
Appendix 3: Taking controlled and prescription drugs to other countries

Some patients receiving palliative care travel to other countries and they will need to take their medicines with them. Practitioners can help ensure a trouble-free journey by advising them about travelling with medicines and the documentation required.¹⁻⁴ Travellers need to consider two sets of law, the law of the country they are in and the law of the country or countries to which they are travelling.

Travelling with controlled drugs

The following is general advice, based on regulations current in the UK in the first half of 2007, but should not be regarded as formal legal advice. Detailed advice can be obtained from the regulatory authorities, embassies or consulates in the relevant countries.

Guidelines for departure from and re-entry into the UK

The permits required by patients leaving and re-entering the UK with controlled drugs for personal medicinal use depend on how long they will be overseas.

Away for ≤28 days

A covering letter from the prescribing doctor is sufficient, irrespective of the quantities of controlled drugs being carried. The letter should state:

- the patient's name, address and date of birth
- the destination(s) and dates of outward and return travel
- the names, forms, strengths, doses and total amounts of the controlled drugs being carried.⁴

Away for >28 days

Patients will require a personal export/import licence for UK Schedule 2, 3, and 4 Part I controlled drugs (Box A3.A) if they are carrying more than the maximum amount listed in the Home Office Open General Licence. Table A3.1 gives some examples; a full list is available from the Home Office.⁴ For patients travelling with less than the permitted limit, a covering letter as detailed above is sufficient. Drugs listed in Schedule 4 Part II (provided they are medicinal products for self-administration) and Schedule 5 do not require an export/import licence.²

Box A3.A UK controlled drug Schedules^{a5}

Schedule 1 (CD Lic)

Drugs with high abuse potential and no accepted medicinal use in the UK. Production, possession and supply illegal except for specially licensed individuals (e.g. researchers, police officers). Includes hallucinogens (e.g. lysergic acid diethylamide/LSD, 3,4-methylene-dioxymethamphetamine/ecstasy, cannabis).

Schedule 2 (CD POM)

Drugs with high abuse potential but recognized medical uses. Generally subject to full UK controlled drugs regulations. Includes most opioids (e.g. morphine, diamorphine, methadone), major stimulants (e.g. amphetamines and cocaine) and secobarbital.

Schedule 3 (CD No Register)

Drugs with less abuse potential than those in Schedules 1 and 2, and considered less harmful if abused. Includes most barbiturates, some opioids (e.g. buprenorphine, pentazocine), some minor stimulants (e.g. benzphetamine), appetite suppressants, meprobamate and temazepam.

Schedule 4 Part I (CD Benz)

Benzodiazepines (*except* temazepam), ketamine and zolpidem.

Schedule 4 Part II (CD Anab)

Hormones liable to abuse (e.g. androgenic and anabolic steroids, chorionic gonadotrophin, clenbuterol and growth hormone analogues).

Schedule 5 (CD Inv)

Preparations of controlled drugs in other schedules (e.g. morphine, codeine, pholcodine, cocaine) which, because of their low strength, are exempt from virtually all UK controlled drugs regulations.

a. see referenced source for complete list of drugs in each Schedule.

Table A3.1 Some of the controlled drugs and their permitted quantities on the Open General Licence list^{2,4}

Alfentanil hydrochloride	45mg
Amphetamine	300mg
Buprenorphine SL (Temgesic [®])	24mg
Buprenorphine TD (Transtec [®])	24mg
Codeine phosphate ^b	??
Dexamfetamine sulphate	900mg
Dextromoramide tartrate	900mg
Diamorphine hydrochloride tablets ^a	450mg
Diamorphine hydrochloride oral solution ^a	500mg
Diamorphine hydrochloride ampoules ^a	1.35g
Diazepam	900mg
Dihydrocodeine tartrate ^b	3.6g
Dipipanone hydrochloride	600mg
Fentanyl	45mg
Hydrocodone	675mg
Hydromorphone	360mg
Ketamine	900mg
Methadone ^c	500mg
Metamfetamine	900mg
Methylphenidate hydrochloride	900mg
Morphine sulphate, hydrochloride or tartrate	1.2g
Oxycodone hydrochloride or pectinate	900mg
Oxymorphone	450mg
Phenobarbital	2.7g
Phenobarbital sodium	1.2g
Temazepam	900mg

- a. medicinal diamorphine is available only in the UK. The following countries do not permit patients from the UK to bring in their own supply: Australia, Greece, Italy, Germany, France, Japan, the Netherlands, South Africa, the USA and Zimbabwe
- b. controlled only if injectable, or if tablets contain >100mg
- c. if >2g, the Home Office requires a written statement by the patient's doctor confirming that the travel documents (e.g. air tickets) have been seen.

