

Notice of the General Office of the National Medical Products Administration on Issuing the Compliance Guidelines for the Online Retail Sale of Prescription Drugs¹

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Chapter I General Provisions

Article 1

These Guidelines are formulated in accordance with the provisions of the *Drug Administration Law of the People's Republic of China*, the *Regulations for the Implementation of the Drug Administration Law of the People's Republic of China*, the *Measures for the Supervision and Administration of Online Drug Sales*, the *Measures for the Supervision and Administration of Drug Distribution and Use Quality*, the *Good Supply Practice (GSP) for Pharmaceutical Products*, and other applicable laws, administrative regulations, departmental rules, and normative documents, for the purposes of effectively safeguarding the quality and safety of drugs sold through online retail channels, regulating the online retail sale of prescription drugs, ensuring the fulfillment of primary responsibilities for drug safety, and enhancing the compliance awareness of participants engaged in online drug retail activities.

Article 2


These Guidelines shall apply to the online retail sale of drugs and the provision of online drug retail transaction platform services within the territory of the People's Republic of China.

Article 3

For the purposes of these Guidelines, “prescription drugs” refer to drugs that have lawfully obtained a Drug Registration Certificate in China and may be dispensed, purchased, and used only upon presentation of a prescription issued by a licensed physician or licensed assistant physician.

¹ Translated by Health Law Asia – Pharmaceutical, Medical Device, and Cosmetics Law





For the purposes of these Guidelines, “online retail sale of prescription drugs” refers to the lawful sale of prescription drugs by a retail pharmacy enterprise to individual consumers through online channels.

For the purposes of these Guidelines, “compliance” means that the business operations and management activities of participants engaged in online drug retail activities conform to the requirements of applicable laws, regulations, departmental rules, and other normative documents.

For the purposes of these Guidelines, “online pharmaceutical services” refer to medication-related services provided to the public by licensed pharmacists employed by online drug retail enterprises through the application of professional pharmaceutical knowledge, skills, and tools. Such services include, without limitation, prescription review and dispensing, medication counseling and guidance, and the reporting of adverse drug reactions.

Article 4

Online drug retail enterprises shall, in accordance with law, fulfill their primary responsibilities for drug safety and continuously improve their drug quality management systems and corporate compliance management frameworks.

Such enterprises shall adopt effective quality-control measures throughout the procurement, storage, sale, and distribution processes in accordance with the requirements of the Good Supply Practice (GSP) for Pharmaceutical Products, so as to ensure that all drugs sold are obtained from lawful sources, meet applicable quality and safety standards, and are fully traceable throughout the relevant processes.


Third-party online drug trading platforms and online drug retail enterprises shall comply with applicable requirements relating to internet-based medical services and prescription administration. They shall establish scientifically designed procedures and interface functionalities for medical consultation and prescription issuance, prescription review, and drug sales, among other activities, so as to effectively distinguish between different categories of service providers.

Chapter II Compliance Requirements for Business Operators

Article 5

An online drug retail enterprise shall lawfully obtain a Drug Distribution Permit and strictly comply with all applicable laws, regulations, departmental rules, standards, and normative requirements.





The enterprise shall continuously display, in a prominent position on the homepage of its website or the principal page through which business activities are conducted, qualification information including its Drug Distribution Permit. Such information may be presented in text or image format and shall be accurate, clear, legible, and readily accessible to the public.

Article 6

An online drug retail enterprise conducting online retail activities shall file with the competent drug regulatory authority information including its enterprise name, website name, application name, IP address, domain name, and Drug Distribution Permit, as required by applicable regulations.

Where any such information changes, the enterprise shall report the change to the drug regulatory authority within 10 working days.

Article 7

An online drug retail enterprise shall, taking into account the characteristics of online drug retail activities and the relevant requirements governing drug distribution, establish and implement an online pharmaceutical services system and continuously improve its drug quality management system, so as to ensure that its online retail operations remain in ongoing compliance with the requirements of the *Good Supply Practice (GSP) for Pharmaceutical Products* and its applicable appendices.

