

Keeping Prescription Pads Secure and Reducing Tampering



With prescription drug abuse on the rise, addicts and drug dealers increasingly are falsifying prescriptions to get the drugs they want. Such events can cause costly and time-consuming problems for prescribers whose prescription pads are stolen or whose prescriptions are repeatedly modified.



With more pharmacies reporting prescriptions to a state Prescription Monitoring Program, the likelihood that tampered prescriptions will be detected and come to the attention of medical/dental boards or law enforcement is rising. No prescriber can afford to be a repeated victim of prescription fraud.

This fact sheet suggests ways to keep prescription pads secure. It also suggests minimum notification responsibilities if a prescription pad is stolen, although requirements can vary between states.

■ **Acquiring/Printing Prescription Pads**

- Use electronically transmitted prescriptions for controlled substances when possible.
- Buy and primarily use prescription pads without the physician's Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) number on them.
- Invest in tamper-resistant prescription pads with the DEA number.
- Make sure the company printing the prescription pads maintains strict process controls over prescription pad production, storage, and delivery.
- If printing prescriptions in-house, lock up the computer prescription paper stock.

■ **Keeping Prescription Pads Secure**

- Avoid pre-signing blank prescription pads, especially pads with the DEA number.
- Establish and maintain an inventory of prescription pads.

- Limit access to prescription pads with the DEA number to authorized personnel.
- Lock prescription pads in a secure location.
- Document the control number on each new pad.
- Keep the prescription pad in a pocket.

■ **Guarding Against Tampering**

- Use a gel pen to write prescriptions.
- Fill up blank space on a written prescription.

■ **If a Prescription Pad Is Stolen**

- Immediately inform the local police department and local DEA office of the theft. Keep a copy of all communications for future reference.
- Give the control number of the first and last prescription in the pad to the state's pharmacy organization.
- Once a pharmacy alert is received that a fraudulent prescription has been filled, request a copy of each filled prescription. Keep these records and file a copy with the police department and DEA.

■ **Reference**

Jain, S. (2014). A diverted or stolen prescription has been signed in your name. What do you do now? *Current Psychiatry*, 13(7), 63.



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration supports the Preventing Prescription Abuse in the Workplace Technical Assistance Center. For more information, contact PAW-TA@PIRE.org. To join the PAW Listserv, visit <http://paw.dsgonline.com>, or simply scan the QR Code to the right.

