

# THE MOST COMMON LIABILITY CLAIMS IN PHARMACIES AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

Pharmacies are essential for providing medication and health care services to the public. However, they also face various risks of liability claims that can result in bodily injuries, reputational damage, and legal consequences. In this article, we will discuss the most common types of liability claims in pharmacies, and the best practices to help prevent losses.

## Types of Liability Claims

The most common types of liability claims in pharmacies are:

- **Dispensing Errors:** These are errors that occur when a pharmacist dispenses the wrong medication, dosage, strength, or form to a patient. Dispensing errors can cause adverse reactions, overdoses, or interactions with other drugs.
- **Failure to Warn:** These are claims that arise when a pharmacist fails to warn a patient about the potential risks, side effects, or contraindications of a medication. Failure to warn can result in harm to the patient or a third party.





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- **Failure to Monitor:** These are claims that occur when a pharmacist fails to monitor a patient's medication therapy, such as checking for drug allergies, interactions, duplications, or compliance. Failure to monitor can lead to ineffective or harmful treatment outcomes.
- **Professional Negligence:** These are claims that involve a breach of the standard of care that a pharmacist owes to a patient. Professional negligence can include misdiagnosis, miscommunication, misinformation, or omission of information.

## Prevention Strategies and Best Practices

To prevent liability claims in pharmacies, pharmacists should follow these best practices:

- **Implement a quality assurance system:** A quality assurance system is a set of policies and procedures that aim to ensure the accuracy and safety of dispensing and counseling. The system can include verification, documentation, reporting, and auditing of pharmacy operations.
- **Use technology and automation:** Technology and automation can help reduce human errors and improve efficiency in pharmacy processes. For example, barcode scanners, electronic prescriptions, and automated dispensing machines can help verify and dispense medications correctly.
- **Provide patient education and counseling:** Patient education and counseling are essential for informing patients about their medication therapy and ensuring their understanding and adherence. Pharmacists should use clear and simple language, ask open-ended questions, and provide written information and instructions.
- **Keep updated and informed:** Pharmacists should know the latest developments and changes in pharmacy laws, regulations, standards, and guidelines and seek continuing education and training opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Pharmacies are exposed to various types of liability claims that can have serious consequences. By following the best practices of quality assurance, technology and automation, patient education and counseling, and keeping updated and informed, pharmacists can help prevent these claims as they work to provide safe and effective pharmacy services.

Contact **David A. Larson**, Ascot U.S. Head of Loss Control & Risk Management, to learn more about our loss control capabilities. Visit [ascotgroup.com](https://ascotgroup.com) for more information about our Allied Health risk solutions.

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