Article 8

An online drug retail enterprise shall, in accordance with applicable requirements, employ a sufficient number of licensed pharmacists commensurate with its scope of operations and product portfolio. Such pharmacists shall be responsible for drug quality management, prescription review and dispensing, guidance on the rational use of medicines, and the collection and reporting of adverse drug reaction information, among other duties.

The enterprise shall continuously disclose the qualification credentials of such personnel in a prominent position on the principal webpage through which business activities are conducted.

The number of licensed pharmacists employed shall be proportionate to the scale of the enterprise's operations and shall be determined with reference to the daily prescription-review workload and actual quality-management requirements, so as to ensure the effective provision of online pharmaceutical services.



Article 9

An online drug retail enterprise shall strengthen the management of personnel engaged in online sales operations and establish an annual training program. The enterprise shall regularly provide training on laws, regulations, departmental rules, standards, normative requirements, and professional knowledge relating to online drug sales and pharmaceutical administration.

The enterprise shall have a duty to supervise the conduct of relevant personnel in connection with online drug retail activities and shall bear the corresponding legal liabilities in accordance with law.

Article 10

An online drug retail enterprise shall regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of its quality management system for online retail operations. In response to identified deficiencies, received complaints and reports, or requirements imposed by regulatory authorities, the enterprise shall formulate corrective measures and monitor their implementation, while ensuring continuous improvement of its quality management system.

Article 11

Where an online drug retail enterprise conducts the online retail sale of prescription drugs through a self-operated website, mobile application, or other proprietary online platform, it shall adopt effective measures, in accordance with applicable requirements, to ensure that information generated throughout the entire transaction process is authentic, accurate, complete, and traceable.

Chapter 3 Compliance Requirements for Business Activities

Article 12

Pharmaceutical online retail enterprises shall ensure that the drug information displayed is truthful, accurate, and lawful, and shall be consistent with the drug package inserts approved by the State drug regulatory authority. No false or misleading content shall be included.

Enterprises shall review and assess whether the display of prescription drug information complies with the following standards:

1. On each prescription drug product page, risk warning information such as *“Prescription drugs shall be purchased and used only with a valid prescription under the guidance of a pharmacist”* shall be prominently displayed. Such warnings may be highlighted using distinctive colors and large-font text;



2. Prescription drugs and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs shall be clearly distinguished in product category listings. Each product page shall display clear identifiers for prescription or OTC status, such as “Prescription Drug (Rx)” and “OTC” labels;

3. Prescription drugs, including their packaging and labeling, shall not be displayed on the homepage of third-party platforms/websites (including applications), the homepage of pharmaceutical and health sections, or the homepage of merchant stores;

4. Prescription drugs shall not display or provide package inserts prior to prescription verification. Product pages shall not include information on indications, therapeutic uses, dosage, or administration instructions;

5. Any information prohibited from disclosure by laws, regulations, rules, or normative documents shall not be displayed.

Article 13

The product title of prescription drug listings on online retail platforms may be presented in the format: “*Trade Name (if any) + Generic Name + Specification*”. Information displayed on the product detail page, including drug approval numbers and marketing authorization holder details, shall be accurate, clear, and verifiable.

Article 14

When displaying images of prescription drug products, online retail enterprises may present actual product photos, packaging content images, and registration approval documents. Where such images contain information relating to indications, therapeutic uses, dosage, or administration instructions, the relevant portions shall be appropriately redacted or processed to comply with applicable requirements under the *Internet Drug and Medical Device Information Service Filing Regulations* and the *Internet Advertising Regulations*.

Article 15

Prior to the sale of prescription drugs, pharmaceutical online retail enterprises shall fully inform consumers of relevant medication risks and obtain their informed acknowledgment. Such confirmation may be implemented through consultation pages or order pages by means including red-text warnings, pop-up notifications, risk disclosure statements, or informed consent forms.

For medicines containing substances listed in the doping control list, a prominent warning such as “*Use with caution for athletes*” shall also be displayed on the product page.





