PDL Risk Assessment Tool

A guide to identifying and addressing risk areas in your pharmacy.

How do I use it?

Step 1: Define your risk question

Analyse your question(s) against each of the five risk categories (refer to next page). Sometimes there is overlap between the definitions of each category and that is fine.

Examples of a 'risk question':

- "I am considering adding a new service to my pharmacy (e.g. dispensing medicinal cannabis). What regulatory considerations do I need to be aware of and how can these be managed?"
- "Mr BY is a regular patient of mine, and I have been dispensing his insulin (new medication). He is having difficulty and asked me to administer it to him in our consult room. Should I be doing that?"
- "Our daily vaccination volumes are increasing; are we managing staff/resources appropriately around this service delivery (and other service obligations)?"
- "Is the medication shortage of drug XXX becoming a bigger issue that I need to address?"

Step 2: Assess risk level by using the 'Indicators for determining risk level' column

Compare current practices in the pharmacy with the indicators for each risk level. The indicators identify potential impacts for your consideration.

Step 3: Enter the identified risk level under the 'Current risk status' column

While this tool helps to provide some parameters around what constitutes each risk level, sometimes it may be unclear which level you fall under. Simply enter all that apply. This is a self-assessment and there is no right or wrong answer.

Step 4: Enter the 'Date of next review' and any observations or planned actions in the 'Actions/notes' section

This step helps you develop action plans to address areas that require attention, and having a firm date for ongoing review will keep you on track and accountable.

If your risk question relates to undertaking a certain activity/service in the pharmacy, you may wish to use the PDL Scope of Practice Checklist to help map out necessary actions.

Step 5: Regularly review and update

Schedule regular assessments, especially in high-risk areas, to update the PDL RAT and ensure Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI).

Understanding your risk level

As pharmacists, our imperative is to minimise risks to ourselves and our patients, to the lowest possible level. The onus of responsibility is on the individual practitioner to understand and consider what level of risk they deem to be acceptable.

Risk rating	Recommended action
CRITICAL	Do not execute service/activity or proceed until immediate action is taken.
HIGH	Some extra measures may be required. Identify the steps you can take, or can be delegated to others, to address necessary change.
MODERATE	Foreseeable risks have been addressed. Consideration should now be given to maintain or improve this safety level and/or service efficiency.
LOW	Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) measures — such as annual audits or reviews — are required to help you maintain this risk level, or improve the service area. Consideration should be given to apply the aspects that are working well, in this case, to other service areas.

TODAY'S DATE:	STAFF INITIALS:

Your risk question:

Risk category	Indicators for determining risk level (suggestions only)				Current risk status
	CRITICAL	**HIGH**	**MODERATE**	**LOW**	
1. Regulatory & Compliance (relating to legislation and regulations)	There are significant compliance gaps. Mandatory qualifications have not been met. The pharmacy has been provided warning by regulatory bodies.	There have been recurrent compliance lapses. Audits have flagged that corrective actions are needed.	There have been minor compliance issues noted internally or via audits.	All necessary qualifications and certifications are current, for all pharmacists undertaking this service/activity. All recent regulatory audits have been passed without issues.	
2. Clinical (involving patient safety)	There has been a recent incident(s) that may have resulted in significant consequence (patient harm, regulatory notification). Critical errors have regularly occurred in a given service area.	There has been a recently reported incident. There is confusion or disconnect amongst the team around procedures/responsibilities/etc.	An isolated near miss event has occurred. Patient counselling or other service provision requires review and/or re-training.	Little or no recent incidents or errors.	
3. Professional (risks associated with your professional actions, decisions or practices)	There has been a serious lapse of professional standards and possible remedial actions yet to occur.	There have been occasions of professional lapses impacting the team or patients.	There have been occasional lapses in professional conduct, that were resolved promptly. There are minor gaps detected in adherence to professional standards.	Professional standards and behaviours are maintained. All interactions with patients and colleagues are respectful and ethical.	
4. Ethical (conflicts with moral or ethical principles or professional conduct)	There has been a serious ethical lapse (e.g. breach of confidentiality). There is evidence that ethical guidelines are being consistently disregarded.	There are significant ethical concerns affecting patient trust and satisfaction.	There are minor ethical concerns or potential conflicts of interest. There has been a need to reinforce ethical policies among the team.	The pharmacy has established a set of rules and principles to encourage ethical behaviour and integrity.	
5. Operational (day-to-day running of pharmacy, including staffing)	There are significant delays, frequent errors or complaints by either staff or patients. Operational efficiency is impacting patient care.	Workflow issues (time, staffing, etc.) are impacting the overall patient experience and staff morale.	There are occasional delays or service inefficiencies, warranting minor workflow adjustments.	Workflow is efficient, when considering the daily operation of all staff members, and the overall patient experience.	
Other					

Actions/notes: 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**Date of next review:** _ _ _ _ _ _ _