

Filing a Complaint – FAQs

Q: Is your complaint within the jurisdiction of the California State Board of Pharmacy?

A: The board's mission is to protect the health, safety and welfare of Californians. This includes reviewing, evaluating and resolving consumer complaints regarding licensees.

Complaints about pharmacist misconduct or prescription errors should be reported regardless whether a patient is harmed. Other types of complaints are not within the board's jurisdiction – such as prescription drug prices, problems with over-the-counter medications, or insurance billing disputes. However, you may contact the board for information about possible options to resolve your complaint.

Although the board generally has no jurisdiction over drug prices, California law requires Medi-Cal provider pharmacies to sell prescription drugs to Medicare recipients at Medi-Cal prices. You may file a complaint with the Board of Pharmacy if you believe a pharmacy is not charging you the correct price under this program.

The board recommends comparing prices at several pharmacies to obtain the best prices for your drugs. Also, ask your doctor or pharmacist if a less expensive generic product is available.

Q: What is pharmacist misconduct?

A: Any action by a licensed pharmacy or pharmacist that appears improper should be reported to the board. Examples of misconduct include:

- The pharmacist fails to counsel you about how to take a new prescription (or a prescription with changed instructions) and possible side effects.
- A non-pharmacist employee is allowed to counsel you regarding your prescription.
- The pharmacist is not present, and your prescription is filled by a non-pharmacist.
- The pharmacist fails to maintain the confidentiality of your prescription.
- The pharmacist appears unable to function safely (due to alcohol or drug abuse).
- The pharmacy appears dirty, cluttered, or unsanitary.

Q: What are prescription errors?

A: Examples of prescription errors include:

- Incorrect information is entered on the label of the prescription container.
- A prescription is dispensed with the wrong drug or wrong dosage.
- A prescription is refilled without proper authorization from the prescribing physician.
- A generic drug is substituted for a brand-name drug without informing the patient.
- A prescription is filled with expired drugs.

Q: How do I file a complaint?

A: You may [submit a complaint online](#) or [download a complaint form](#) at the board's website. (Forms are available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).) Mail the completed form to:

Board of Pharmacy
Attention: Complaint Unit
2720 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95833

To help the board evaluate your complaint, provide as many details as possible. Include copies of any related documentation, such as prescriptions, invoices, or correspondence.

If your complaint is about a dispensing error or a prescription container that is incorrectly labeled, keep the container and its contents for reference if possible.

Q: What happens to my complaint?

A: The board will notify you by letter when your complaint is received. After evaluating your complaint, the board may advise the pharmacy of your concerns and ask for an explanation. In some instances, depending on the type of complaint, your name may be kept confidential.

The board will take disciplinary action if its investigation reveals a violation of California pharmacy law. The action, based on the type and severity of violation, can range from an official warning and/or fine to suspension, probation, or revocation of license.

Q: Will I be informed of the complaint outcome?

A: Yes. You will receive a written notice of the outcome and any action taken by the board. Routine investigations may take about six months, while more complex cases requiring extensive investigation may take longer.

You also may write to the board and request information regarding the complaint outcome. The board will respond in writing with the following information:

- The date the complaint was received.
- A summary of the investigation.
- The case outcome or type of discipline.

Formal disciplinary actions are matters of public record, as are licensee names, numbers, and addresses of record; original license date of issue; and current license status (active or inactive).

You can check the license status of any pharmacy, pharmacist, or other business or person licensed by the Board of Pharmacy by clicking the [License Search](#) icon at the board's website, www.pharmacy.ca.gov.

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