



PROGRAM RULES

Emergency Locum Service

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Australian Government
Department of Health

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EMERGENCY LOCUM SERVICE

1 INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the Program Rules governing the Emergency Locum Service (ELS) Program. This document must be read in conjunction with the *Pharmacy Programs Administrator General Terms and Conditions (General Terms)*. Definitions in the General Terms apply in these Program Rules.

The Emergency Locum Service is an initiative of the Rural Pharmacy Workforce Program (RPWP). The RPWP is designed to strengthen and support the rural pharmacy workforce, and in turn provide increased access to quality pharmacy services for consumers residing in rural and remote regions of Australia.

RPWP is part of the suite of Rural Support Programs funded under the Seventh Community Pharmacy Agreement to support targeted Programs and services that improve access to Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines and services for people living in rural and remote regions of Australia.

2 BACKGROUND

ELS supports Community Pharmacies in rural and remote areas through direct access to Pharmacist locums in emergency situations. Locums are deployed at short notice, generally in under 24 hours, to provide relief in urgent and emergency situations.

The primary aim of the ELS is to alleviate the hardships faced by Community Pharmacies based in rural and remote communities in accessing locum services. It provides for locum services to Community Pharmacies who are faced with an emergency situation that will affect the provision of pharmacy services to the community.

The ELS Program assists Community Pharmacies by funding up to \$2,500 (GST exclusive) to contribute towards the travel costs between the locum's home and the Community Pharmacy location. The cost of Pharmacist locum wages are not covered.

The ELS Program is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Emergency locum placements are for a minimum of one day and a maximum of seven consecutive days.

In the event that a pharmacist is:

- isolating themselves at home on the advice of a medical practitioner, for confirmed COVID-19; or
- meeting the current national triage protocol criteria for suspected COVID-19 infection after consultation with either the national COVID-19 hotline, state COVID-19 hotlines, a registered medical or nursing practitioner or COVID-19 trained health clinic triage staff;

the maximum placement duration is extended to fourteen consecutive days.

3 ELIGIBILITY

1.1 Pharmacy Eligibility

To be eligible for the purposes of the ELS Program, applicants must:

- Be a Community Pharmacy

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- Be located in a rural or remote location, which is defined as the Pharmacy Accessibility Remoteness Index of Australia ([PhARIA](#)) 2–6. The current financial year PhARIA data will be applied to determine eligibility
- Be unable to undertake dispensing duties or to fully and effectively operate the Pharmacy due to an emergency situation as defined by these Program Rules.

1.2 Emergency Eligibility

To be considered eligible for the purposes of the ELS Program, an emergency situation must be where:

- The Pharmacist is unable to undertake dispensing duties or to fully and effectively operate the Pharmacy due to illness or injury
- A family emergency requires the Pharmacist to be present at an alternative location or take action that renders them unavailable to undertake dispensing duties or to fully and effectively operate the Pharmacy. A 'family emergency' is defined as:
 - Illness or injury to a member of immediate family
 - Illness or injury to a dependent relative
 - Bereavement due to death of a member of immediate family.

4 APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants who meet the Eligibility Criteria must submit a completed official application form and attach all required documentation in order to be considered, including documentation to support the nature of the emergency. Applicants are responsible for:

- Providing sufficient information on the application form to determine eligibility and recruit a suitable locum
- Accepting the locum Pharmacist offered
- Organising and paying the wages and accommodation costs of the locum for the duration of the placement.

In cases where the nature of the emergency situation prevents completion of the application form, this requirement may be waived, and the form lodged within ten working days of the original request for assistance, in which case a fax advice and/or email will constitute an interim application form.

There is no limit on the number of times a Community Pharmacy may access the ELS Program, subject to availability of funds.

The ELS Program is limited on the basis of available funds. Lodging an application does not guarantee access to the ELS Program. Consequently, Community Pharmacies satisfying the Eligibility Criteria will not necessarily receive access to the ELS Program.

A link to the application form may be obtained from the [ELS website](#) or the [PPA website](#).



CONTACT THE SUPPORT CENTRE: 1800 951 285 | [Email](#)