

Relevance to Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003

1. Section 118 – Standards of Competence

Policy Statement

2. At the point of registration in the pharmacist scope of practise all pharmacists must hold a First Aid Certificate in NZQA Unit Standards:

6400 Manage first aid in an emergency situation

6401 Provide first aid

6402 Provide basic life support

Pharmacists must maintain a level of first aid competence commensurate with their role and professional obligations.

Rationale

3. All pharmacists are required to hold a current First Aid Certificate for entry to the profession as part of the registration process.
4. Pharmacists practising in a primary care, patient facing setting, in the community must be able to render assistance in an emergency.
5. It is a pharmacist's ethical¹ and professional duty² to provide emergency first aid where necessary, in line with professional role and expertise.
6. Pharmacists practising in a secondary care (hospital) setting may elect to maintain a level of competence in first aid as deemed appropriate by their employer and as reflected by their professional obligations. In the hospital setting, highly skilled medical personnel are able to administer emergency care promptly therefore it is unlikely that hospital pharmacists will be required to administer first aid. Hospital policies often preclude pharmacists from administering life saving measures.

Implementation

Entry to the profession

7. Intern pharmacists are required to provide Council a copy of a valid first aid training certificate(s) when lodging the application for registration in the Pharmacist scope of practice. This is to confirm they've done comprehensive first aid training that meets all required NZQA Unit Standards and that it is current (not expired or lapsed without refreshers) when applying.
8. The above also applies to Overseas pharmacists who registered in the Intern Scope via the Non-Recognised Equivalent Qualifications Route (Non-REQR). They will need to provide a copy of valid first aid training certificate(s) when applying for registration in the Pharmacist scope of practice.

¹ [Code of Ethics](#) Principle 1: A pharmacist makes the health and wellbeing of the patient their first priority.

² [Scope of Domain 6](#): Pharmacists have an independent duty of care to use their professional judgement and apply their expertise to protect and promote the safety, health and well-being of individual people and the public more generally.

9. Overseas pharmacists applying for registration through the Recognised Equivalent Qualifications Route (REQR) or the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act (TTMRA) are not required to hold a current certificate at the time of full NZ registration. Instead, they are expected to hold a current certificate by the next APC renewal date if they work in direct patient care (including primary care) as part of their practice.

Maintenance of competence

10. Pharmacists practising in primary care (Community Pharmacy, General Practice or consulting with patients in a primary care setting) must, as a minimum, maintain competence in providing emergency first aid through completion of a refresher course in CPR equivalent to New Zealand Resuscitation Council (NZRC) Level 2 or NZQA Unit Standard 6402, once every **TWO** years. This should be recorded as part of a continuing professional development process.
11. Pharmacists who provide a vaccination service must comply with authorisation requirements outlined in the Immunisation Handbook. Since the requirements include cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training, pharmacist vaccinators do not need to do an additional Level 2 CPR course every two years.
12. Individual pharmacists may choose to maintain competence in First Aid at a level higher than the Council requires. The decision should be based on self-reflection and assessment of their own and their community's requirements. For example, a pharmacist practising next to a medical centre may only need CPR, whereas a pharmacist in a remote or rural setting may want to maintain their medical emergency training at a higher level, for example New Zealand Resuscitation Council CORE Advanced.
13. Pharmacists who are designated workplace first aid providers must comply with WorkSafe New Zealand requirements regarding first aid competency.