Article 16

For medicines that are prohibited from online sale as stipulated by laws, regulations, or explicit requirements of the drug regulatory authorities, pharmaceutical online retail enterprises shall conduct regular inspections, establish risk control and management measures, and prevent such medicines from being sold via online channels.

Article 17

During the sale of prescription drugs, pharmaceutical online retail enterprises shall not encourage excessive or inappropriate use of medicines, nor shall they provide prescription drugs free of charge or in promotional forms such as “buy one get one free” or similar arrangements.

The following practices, which may entail legal risks, are strictly prohibited, including but not limited to: providing prescription drugs through quizzes, lucky draws, promotional giveaways, or bonus gifts; selling or indirectly selling prescription drugs through vouchers, redemption codes, or similar mechanisms; selling prescription drugs in combination with other goods or medicines as bundled products.

Pharmaceutical online retail enterprises shall not, by any means, induce consumers to purchase medicines unrelated to therapeutic needs, including but not limited to marketing-driven short videos, live-stream promotions, and private domain marketing, so as to prevent risks to public medication safety and potential drug misuse.

Article 18


Where an online retail enterprise identifies that the prescription indicates the medicine is intended for a minor, it shall inform the consumer that purchase requires parental or guardian consent. The enterprise shall also advise that the medicine must be used under the guidance of a qualified pharmacist, provide warnings regarding medication safety risks, and, where necessary, block the transaction to protect the minor’s physical and mental health.

Article 19

Pharmaceutical online retail enterprises shall sell prescription drugs strictly on the basis of valid prescriptions. Where prescription drugs are sold online, the enterprise shall ensure that the prescription source is authentic and reliable and shall implement a real-name verification system.

Article 20





Prior to the sale of prescription drugs, pharmaceutical online retail enterprises shall conduct prescription review in accordance with the relevant provisions of the *Drug Administration Law of the People's Republic of China* and other applicable regulations.

Licensed pharmacists responsible for prescription review shall carefully examine each element of the prescription to ensure its legality and the appropriateness of the prescribed medication. Specific review requirements shall be carried out in accordance with the applicable rules governing prescription management.

Article 21

Before a prescription has been reviewed and approved, pharmaceutical online retail enterprises shall not provide consumers with services related to the purchase of prescription drugs.

For electronic prescriptions received online or scanned copies of paper prescriptions, personnel responsible for prescription review, dispensing, and verification shall sign or affix a designated seal to the prescription and indicate the date of review.

Pharmaceutical online retail enterprises shall implement effective measures to prevent the repeated use of prescriptions, retain prescriptions or copies thereof for record-keeping and inspection purposes in accordance with applicable requirements, and are encouraged to use technologies such as electronic signatures and digital verification tools for authentication and validation.

Article 22

Pharmaceutical online retail enterprises shall ensure that prescription review activities are conducted exclusively by licensed pharmacists. Such activities shall not be performed by personnel in other positions or delegated to artificial intelligence systems.

Article 23


To ensure the quality of prescription review, pharmaceutical online retail enterprises shall maintain the average daily prescription review workload of each reviewer within a reasonable range.

Article 24

Pharmaceutical online retail enterprises shall refuse to dispense and sell prescription drugs under any of the following circumstances:

1.the prescription is forged or otherwise fraudulent;



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- 2.the prescription has been altered or has already been marked as used;
 - 3.the prescription contains serious irrational medication practices or prescribing errors;
 - 4.the prescription relates to medicines that are prohibited from being sold online.

Pharmaceutical online retail enterprises shall conduct enhanced risk assessment and due diligence during prescription dispensing and sales where any of the following circumstances arise:

- 1.the prescription lacks a valid indication or involves off-label use;
- 2.the prescription is issued outside the scope of the medical institution's approved practice areas or beyond the prescribing physician's authorized scope of practice;
- 3.the same account purchases large quantities of, or repeatedly purchases, the same category of medicines within a short period of time;
- 4.the prescription is irregular, non-compliant, or its legality cannot be reliably determined.

