



## Voluntary Assisted Dying Substance Disposal Guidance for Pharmacists

### What is Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD)?

VAD is the legal process which enables a person living with terminal disease to access medication intended to cause death. The medication is referred to as a VAD substance. More information regarding VAD is available on the Department of Health Voluntary Assisted Dying website: [www.health.wa.gov.au/voluntaryassisteddying](http://www.health.wa.gov.au/voluntaryassisteddying).

### About this document

There are situations where the VAD substance may no longer be required and/or needs disposal.

This disposal guidance document is for a pharmacist who, in accordance with the WA Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2019 (VAD Act), is deemed to be an **Authorised Disposer** of the VAD substance.

**This document outlines the minimum legislative requirements for disposal of the VAD substance (schedule 8), as outlined in the [Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2019](#), [Medicines and Poisons Act 2014](#), and [Medicines and Poisons Regulations 2016](#) and does not take into account local policy or procedures.**

### Your role as an Authorised Disposer

**Authorised Disposers** are registered pharmacists who hold specifically identified roles – scan the QR code below or [click here](#) to see the Department of Health *Published list of Authorised Disposers*. An eligible pharmacist who accepts the VAD substance for disposal agrees to act as an **Authorised Disposer** and is required to meet the legislative requirements of the VAD Act.

Pharmacists are not obliged to accept the VAD substance for disposal. If you are not authorised or unwilling to accept the VAD substance for disposal, direct the person seeking to dispose of the VAD substance to contact the WA Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Pharmacy Service (SWPS).

### Support

If further assistance is required, please contact:

#### WA Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Pharmacy Service (SWPS)

Phone: (08) 6383 3088

Monitored 8:30am – 8:00pm Monday to Friday, 8:00am – 8:00pm Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays

Email: [statewidepharmacy@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:statewidepharmacy@health.wa.gov.au)

Monitored 8:30am – 5:00pm Monday to Friday (excluding Public Holidays)

### Step 1: Acceptance of VAD Substance for Disposal

The VAD substance should be handed over to the **Authorised Disposer** in a metal box. Ask the person seeking to dispose of the VAD substance to unlock the metal box. It should contain:

- VAD substance requiring disposal (labelled “Bottle 1”)
- A denaturing pharmaceutical waste container (to assist with disposal)
- ORA-Plus® (labelled “Bottle 2”)
- Supportive medications (if prescribed)
- Contact Person and Pharmacy Disposal Information Sharing form (to assist with reporting requirements)

If the metal box does not contain these items, please contact SWPS for advice.

If there is no VAD substance remaining in Bottle 1, there is no requirement to complete a submission to the VAD Board. Follow the relevant disposal and paperwork destruction instructions overleaf.

**Note:** The person seeking to dispose of the VAD substance may be experiencing distress – a discreet and empathetic approach is recommended.



Department of Health  
Published list of  
Authorised Disposers



## Step 2: Disposal of VAD Substance and Other Items

It is essential that the **Authorised Disposer** disposes of the VAD substance as soon as practicable after receiving it. If immediate disposal is not possible, follow local policies and procedures for documentation and storage of the VAD substance (Schedule 8).

### **Process required for disposal of the VAD substance ("Bottle 1"):**

**Note:** It is recommended to wear barrier protective gloves when handling the VAD substance. The VAD substance should not be handled by pregnant women (category D warning).

1. **De-identification:** Remove all labelling and packaging
2. **Destruction:** Follow the denaturing pharmaceutical waste container (DPWC) directions to render the substance inactive
  - If the VAD substance ("Bottle 1") is a liquid, it can be decanted into the prepared DPWC
  - If the VAD substance ("Bottle 1") is in powder form, add 30-50mL of water to Bottle 1 and shake. Then decant the VAD substance mixture into the prepared DPWC
  - Retrieve all paperwork contained within the metal box for use at Step 3
3. **Disposal:**
  - Place sealed DPWC and the empty Bottle 1 in a RUM bin/clinical waste bin
  - Place ORA-Plus® ("Bottle 2") and unused supportive medication (if prescribed) into a RUM bin
  - Discard any other items, including the metal box, into a general waste bin.

## Step 3: Documentation and Notification Requirements of Disposal

An **Authorised Disposal Form** is available online [here](#) or via the QR code. No log in is required. The form can be submitted either electronically or by fax.

I need to complete a form

You do not need access to VAD-IMS to submit the following forms. However, if you do have access to VAD-IMS, please [log in](#) first.

<input type="radio"/> A patient has made a <a href="#">First Request</a> for voluntary assisted dying	<a href="#">First Request Form</a>
<input type="radio"/> I have received a referral for a Consulting Assessment	<a href="#">Consultation Referral Form</a>
<input type="radio"/> I have received and disposed of a voluntary assisted dying substance	<a href="#">Authorised Disposal Form</a>



Authorised Disposal Form

A how-to guide for submitting the **Authorised Disposal Form** is available [here](#) or via the QR code.

The **Authorised Disposer** must complete the **Authorised Disposal Form** and submit this to the Voluntary Assisted Dying Board within 2 business days of disposal of the VAD substance.



How-to-Submit Guide

Once the **Authorised Disposal Form** has been submitted, destroy all paperwork retrieved from the metal box.

A VAD for Pharmacists eLearning module is available on request via [statewidepharmacy@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:statewidepharmacy@health.wa.gov.au)