If you are uncertain about the status of a drug, advice should be obtained directly from the Home Office:

The Home Office
 Drugs Licensing Section
 6th Floor, Peel Building
 2 Marsham Street
 London SW1P 4DF
 UK
 Tel: +44 (0)20 7035 0484
 Fax: +44 (0)20 7035 6161
 e-mail: licensing_enquiry.aadu@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

If a licence is required, an application form can be obtained from the Home Office Drugs website⁴ or the above address. This must be submitted with a covering letter from the patient's doctor or nurse to confirm that the details are correct. Alternatively, applications may be made by a letter from the patient's doctor stating:

- the patient's name and address
- names and quantities of drugs to be taken out of/brought into the UK
- strength and form of the drug preparations
- dates of travel from and back to the UK.

Doctors who need to take controlled drugs abroad when accompanying patients may also be issued with licences.

Ten working days should be allowed for processing the application. Licences generally have an expiry date of 1 week after the expected return to the UK. If the patient is staying overseas for longer than 3 months, they should register with a doctor in the destination country so that further prescriptions for controlled drugs can be issued. If returning to the UK, they should contact the Home Office on the telephone number above to arrange for a renewed licence to be faxed to them so that they can import the new supplies.

Personal drugs export/import licences are issued to comply with the Misuse of Drugs Act and facilitate passage through UK customs control. They have no legal status outside the UK. Covering letters or licences should be carried in the patient's hand luggage in case the UK customs want to examine them. Controlled drugs should be contained in their original packaging and also carried in the hand luggage.

Travelling to or through other countries

It is important to fulfil the controlled drug import/export requirements for *all* the countries in which the patient will have to pass through customs, otherwise entry may be refused. The International Narcotics Control Board has produced a list of suggested maximum quantities for personal import/export of internationally controlled substances (Table A3.2) and a model import/export certificate (Box A3.B). It is also advisable to carry a duplicate copy of the prescription, preferably stamped by the pharmacy from which the drugs were obtained. *However, patients should check exact legal details and the quantities they are allowed to import/export with the relevant embassies or consulates before travelling.* For example, some countries do not allow the importation of **codeine**, **dihydrocodeine** or **diamorphine**. Further, some of the quantities suggested in Table A3.2 differ from those on the UK Open General Licence list in Table A3.1. A list of embassy contact details can be downloaded from the Home Office Drugs website.⁴

Table A3.2 Suggested maximum quantities of controlled substances for international travellers ^{1,a}

<i>Drug</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
Buprenorphine	300mg
Codeine	12g
Diazepam	300mg
Dihydrocodeine	12g
Fentanyl transdermal patches	100mg
Fentanyl (other formulations)	20mg
Hydromorphone	300mg
Lorazepam	75mg
Methadone	2g
Morphine	3g
Oxycodone	1g

a. this is not a complete list; see referenced source for more details.

Box A3.B Model certificate for personal import/export of internationally controlled substances¹

Country and place of issue

Country of issue
Place of issue
Date of issue
Period of validity^a

Prescribing physician

Last name, first name
Address
Telephone (including country code)
Professional licence number

Patient

Last name, first name
Sex
Place of birth
Date of birth
Home address
Passport or identity card number
Intended country of destination

Prescribed medical preparation

Trade name of drug (or composition)
Formulation (ampoules, tablets, etc.)
Number of tablets, etc.
rINN of the active substance
Concentration of the active substance
Total quantity of the active substance
Instructions for use
Duration of prescription in days
Remarks

Issuing authority

Official name of the authority
Address
Telephone (country code, local code, number)
Official seal of the authority
Signature of the responsible officer

a. the recommended duration is 3 months.

Travelling with non-controlled prescription-only medicines (POMs)

Personal export/import licences are not required for POMs. However, they should be accompanied by either a copy of the prescription, or a covering note from the prescriber.⁴ POMs should be contained in their original packaging and carried in the hand luggage.

It is advisable to check with the relevant embassies or consulates for any restrictions on the drugs allowed into the destination countries *before travelling*. This is particularly important for medicines containing **codeine** or **dihydrocodeine**, e.g. **co-codamol**, **co-dydramol**. A list of embassy contact details can be downloaded from the Home Office Drugs website.⁴

- 1 International Narcotics Control Board (2004) *Guidelines for travelers*. University of Wisconsin Comprehensive Cancer Center. Available from: www.incb.org/incb/guidelines_travellers.html
- 2 BNF (2006) *Controlled drugs and drug dependence*. In: British National Formulary. British Medical Association and Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London. Available from: www.bnf.org/bnf/bnf/current/3617.htm
- 3 Myers K (2006) *Flying home or on holiday: Helping patients to arrange international travel*. Hospice Information, London. Available from: www.hospiceinformation.info/publications/factsheets.asp?ID=104
- 4 Home Office Drugs website (2007) *Drug Laws and Licensing*. Available from: www.drugs.gov.uk/drugs-laws/licensing/personal/
- 5 Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain (2006) *Medicines, Ethics and Practice. A guide for pharmacists and pharmacy technicians*. Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, London, pp. 23–31.