Article 25

Upon completion of prescription review, online pharmaceutical retail enterprises shall accurately dispense medicinal products in accordance with the prescription. During dispensing, enterprises shall carefully inspect the external appearance and expiry date of the medicinal products. Based on the volume, weight, and storage conditions of the products, appropriate packaging materials and fillers shall be selected to ensure that the packaging is not easily damaged or deformed during transportation, thereby preventing packaging breakage, contamination, or other adverse conditions affecting the medicinal products.

Article 26

When providing medication guidance, online pharmaceutical retail enterprises shall offer instructions consistent with the product leaflet or prescription, including the dosage, method of use, and relevant precautions for each medicinal product.

Article 27

Online pharmaceutical retail enterprises shall issue sales documentation in accordance with applicable regulations and ensure that the traceability code of the medicinal product is displayed on the purchase receipt. Sales documentation may be issued electronically. Records of the smallest retail unit of medicinal products shall be clearly maintained to ensure full traceability.



Article 28

Where medicinal products are delivered via in-store pickup, the enterprise shall remind consumers to verify, at the time of collection, the product name, packaging, quantity, expiry date, and traceability code.

Article 29

Where delivery is carried out through courier services, online pharmaceutical retail enterprises shall ensure that delivery personnel, transportation tools, and delivery conditions comply with applicable pharmaceutical quality management requirements, guaranteeing that the entire distribution process is controllable and traceable. The delivery process shall also ensure that the shipping address is consistent with the business or warehouse address specified in the pharmaceutical business license.

Article 30

Online pharmaceutical retail enterprises shall conduct inbound and outbound verification for prescription medicines in accordance with regulations, including scanning and verifying traceability codes to ensure product legality and compliant supply channels. Non-compliant products shall not be purchased or sold.

Article 31

Online pharmaceutical retail enterprises shall properly retain prescriptions and records of online pharmaceutical services. Enterprises are encouraged to clearly distinguish online and offline sales records within their information systems and accurately indicate the name of the sales platform used (website, application, third-party platform, or store), ensuring consistency between online sales records, actual transaction records, and warehouse inbound/outbound records.

Article 32

In cases where medicinal products are refused upon delivery or returned after sale, such matters shall be handled in accordance with the provisions of the *Good Supply Practice (GSP) for Pharmaceutical Products* and its relevant annexes.

Chapter IV Compliance Requirements for Third-Party Platform Administration



Article 33

Third-party platforms shall establish a pharmaceutical quality management body and assign qualified pharmaceutical technical personnel to carry out drug quality and safety management duties. Such platforms shall perform inspection and supervisory responsibilities over prescription drug information display and related business activities conducted within the platform.

Article 34

Third-party platforms shall establish a quality management system for online pharmaceutical sales, standardize prescription circulation and prescription review procedures within the platform, and provide necessary medication guidance to patients. Platforms shall employ technological measures to promptly identify and intercept artificial intelligence-generated prescriptions and falsified prescriptions circulating through the platform, thereby effectively safeguarding patient medication safety.

Article 35


Third-party platforms shall strengthen the qualification review of pharmaceutical retail enterprises operating within the platform. They shall conduct inspection and management of prescription drug information publication, prescription review processes, and prescription drug sales activities within the platform, ensuring that the information of prescription drugs displayed and listed is truthful, accurate, and lawful.

Third-party platforms shall focus on identifying the following categories of risks:

1-Operating drugs without a valid *Pharmaceutical Business License* or *Business License*;

1. Misuse, forgery, or alteration of pharmaceutical business licenses or drug registration certificates;
2. Expired, revoked, suspended, or cancelled pharmaceutical business licenses or drug registration certificates;
3. Distribution of counterfeit or substandard medicines;
4. Operating beyond the approved business scope or not in accordance with the approved mode of operation;
5. Claims regarding indications or therapeutic uses exceeding approved specifications;
6. Distribution of medicines prohibited from online sale;
7. Distribution of imported medicines without registration approval, Chinese labels, or Chinese instructions;



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8. Misclassification of prescription medicines under other product categories;
 9. Entities subject to regulatory risk-control measures such as suspension of operations by drug regulatory authorities;
 10. Other unlawful or non-compliant activities requiring special attention.

