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Effective January 1, 2021: New Laws Regarding Security Prescription Form Requirements and CURES Reporting

Effective January 1, 2021, two important laws will affect pharmacists and other licensees who prescribe and/or furnish controlled substances.

1. New Security Prescription Form Requirements: Starting January 1, 2021, California state law requires 15 elements to appear on California Security Prescription Forms. State law also requires California Security Prescription Forms to be produced by printers approved by the California Department of Justice's [California Security Prescription Printers Program](#).

California-approved security printers have been issuing these prescription pads since the beginning of 2020. **Starting January 1, 2021, except for limited emergency situations, pharmacists will be unable to fill a controlled substances prescription that is not on a compliant form.**

The new security form requirements are specified in Health and Safety Code (HSC) section 11162.1 and 11162.2, which was enacted by [AB 149](#) (Cooper, Chapter 4, Statutes of 2019). Pursuant to the law, **effective January 1, 2021, prescription forms for controlled substances must be printed with the following features:**

1. A latent, repetitive "void" pattern across the entire front of the prescription blank; if a prescription is scanned or photocopied, the word "void" shall appear in a pattern across the entire front of the prescription.
 2. A watermark on the backside of the prescription blank; the watermark shall consist of the words "California Security Prescription."
 3. A chemical void protection that prevents alteration by chemical washing.
 4. A feature printed in thermochromic ink.
 5. An area of opaque writing so that the writing disappears if the prescription is lightened.
 6. A description of the security features included on each prescription form.
 7. (A) Six quantity check off boxes on the form so that the prescriber may indicate the quantity by checking the applicable box where the following quantities shall appear:
 - 1–24
 - 25–49
 - 50–74
 - 75–100
 - 101–150
 - 151 and over.
- (B) In conjunction with the quantity boxes, a space shall be provided to designate the units referenced in the quantity boxes when the drug is not in tablet or capsule form.

8. Prescription blanks shall contain a statement printed on the bottom of the prescription blank that the "Prescription is void if the number of drugs prescribed is not noted."
9. The preprinted name, category of licensure, license number, federal controlled substance registration number, and address of the prescribing practitioner.
10. Check boxes on the form so that the prescriber may indicate the number of refills ordered.
11. The date of origin of the prescription.
12. A check box indicating the prescriber's order not to substitute.
13. An identifying number assigned to the approved security printer by the [Department of Justice](#).
14. A check box by the name of each prescriber when a prescription form lists multiple prescribers.
15. A unique serialized number, which must be:
 - Compliant with all state and federal requirements.
 - Utilizable as a barcode that may be scanned by dispensers.
 - Compliant with current National Council for Prescription Drug Program Standards

Additionally, each batch of controlled substance prescription forms shall have the lot number printed on the form and each form within that batch shall be numbered sequentially beginning with the numeral one.

The Board of Pharmacy, the Medical Board of California, and the California Department of Justice have developed [an informational document and FAQs](#) regarding the new security prescription form requirements of AB 149.

2. Revised Reporting Requirements for Controlled Substances: Beginning January 1, 2021, the dispensing of a controlled substance must be reported to the Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (CURES) within one working day after the medication is released to the patient or the patient's representative. Previously, the deadline to report was seven days after dispensing.

Further, this law requires reporting the dispensing of Schedule V drugs, in addition to Schedules II, III, and IV. This requirement applies to pharmacists and prescribers who dispense controlled substances.

The revised reporting requirements for controlled substances are specified in [AB 528](#) (Low, Chapter 677, Statutes of 2019).

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