

Notification instead of a permit. What the draft law on online drug sales simplifies and what it leaves for later

If the Health Ministry's draft is adopted, from September 2027 a pharmacy will no longer need a permit from Roszdravnadzor, the healthcare regulator, to sell medicines for delivery. A notification will be enough. I read the draft, went through the register of current permits and looked at who obtains them. The procedure will become simpler, while the conditions for delivery itself will be set by a future government decree.



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On 10 September 2026 the Health Ministry published a draft law on the remote sale of medicines on regulation.gov.ru, the federal portal for draft regulations. Today a pharmacy business that sells with delivery has to obtain a permit from Roszdravnadzor. Under the draft it will file a notification instead, and the regulator will enter it in an open register. The law is due to take effect on 1 September 2027.

Public consultation closed on 25 September. The portal rates the regulatory impact of the draft as low. Next come the impact assessment opinion and consideration by the government.

A permit is not hard to get even now. Since January 2025 Roszdravnadzor has been issuing at least 21 permits a month, against no more than nine before. Four out of five new permits went to legal entities belonging to large pharmacy chains. One possible explanation is that chains have been moving onto delivery platforms, and the draft says nothing at all about platforms.

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What the draft changes

The draft has three articles, the third of which deals with entry into force. It amends the law on the circulation of medicines: Article 55 on retail trade and Article 5 on the powers of the regulator. It also amends Article 15.1 of the law on information, the provision under which websites are blocked.

ITEM	NOW	UNDER THE DRAFT
Admission to delivery sales	Permit from Roszdravnadzor	Notification to Roszdravnadzor
Timing and refusal	5 working days via the Gosuslugi state services portal, three grounds for refusal	Not set out in the law
Retail licence held for at least a year	In Government Decree No. 697	In the law
Website or aggregator, couriers, storage, payment	In Government Decree No. 697	To be set by the government
Termination of the right	Four grounds in the decree	Not set out in the law

ITEM	NOW	UNDER THE DRAFT
Ground for blocking a website	No licence or permit	No licence or notification
Prescription drugs	No remote sales	No remote sales

Summaries of the draft present the requirement to hold a licence for at least a year as new. It has been in the rules since 2020; the draft merely moves it into the law. Only one thing in the draft is new: a notification in place of a permit.

The rules on remote sales have been relaxed once before. Until September 2021 a permit was available only to an organisation with at least ten pharmacies. At the same time pharmacies were allowed to work through an aggregator without a website of their own.

Everything else will be set by the government, as it is now. A new decree will decide whether the current requirements on couriers, storage and work through aggregators survive. The first item on the list of implementing acts attached to the draft is an amendment to Presidential Decree No. 187, due in March 2027.

The ban on selling prescription drugs remotely stays. The experiment that allowed such sales in Moscow, the Moscow Region and the Belgorod Region ended on 1 March 2026, and the draft does not touch it.

Who holds permits now

Roszdraznadzor keeps the register of permits open to the public. On 26 September 2026 it contained 763 entries. The register appears to show only permits that are still in force. Terminated permits are not visible, so the early years look smaller than they were.

YEAR OF ISSUE	PERMITS IN FORCE
2020	143
2021	46
2022	51
2023	49
2024	33
2025	198
2026, to 23 September	243

Of the 763 permits in force, 441 were issued from January 2025 onwards. The busiest months were October 2025 (58), April 2026 (71) and July 2026 (45).

I checked who received these 441 permits, matching legal entities to pharmacy chains on open data. The main markers were the list of legal entities on a chain's own website, the chain's domain in the "website" field of the register, and a shared management company according to the state register of legal entities (EGRUL). For some entries the link rests only on a matching name, director or address.

Of the 441 permits, 359, or 81%, went to legal entities of pharmacy chains and groups, including pharmacies attached to clinics. Eight groups account for two thirds of the new entries, and four groups for almost half.

Chains obtain permits in waves. One received about fifty permits within two weeks in the spring, another about twenty in a single week in the summer. In a third group, more than fifty legal entities with a shared management company obtained permits over a few months.

In 282 of the 441 new entries there is no address of the pharmacy's own website. Among entries from 2021–2024 the figure is 53 out of 179. A pharmacy without a website of its own sells under a contract with an aggregator.

Some of the new entries are probably re-registrations. A number of long-standing market players remain in the register only with permits dated 2026. There are therefore fewer newcomers to remote sales than there are new entries.

Why chains may take out a permit for every legal entity

Under the rules, remote sales include delivery. When a medicine is carried by a marketplace or a delivery service, the seller is still the licensed pharmacy business. The platform concludes the contract with the customer in the pharmacy's name and on its account. The permit is needed by the legal entity in whose name the platform sells. The platform's address goes into the register, and the rules allow three working days after the contract is signed to do so.