Third-party platforms are encouraged to take timely risk-control measures against merchants and products that may pose a threat to public medication safety, based on real-time information such as complaints, regulatory requirements, user feedback, and adverse drug reaction reports, and to continuously improve platform compliance and risk prevention strategies.

Article 36

Third-party platforms shall conduct qualification reviews of pharmaceutical retail enterprises operating on the platform and establish registration files for prescription drug online retail enterprises. The platforms shall verify and update the qualifications of all pharmaceutical retail enterprises operating within the platform at least once every six months. Third-party platforms are encouraged to establish an internal hierarchical and categorized management system, and to increase the frequency of risk verification according to the corresponding risk levels.

Article 37


The operation of medicines not approved for marketing in the domestic market, or the provision of storage, transportation, or other facilitation services for such medicines, shall constitute unlawful conduct. Where third-party platforms provide facilitation services such as display, linking, or redirection for other drug-selling entities, they shall assess potential safety risks and legal liabilities that may arise therefrom.

Article 38

Third-party platforms shall establish, implement, and continuously improve a pharmaceutical quality and safety risk management system. They are encouraged to establish mechanisms for risk monitoring, analysis, assessment, prevention, early warning, and disposal, and to carry out inspection and monitoring of online pharmaceutical retail activities within the platform. Third-party platforms are also encouraged to establish risk information-sharing mechanisms among themselves, in order to jointly address and prevent illegal and non-compliant activities.

Article 39





Where third-party platforms undertake electronic prescription services, they shall verify the qualifications of the institutions providing such electronic prescriptions and enter into formal agreements with them. Third-party platforms shall design the purchasing process in a rational manner so that consumers can clearly distinguish between electronic prescription service providers and pharmaceutical online retail enterprises.

Article 40

Third-party platforms may, with reference to the requirements set forth in Articles 12, 13, 14, and 15 of these Guidelines, further enhance their mechanisms for the review and management of prescription drug information displayed on the platform, and provide technical support to online pharmaceutical retail enterprises operating on the platform for the implementation of risk warnings and informed consent procedures.

Prior to the completion and approval of prescription review, third-party platforms shall not display or make available to consumers any package inserts, instructions for use, or information relating to therapeutic functions, indications, dosage, administration, or other prescription drug information.

Third-party platforms are encouraged to establish information display review and management mechanisms covering different product categories, ensuring a clear distinction between prescription drug information and information relating to other consumer goods, so as to avoid misleading consumers.

Article 41


Third-party platforms are encouraged to establish online monitoring and early-warning systems for pharmaceutical sales and to conduct dynamic monitoring and risk analysis of prescriptions falling within the circumstances specified in Article 24 of these Guidelines.

Particular attention shall be paid to abnormal sales patterns involving medicinal products containing substances listed in anti-doping catalogues, compound preparations containing psychotropic substances, and other medicinal products presenting a risk of misuse or abuse. Appropriate sales-blocking mechanisms shall be established. Where a single purchase or repeated purchases through the same user account exceed quantities reasonably required for legitimate use, the sale of such products shall be suspended.

Third-party platforms are further encouraged to conduct periodic retrospective assessments of prescription utilization and prescription drug sales activities conducted on the platform, with a view to promptly identifying and mitigating potential risks and compliance concerns.

Article 42





Third-party platforms may periodically conduct lifecycle compliance management of prescription drug online retail activities carried out on the platform through measures including, but not limited to, unannounced merchant inspections, product quality sampling and testing, audits of prescription review practices, and post-purchase consumer follow-up surveys.

Platforms are encouraged to explore and adopt emerging technologies and innovative tools to evaluate and continuously improve the effectiveness of their compliance management systems and governance performance.

