



**Drugs Licensing**

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To whom it may concern

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For some time this office has been considering the status, under the Misuse of Drugs legislation, of paramedics working outside the ambit of the NHS.

NHS ambulance paramedics have, for some time, been covered under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 to possess and supply (by way of administration) medicines containing morphine sulphate and diazepam under the terms of a group, or blanket, licence issued by this office. We have, however, received a number of enquiries about the status of paramedics, employed in that capacity, by private companies.

The ability of paramedics to hold and administer medicines containing morphine sulphate and diazepam is covered by the provisions of a Prescription Only Medicines (POM) Order. The issue of the group licence, mentioned above, ensured that NHS paramedics were covered by the provisions of the Misuse of Drugs legislation when administering these two controlled drugs.

The POM Order, however, covers all registered paramedics and not just those employed by the NHS. Similarly, the registration they must hold with the Health Professions Council (HPC) before they can function as paramedics, and benefit from the POM Order provisions, again covers all paramedics not just those in employment with the NHS.

In these circumstances, and following consultation with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), who administer the POM Orders, a further group licence has now been issued and a copy appears on this website. This covers paramedics, whilst employed in the public sector, to possess morphine sulphate (in the form of morphine sulphate injection to a maximum of 20mg and oral) and diazepam for the purpose of administration for the immediate and necessary treatment of sick or injured persons.

The group licence covers individual privately-employed paramedics, not the companies that might employ them, and it will be the responsibility of such paramedics to source their own individual supplies of morphine sulphate and diazepam. They will, as individuals, be responsible for the safe-keeping of the drugs coming into their possession, when both on- and off-duty, and for keeping a record of their usage.

As the POM Order and group licence cover individual paramedics, and they are responsible for all matters relating to controlled drugs, we will not be licensing employing companies to hold stocks of controlled drugs.