

# Seven Simple Ways to Detect and Report Forged Prescriptions

The U.S. Department of Justice recently settled one of the largest lawsuits ever involving prescription drug diversions at the cost of \$3.5 million. Will you be the next big prescription drug diversion culprit? Enact these seven recommendations from the experts at Thompson Information Services to help ensure your pharmacy stays in compliance with the Controlled Substances Act.

## Pharmacies Should Take The Following Steps:

### Train Pharmacists

Provide information to your staff on their "corresponding responsibility" under federal law to ensure that prescriptions for controlled substances are valid and written for a legitimate medical purpose.

### Provide Access

Ensure all pharmacists have access to the state's Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) and require them to review PMP data when in doubt about the validity of a prescription. PMPs can help pharmacists identify "doctor shoppers" who may be attempting to obtain controlled substances by fraud, forgery or deceit.

### Know the Prescriber

Pharmacists should check the DEA Diversion Control Division's Registration Validation website at <https://apps.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/webforms/validateLogin.jsp> in order to identify a prescriber's signature and DEA registration number. If there is any question about a prescription, contact the prescriber for verification or clarification.

### Have a Policy

Create a policy that explains when the pharmacy should notify law enforcement about potential forgeries. According to the DEA, a pharmacist who believes a prescription is forged or altered should not dispense it and should call the local police.

### Require Identification

In addition to requiring proper identification from the customer, check the date on the prescription order to determine if it has been presented in a reasonable length of time since being issued by the prescriber. Watch for particular customers picking up frequent prescriptions or prescriptions for various patients.

### Know the Patient

Run checks on new patient profiles in your database to detect duplicated information that could signal that a customer may try to use multiple identities.

### Hold Staff Accountable

Include compliance metrics in staff performance evaluations and impose meaningful discipline for failures.

## Clues That a Prescription May Be Forged:

- The prescription looks "too good." The prescriber's handwriting is too legible.
- Quantities, directions or dosages differ from usual medical usage of the drug.
- The prescription does not comply with the acceptable standard abbreviations.
- The prescription appears to be photocopied.
- Directions are written in full with no abbreviations.
- The prescription is written in different color inks or written in different handwriting.

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