

Disposing of voluntary assisted dying substances

Guidance for administering practitioners

Introduction

The *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021* authorises administering practitioners to act as disposers of a voluntary assisted dying (VAD) substance which has been supplied for practitioner administration.

An administering practitioner must personally dispose of a VAD substance, or any unused or remaining substance, that is in their possession, as soon as practicable after:

- a person revokes their practitioner administration decision; or
- the person dies.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to an administering practitioner on how to dispose of unused or remaining voluntary assisted dying substance. This document outlines the legal requirements for disposing of a voluntary assisted dying substance in accordance with the Act. For further information see the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021* and *Voluntary Assisted Dying Regulation 2022*.

If disposal is occurring within a health service facility, there may be additional local policies and procedures for disposing of medications. The pharmacy department or pharmacist in charge at a facility can provide guidance, if required.

Process for disposal of the VAD substance

The *Voluntary Assisted Dying Regulation 2022* requires that, when a substance is disposed of by the administering practitioner, it be destroyed personally by the administering practitioner in a way that renders the substance unusable and unidentifiable. In addition, to prevent environmental contamination, the *Environmental Protection Regulation 2019* (Qld) requires that pharmaceutical waste (which includes a VAD substance) undergo high temperature incineration, as the final step of disposal.

A drug waste container is provided by the Queensland Voluntary Assisted Pharmacy Service (QVAD-Pharmacy) with each practitioner administration kit to assist in the safe and timely disposal of any unused substance. Alternatively, an administering practitioner may follow their usual process for disposing of Schedule 8 medicines, provided this is done personally by the administering practitioner and the VAD substance is rendered unusable and unidentifiable.

The process for disposing of the substance using the drug waste container is provided below.

1. Remove and discard all labelling from the packaging to protect the privacy of the person to whom the substance was supplied.
2. Decant the substance into the drug waste container.



3. Discard the packaging and container in general waste.
4. Follow the directions on the container to render the substance unusable. Once the denaturing process is complete, dispose of the container by your usual means of medication disposal (for example, in sharps or clinical waste container).
5. Complete the *Practitioner Disposal Form* and submit this form to the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board (Review Board) within 2 business days after disposing of the VAD substance. This is a legislative requirement. This form can be accessed and submitted electronically on QVAD-IMS.

If assistance is required to complete the disposal process, please contact:

Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Pharmacy Service
Email: QVADPharmacy@health.qld.gov.au
Hours: Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.00pm (excluding public holidays)