation for supply of CDs within a ward or department is different from the legislation for ordering by prescribers. A nurse can only order CDs for the treatment of patients within that ward or department. This means that ward stocks cannot be given to patients to take when they leave; an individual prescription must be generated for each patient.

Can tramadol be supplied on 'top-up' for wards/departments?	NO –as a schedule 3 CD tramadol must be written as a requisition. Topup/routine order sheets do not comply with this. Tramadol orders must comply with requisitions requirements, i.e. signed by authorised signatory for that clinical area when ordered, signed by pharmacy at point of supply and specify drug name, strength, form and quantity. Copy must be kept by pharmacy.
Must tramadol be ordered on a CD order book?	Board areas will have local arrangements to ensure legal compliance with the requisition requirements as above.
When tramadol is a schedule 3 controlled drug will it need to be stored in the CD cabinet?	NO – there are no safe custody requirements for tramadol – it can still be stored in ward stock cupboards (unless local arrangements)
Will records for tramadol need to be kept in CD register?	NO – (unless local arrangements)
Can tramadol be supplied directly to patients from ward/department pre-labelled (TTO) stocks?	NO – tramadol as schedule 3 CD cannot be supplied directly to patients without a legal prescription. This applies to all wards/departments within the managed service including casualty departments.
What are the legal requirements for a tramadol discharge prescription?	Tramadol prescriptions must state: Patient name and address, prescriber's name and address, be dated and signed and specify the drug name, strength, form, total quantity in words & figures and the dose (note 'as directed' is not acceptable 'one as directed' is allowable).
Can nursing staff still administer tramadol from ward stock to a patient if it is prescribed on their Prescription and Administration record (kardex)?	YES
Can tramadol be included on a Patient Group Direction (PGD)?	NO – the only schedule 3 CD allowable on PGD is midazolam.

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How should casualty departments or day surgery units supply tramadol to patients?	There must be a written prescription signed by a doctor or non-medical prescriber. Any prescription must comply with prescription writing requirements and is recommended to be for a maximum of 30 days supply. Options include a prescription to be dispensed by the hospital pharmacy or to be dispensed by community pharmacy (HBP pad).
How should tramadol that is out of date be destroyed within hospital wards/departments?	Follow local arrangements for other schedule 3 controlled drugs

Out of Hours Service

Can tramadol be supplied directly to patients from doctors/nurse practitioner out of hours/emergency bag or centre stocks?	YES – doctors/non-medical prescribers are allowed to possess and supply schedule 3 CD to patients.
Can tramadol be held in emergency bag/centre stock cupboards?	YES –there are no CD storage requirements and any issue is by doctor/nurse practitioner
How should tramadol be ordered for out of hours/emergency bag or centre stocks?	Top up orders will not be allowed – orders must comply with requisition requirements. Board areas will have local arrangements to ensure legal compliance – i.e. signed by doctor when ordered, signed by pharmacy at point of supply and specify drug name, strength, form and quantity. Copy must be kept by pharmacy. Local arrangements for top up from rural casualty departments will become illegal for tramadol as of 10 th June.
Will records for tramadol need to be kept in CD register?	NO
What prescription writing requirements will apply on 10 th June for Tramadol?	Tramadol prescriptions must state: Patient name and address, prescriber's name and address, be dated and signed and specify the drug name, strength, form, total quantity in words & figures and the dose (note 'as directed' is not acceptable 'one as directed' is allowable).

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Prison Service

<p>How should tramadol be ordered for the prison service?</p>	<p>Controlled Drug Requisition Forms (CDRFs) must be used from the 10th June – separate CDRF should be used for each strength/formulation of tramadol required. Board areas will have local arrangements to ensure legal compliance – i.e. signed by doctor when ordered, signed by pharmacy at point of supply and specify drug name, strength, form and quantity. The CDRD must be signed by doctor.</p>
<p>When tramadol is a schedule 3 controlled drug will it need to be stored in the CD cabinet?</p>	<p>NO – there are no safe custody requirements for tramadol – it can still be stored in health centre stock cupboards (unless local arrangements)</p>
<p>Will records for tramadol need to be kept in CD register?</p>	<p>NO - (unless local arrangements) however it is recommended that stock balances are maintained to account for stock movement and administration is recorded in the patient administration record (kardex)</p>
<p>Can prisoners have tramadol as an 'in-possession' medication.</p>	<p>NO – due to the risks of diversion tramadol should be administered by health centre staff.</p>