

Lost / Stolen Prescription Pads

All doctors should ensure the security of prescription forms or pads from theft and misuse. Although incidents of theft may be rare, forms or pads can be used to obtain drugs illegally, often controlled drugs (CDs) for recreational use or for onward sale.

There are already a number of security features built into prescription forms to deter theft and fraudulent use including solvent-sensitive ink, ultraviolet marking, coloured backgrounds and serial numbers. However, it is still important to have good security measures to prevent theft of the forms in the first place.

- All GPs and practice staff should ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for the secure storage of prescription forms and other related stationary.
- Procedures should be in place for the immediate reporting of any loss or theft of prescription stationary and staff should be aware of what actions to take if prescription pads go missing, including liaising with the Community Pharmacist, other pharmacists and possibly the Gardaí in certain circumstances.
- A clear record of all prescription stationary stock received should be kept including:
 - what has been received along with serial numbers
 - to whom prescription forms are issued along with serial numbers
 - the serial numbers of any unused prescription forms
 - details of any prescription pads destroyed.

It is advisable to hold minimal stocks of prescription stationary. Patients, temporary staff and visitors should not be left alone with prescription forms or allowed into secure areas where they are stored.

When making home visits take suitable precautions to prevent the loss or theft of forms-ensure prescription pads not left on view in a vehicle. Doctors doing home visits should record the serial numbers of any prescription forms necessary.

Blank prescriptions should never be pre-signed.

It should also be noted that the HSE state in *Primary Care Eligibility & Reimbursement Service Information and Administrative Arrangements for Pharmacists (2020)* (available on the HSE website) that:

“GMS panel doctors have been informed to report stolen GMS prescriptions/pads to the Gardaí as soon as possible. Once reported to the Gardaí GPs should report the incident to the HSE Primary Care Eligibility & Reimbursement Service Business Performance Unit at the Primary Care Reimbursement Service or email StolenRX@hse.ie. The HSE will then contact local Pharmacies in the area.”

Please do not hesitate to contact Medisec for specific advice.

“The contents of this publication are indicative of current developments and contain guidance on general medico legal queries. It does not constitute and should not be relied upon as definitive legal, clinical or other advice and if you have any specific queries, please contact Medisec for advice”.