

## **Guidelines for the Implementation of a Washington Pharmacy Technician Training Program**

[RCW 18.64A.060](#) and [WAC 246-945](#)

The following program areas should be included in any basic training program considered for approval by the Commission:

- A. Orientation to Pharmacy Practice**—Health care delivery systems, broad definitions of pharmacy practice and practice settings, communications techniques, confidentiality of information, hygienic techniques and safety considerations.
- B. Basic Pharmaceuticals**—Medical and pharmaceutical terminology and abbreviations, components of a prescription and patient medication record, drug dosage forms, routes of administration and drug product packaging, weighing and measuring, packaging and labeling, drug nomenclature, aseptic techniques, drug standards and information sources.
- C. Principals of Applicable Pharmacy Law**—Pharmacy Act, Pharmacy Ancillary Personnel Act, Legend Drug Act, Controlled Substances Act and other statutes applicable to pharmacy practice, federal and state regulations and guidelines/interpretive statements.
- D. Pharmaceutical Calculations**—Basic mathematics (fractions, decimals, percentages, proportions), and weights and measures.

Additional program areas may be included in a training program based upon the individual requirements of the trainee and the functions to be performed by the pharmacy technician in the particular practice setting, such as sterile admixture techniques and fundamentals of pharmacology.

Teaching methods utilized by training programs must combine individual discussion and supervised work experience. In addition, the following techniques may be utilized to develop skills and provide reinforcement: workshop/discussions with demonstrations, films and simulated work experiences, programmed texts, individual and group conferences, observations in the work environment and individualized work experiences.

To become certified, the candidate must complete one of the education and/or training requirements listed below:

**On-The-Job Training Programs**—The basic program areas shall be not less than 520 hours with not less than 12 hours of instructive education.

**Formal Vocational Training**—Programs shall be not less than 800 hours and should include a period of supervised work experience of not less than 160 hours.

**Formal Academic Programs**—The basic program areas should not be less than two academic quarters of 30 academic quarter credits and shall include a period of supervised work experience of not less than 160 hours.

**Military Pharmacy Technicians**—Documentation of completion of the active service training and service as an active service technician along with proof of study of Washington State pharmacy law.

## **Pharmacy Technician Training Program Instructions for Pharmacies**

The Commission has prepared the following to assist pharmacies in the development of training programs for pharmacy technicians. Your program should be consistent with the needs and operation of your pharmacy and should relate to your utilization plan as filed with the Commission office.

**Director (Section I)**—The responsible pharmacist in each pharmacy is usually the director of the training program. List name, license number, and any experience in training pharmacists, interns or technicians. List previous experience in providing instruction, background information and qualifications. If anyone else is involved in training the technicians, list name, practice/instruction experience, if any, and areas of responsibility in your program.

**Facilities**—Give pharmacy name, location, phone number and license number.

**Resource Materials**—List texts, manuals, journals and other current references used in the training or available in the pharmacy as references using a bibliographical format. Include any written material you have prepared for technician use or training. All reference materials used in training must be the latest edition available.

**Content of Instructions**—Are key topics covered adequately, i.e., orientation to pharmacy practice, basic pharmaceuticals, pharmacy law and pharmaceutical calculations? Pharmacy law instruction must be at least eight hours. List other topics you will cover.

**Program Administration**—Your program must comply with the guidelines which require that on-the-job training programs be not less than 520 hours with not less than 12 individual instruction hours outside of the time the trainer is responsible for the prescription area. The minimum hours of education and training extends over a period of 15 weeks but under 24 months. How many candidates will you train?

**Instruction Process**—The use of a training manual is mandatory. The training manual may contain such items as job description, training program objectives, orientation to the organization and to the pharmacy department, course outline, schedule and assignments, evaluation forms for trainee, instructors and for the training program, selected information resources, and departmental policy and procedure manual. Which of these items will you use? Review your utilization plan and description of technician's duties. The technician's training must match your pharmacy plan and needs. Do you allow adequate time for instruction units? List any evaluation procedures for candidates (other than performance evaluation) such as quizzes, examinations or observation.

**Documentation Required**—Demonstrate a mechanism for evaluating the trainee's progress in each knowledge and skill area. Such evaluations may be accomplished by any of the following methods: written examination, oral examination, written assignments and/or reports, practical examination/evaluation in the work environment.

Records of the evaluations as well as periodic individual conferences reviewing the trainee's progress should be maintained for each trainee and should be available for review by the Commission for a period of two years following completion of the training program. Assistants enrolled in a technician training program need to obtain a technician-in-training endorsement by notifying the department.

