

## **Transportation of personal medicines by travellers**

Travellers who need to carry medication with them should be aware that its legal status in other countries may be different than in the UK. The requirements regarding carrying medicines for personal use across international borders are highly variable and often not consistently enforced. This applies to over-the-counter medication as well as prescribed medication.

Some countries may not allow the entry of certain types of medicines, and others may have blanket regulations requiring specific permission for a medication. The regulations regarding whether a traveller needs to carry a physician's letter/note describing the medications varies widely.

Travellers are also officially required to obtain an export licence prior to transporting certain quantities of drugs (usually when taking greater than a 3 month supply). These are classified and listed in the U.K. under Schedule 2 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 2001 (see below) [1].

Examples of Schedule 2 drugs are:

Cyclimorph (Morphine Tartrate), Durogesic (Fentanyl), Pethidine (Pethidine Hydrochloride), Phenobarbitone (Phenobarbitone Barbiturate), Physeptone (Methadone Hydrochloride), Ritalin (Methylphenidate Hydrochloride), Rohypnol (Flunitrazepam), Sevredol (Morphine Sulphate), Temazepam (Temazepam), Temgesic (Buprenorphine).

Licences can be obtained from the Home Office. Further guidance, entitled "Taking medicines with you when you go abroad" has been written by HM Revenue & Customs [2].

### **Advice for Travellers**

- Review medication regulations for the countries to which you are travelling with the relevant authorities (Home Office and embassies of the destination country/countries). This is especially important if intending to travel with a controlled drug.
- Always carry medicines in a correctly labelled container as issued by the pharmacist
- Carry a copy of all prescriptions, including generic names for medications, along with the actual medication in the hand luggage.
- Carry a spare supply of medication in the hold luggage in case of loss of hand luggage.
- Obtain a note from the prescribing physician on letterhead stationary for controlled substances and injection medications.
- A note from a doctor may also be useful for travellers with chronic medical conditions in case you need to seek medical help.
- Take out an appropriate level of travel health insurance including repatriation and specific cover for any pre-existing illnesses.

## References

1. The Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 Schedule 2. Statutory Instrument 2001 No. 3998. The Stationery Office Limited (ISBN 0 11 039021 0). Available at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2001/20013998.htm#sch2>
2. HM Revenue and Customs. Taking medicines with you when you go abroad. HMRC (July 1998). Available at: [http://customs.hmrc.gov.uk/channelsPortalWebApp/channelsPortalWebApp.portal?\\_nfpb=true&\\_pageLabel=pageTravel\\_InfoGuides&propertyType=document&id=HMCE\\_CL\\_001589](http://customs.hmrc.gov.uk/channelsPortalWebApp/channelsPortalWebApp.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=pageTravel_InfoGuides&propertyType=document&id=HMCE_CL_001589)