

Virginia Board of Pharmacy

Guidance for Continuous Hours Worked by Pharmacists and Breaks

Regulations Governing the Practice of Pharmacy

18VAC110-20-110. Pharmacy permits generally.

B. Except in an emergency, a permit holder shall not require a pharmacist to work longer than 12 continuous hours in any work day and shall allow at least six hours of off-time between consecutive shifts. A pharmacist working longer than six continuous hours shall be allowed to take a 30-minute break.

The Board provides the following guidance regarding subsection B of Regulation 18VAC110-20-110 which addresses continuous hours worked by pharmacists and 30-minute breaks:

- While a permit holder cannot require a pharmacist to work longer than 12 continuous hours in any work day, except in an emergency, a pharmacist may volunteer to work longer than 12 continuous hours;
- A pharmacy may, but is not required to, close when a pharmacist is on break. A pharmacist on duty may use professional judgment about whether to close the pharmacy provided notice has been posted at least 14 days in advance of the closure;
- If a pharmacy does not close, the pharmacist must ensure adequate security of the drugs by taking his break within the prescription department or on the premises;
- The pharmacist on-duty must determine if pharmacy technicians or pharmacy interns may continue to perform duties and if he is able to provide adequate supervision. Pharmacy technicians shall never perform duties otherwise restricted to a pharmacist;
- If the pharmacy remains open, only prescriptions verified by a pharmacist pursuant to Regulation 18VAC110-20-270 may be dispensed when the pharmacist is on break. An offer to counsel must be extended pursuant to § 54.1-3319. Persons requesting to speak with the pharmacist should be told that the pharmacist is on break, that they may wait to speak with the pharmacist upon return, or provide a telephone number for the pharmacist to contact them as soon as he or she returns from break. Pharmacists returning from break should immediately attempt to contact persons requesting counseling and document when counseling is provided.