**Format for Program Submission**—Prepare your write-up in three sections:

Section I, Director and Other Instructors;

Section II, Facilities and Resources;

Section III, Instruction and Program Administration.

Please send to:

Department of Health

Washington State Pharmacy Commission

PO Box 47877, Olympia WA 98504-7877.

Your program will be reviewed in the office using the enclosed checklist and, if all requirements are met, sent to the Commission for approval at their next meeting. You may begin training after receiving approval of your program from the Commission office. If the program review finds your program not ready for Commission approval, it will be returned to you to make indicated changes and will again be reviewed when re-submitted.

**Commission Review**—Please review, update and submit a copy of your utilization plan with your training program. Your trainee must be a registered Pharmacy Assistant and may work as a Pharmacy Technician while in training. This person is listed as a Technician on your pharmacy use plan and you must inform the Commission in writing of any changes in the number of technicians at work in your pharmacy. Your trainee may apply for certification when he or she has completed all areas of your program. If the trainee has previous work experience, you may evaluate and test for adequate knowledge according to your program.

**Re-Approval**—The Director shall submit each approved program to the Commission for re-approval every five years unless listed in [WAC 246-945-215\(1\)](#).

Please feel free to contact the Commission office at 360-236-4946 in Tumwater, or by email at [WSPQAC@doh.wa.gov](mailto:WSPQAC@doh.wa.gov) if you have any questions or would like assistance with your program.

## Section III – Instruction And Program Administration Sample

### Pharmacy Technician Training Schedule

Subject	Weeks	Hours
A. Orientation to pharmacy practice	2	10
B. Pharmacy terminology and basic pharmaceuticals	4	15
C. Pharmacy law – state and federal	4	8
D. Pharmaceutical calculations	2	15
E. Processing the prescription/drug order	4	20
F. Stocking/ordering/inventory	4	15
G. Receiving merchandise	2	10
H. Inventory control and returned goods procedure	4	15
I. Telephone procedure and communication	4	15
J. OTC drugs	3	15
K. Pharmaceutical compounding	2	15
L. Pharmacy computer system	6	20

## Sample Technician Utilization Plan

- A. Places, receives, unpacks and stores drug orders.
- B. Files and retrieves various pharmacy records as required.
- C. Files completed prescriptions alphabetically on the shelf for patient pick-up.
- D. Maintains assigned work areas and equipment in clean and orderly condition.
- E. Hands out refills when specifically requested to do so by a pharmacist where no counseling is deemed necessary.
- F. Handles non-professional phone calls to/from:
  - Patients requesting refill of a prescription by number.
  - Calls to physician's office requesting refill authorization:
    - a. Refill requests shall be made stating the patient's name, medication and strength, number of doses and date of prior refills.
    - b. Any additional inquiries by the office concerning the prescription must be referred to the pharmacist.
  - Calls from physician's office authorizing refills providing no changes in the prescription are involved.
  - Calls concerning price information.
  - Calls regarding business hours or delivery services.
  - Calls regarding the availability of goods and services—these might require transferring the call to another person.
  - Inquiries from patients asking if their prescriptions are refillable or the number of refills left, etc.
  - Calls dealing with the ordering of drugs and supplies from wholesalers and distributors.
- G. Operates cash register and related front counter tasks.
- H. Counts and pours from stock bottles for individual prescriptions. This function is performed under the direct supervision of a licensed pharmacist and the accuracy of the prescription contents is checked and initialed by a licensed pharmacist.
- I. Reconstitutes—restoration of original form of medication previously altered for preservation and storage by addition of a specific quantity of distilled water or provided diluent requiring no calculation. In 100 percent of the cases, the accuracy of the technician is checked and the work initialed by a licensed pharmacist.
- J. IV admixtures and unit dose cassette filling (hospitals).
- K. Enters prescription data into the computer and monitors label printing.
- L. Transcribes orders—accuracy checked and initialed by licensed pharmacist.
- M. Reviews patient profile to retrieve specific clerical and other information as directed by a pharmacist.
- N. Calls to and/or from the physician's office dealing with profile information where no interpretation is necessary, i.e., quantity, date last filled, price, etc.
- O. Performs tasks under pharmacist's supervision such as obtaining individual prepackaged, labeled medications for prescriptions, obtains stock bottles for prescription filling.

This sample utilization plan is provided for your information. Complete and concise descriptions of your Pharmacy Technician's duties will help both you and the Commission to evaluate the practice of pharmacy in your facility.