

Responsible Pharmacist (RP) questions and answers

1) Can someone else complete the Pharmacy Record on the RP's behalf?

The Medicines Act 1968 requires that the responsible pharmacist (RP) makes the entry in the pharmacy record.

The superintendent pharmacist or pharmacy owner would be advised to put in place adequate procedures that are robust enough to reduce the possibility that the RP could inadvertently leave before adequately completing the record.

A situation may arise where an RP fails in their duty to make the record, and it may not be possible for the RP to return to the pharmacy to record this. If the pharmacy operated an electronic Pharmacy Record system with remote access, this may provide a practical solution.

2) Can a responsible pharmacist complete the record remotely?

The pharmacy record must be contemporaneous, accurate and available at the pharmacy premises for inspection. The record can be kept as a hard copy or electronically. The record must be made by the responsible pharmacist and cannot be made by someone else on their behalf.

Any system put in place for completing and maintaining the pharmacy record must be able to comply with all of the responsible pharmacist requirements. Therefore, the responsible pharmacist could complete a record remotely as long as all the requirements are satisfied.

3) Does sending in an e-mail constitute an electronic record?

See response to question 2. The legislation does not specify a format for the record.

4) The professional standards and guidance for responsible pharmacists state that the record must be contemporaneous. What does this mean? Can the record be completed retrospectively?

The requirement for the pharmacy record to be a 'contemporaneous' record is a mandatory professional requirement. The word 'contemporaneous' is not defined in the Professional Standards and Guidance for Responsible Pharmacists. 'Contemporaneous' is taken to mean 'of the time' and the record must identify the responsible pharmacist in charge of the pharmacy at any given time. The record must be made by the responsible pharmacist.

The legislation requires the pharmacy record to be available at the pharmacy premises for inspection.

A record made after the event (i.e. retrospectively) could not, by its very nature, fulfil the requirement of identifying who the responsible pharmacist is at any given time.

5) I am employed as the responsible pharmacist in a pharmacy for six consecutive days from Monday – Saturday. I would like to complete the record on Monday morning and Saturday evening. Is this acceptable?

The responsible pharmacist must be satisfied that the pharmacy record is compliant with the responsible pharmacist requirements. The pharmacy record must be contemporaneous and an accurate reflection of who has been the responsible pharmacist at any given time.

If a pharmacist makes a record of the fact they are the responsible pharmacist and does not complete the record to show they have ceased to be responsible pharmacist then it can be assumed they are still the responsible pharmacist, when activities that require a responsible pharmacist take place, the next day.

A responsible pharmacist who is going to be in charge of the same pharmacy for consecutive days, for example Monday to Saturday may decide to complete the record on Monday morning (to show that they have become the responsible pharmacist) and then complete the record on Saturday evening (to show that they have ceased to be the responsible pharmacist). By completing the record in this way the RP must understand that they remain responsible for all activities that occur at the premises even when they are absent. Alternatively, they may make the record daily. Either way, the pharmacist must be satisfied that the record is contemporaneous.

If a responsible pharmacist chooses to complete the pharmacy record on Monday morning and Saturday evening, they must ensure that the record in respect of 'absence' is held in a contemporaneous manner. A responsible pharmacist cannot complete their absence for the preceding week retrospectively.

6) If leaving the registered pharmacy premises for a very short time, (e.g. nipping to the toilet off the registered premises), does a record of that absence need to be made?

The pharmacy record is an important legal document that records who was the pharmacist in charge of the registered pharmacy premises at any particular time. Certain activities may take place when the RP is in charge of the pharmacy but is absent (for up to a maximum of 2 hours). The pharmacy record must accurately and contemporaneously record any absences.

Absence must be recorded in the pharmacy record if the RP wishes the business to remain operational during that period of absence. (See *Responsible pharmacist requirements: What activities can be undertaken?* guidance: www.rpsgb.org/pdfs/rprequirementsguid.pdf).

If the pharmacy is not operational (i.e. not undertaking any activities that require an RP to be in charge of the pharmacy) there is no obligation to have either a responsible pharmacist or to make a record. Whilst a pharmacy is closed, and no activity is taking place, there is nothing to be responsible for. **N.B. Closed in this sense does not refer to simply restricting access to members of the public, as activities may potentially be undertaken in a pharmacy which either does not open to the public at all, or has temporarily closed to exclude the public.**

Similarly, if the RP needs to leave the pharmacy premises for a short period of time and instructs staff to suspend activities that require a RP to be in charge of the pharmacy until they return, a record of the RP leaving the premises need not be made.

The pharmacy record is not a record of comings and goings.

7) The RP is the RP at one pharmacy all week, Monday to Saturday. They record that they assume the role of RP on Monday morning. If they wish to arrive at 10am on Tuesday morning but allow certain activities to continue from 8am... When does the RP make the record of absence?

Ideally, an absence should be pre-planned. If the RP plans to be absent on Tuesday morning, a record stating that they will be absent from 8am on Tuesday could be made in the record on Monday evening before they leave the pharmacy. When the RP arrives at 10am, the RP would then complete the record to indicate that they had returned from their absence.

Alternatively, if the pharmacy operated an electronic Pharmacy Record system with remote access, it may enable the RP to complete the record on Tuesday morning at 8am.

8) The RP is the RP at one pharmacy all week, Monday to Saturday. They record that they assume the role of RP on Monday morning. If the RP is due in at 9am on Tuesday morning but is late attending and they arrive at 10am can they make the full record of the absence then?

The situation described above is exceptional and unplanned.

In this scenario the RP is still in charge of the pharmacy because they were the RP at the pharmacy the day before, and they have not recorded that they have ceased to be the RP. This is an unplanned and exceptional circumstance as the pharmacist is unintentionally delayed. The pharmacist will need to make a professional decision and decide whether to allow the pharmacy to operate as it can during a period of absence and make the pharmacy record entry (i.e., record their absence) when they arrive at the pharmacy. The RP must understand that this is not a contemporaneous record and should be able to justify their decision. In doing this the RP should consider if they can comply with the legal and professional requirements with respect to being absent from the pharmacy, (i.e. securing the safe and effective running of the pharmacy, satisfying themselves that the pharmacy can continue to run safely in their absence, remaining contactable and able to return with reasonable promptness where it is necessary to do so or arrange for another pharmacist who is available to be contactable and able to provide advice).

If however, the RP has not already been appointed and recorded that they are the RP in the pharmacy record, they cannot be absent until this has been done. A locum or relief pharmacist attending a pharmacy for the first time would not be in charge of the pharmacy or have recorded that they were the RP in the pharmacy record. Until the record has been made and absence established, no activities that require a RP to be in charge of the pharmacy should be carried out.

9) The RP is the RP at one pharmacy all week, Monday to Saturday. They record that they assume the role of RP on Monday morning. Can the RP have an absence at the end of the day, and then go home?

This depends if the RP is in charge of the pharmacy premises and has recorded they are the RP in the pharmacy record and intend to return to the pharmacy the next day to continue working in this role.

If the RP will not be the RP the following day they must make a record to show that they ceased to be the RP when they leave the pharmacy and therefore they could not take advantage of the absence provision at the end of the day.