If the pharmacies in your chain are spread across dozens of legal entities, each of them may need a permit. Among the platforms, Ozon states this requirement outright. Its [guidance for sellers](#) says a pharmacy chain uploads a remote-sale permit that already contains a link to Ozon. I found no public requirements from other platforms.

The growth of the register coincided with chains moving onto delivery platforms. In the spring and summer of 2025 chains were joining Kuper, a grocery delivery service, and in August 2025 Yandex launched its pharmacy delivery service, Yandex Apteki. I found no direct link in the documents, and for the three largest waves none is visible at all. So far this is only a coincidence of dates.

For such chains a notification may make life easier. At present every legal entity goes through a separate procedure. Under the draft Roszdravnadzor will not have to take a decision. If the decree keeps the duty to report every platform, the paperwork will shrink only slightly.

The procedure is not the main hurdle even now

The Health Ministry justifies the draft as follows. Over 2020–2025, 676 permits were issued, and inspections found no breaches of the rules of trade. The aim, according to the explanatory note, is to cut pharmacies' costs. The note says nothing about access to medicines in small settlements.

The procedure is already short. The application goes through Gosuslugi and a decision is taken within five working days. A refusal can rest on three grounds: the application lacks information, the information is inaccurate, or the pharmacy does not meet the requirements.

The requirements themselves take more effort. A pharmacy needs premises to store assembled orders. It needs a website or a contract with an aggregator. It needs a courier service, its own or contracted, with equipment for temperature-sensitive drugs. It needs a way to take payment on delivery. The price in a remote sale may not exceed the retail price in the pharmacy.

Door-to-door courier delivery of medicines, according to RNC Pharma, took 0.96% of the retail drug market by value in 2024, and 1.1% in January–May 2025. The rest of pharmacy e-commerce is booking with collection at the pharmacy, and booking needs no permit from Roszdravnadzor. I explained why, and where the grey areas lie, in [a piece on online booking](#).

Online sales are slowing down as well. According to AlphaRM data cited by [Kommersant](#), online sales of medicines grew by 2% in packs and by 22% by value in January–July 2026. A year earlier growth was 18% and 31%.

What the draft leaves out

Blocking will work in the same way. Roszdravnadzor takes a decision on a website that sells medicines illegally. The site goes into the unified register of prohibited information and access to it is cut off. Only the ground changes: "no notification" instead of "no permit".

According to Alla Samoylova, head of Roszdravnadzor, about 133,000 online resources had been blocked in six years by May 2026. About two thirds of them sold unregistered drugs. In 2025, according to Roszdravnadzor's Telegram channel, about 21,500 websites were blocked.

The regulator does not disclose how many blocks concern legal products sold without a permit. It is therefore impossible to say how replacing the permit with a notification will affect their number.

The register of permits now lists pharmacies' websites. The draft does not say whether the register of notifications will list them too. That determines whether a customer, or the regulator itself, will be able to check a website against the register.

The second issue the draft does not touch is connectivity. Since September 2025, when mobile internet is restricted, services on the "white list" of the Ministry of Digital Development keep working. According to Kommersant and Habr, the list includes Ozon, Wildberries, Yandex, Magnit and Apteka.ru. The websites of individual pharmacy chains are not on it.

The Russian Association of Pharmacy Chains (RAAS) has been seeking their inclusion since March 2026. It first approached the government through the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In August the association wrote to the health minister. According to RAAS as reported by Vademecum, two departments of the Health Ministry had declined to support the initiative before that. In September the ministry's digital development department replied that it was ready to petition the Ministry of Digital Development. The decision lies with that ministry, and there is no timetable.

Until the matter is settled, during restrictions a customer can order a medicine through a marketplace or Apteka.ru, while the website of his own pharmacy chain does not open.

What the decree will decide

The draft leaves the main questions for pharmacy businesses to the government:

- ◆ whether the requirement for a courier service, own or contracted, survives, and what the rules for transporting temperature-sensitive drugs will be;
- ◆ whether a pharmacy will be able to work through an aggregator alone, and whether every new platform must be reported;

- ◆ on what grounds a pharmacy will be removed from the register. At present a permit is terminated, for example, after two penalties within a year under Articles 6.33 and 14.4.2 of the Code of Administrative Offences;
- ◆ whether the register of notifications will list website addresses.

The answers will decide whether moving into delivery becomes cheaper for a small pharmacy business. The paperwork alone already takes it about a week.

What a pharmacy chain owner should do

What follows are the author's practical conclusions. They are not legal advice.

Check your chain's legal entities against the register. The register is open on Roszdravnadzor's website. The permit is needed by the legal entity in whose name the delivery platform sells. The address of each platform is entered in the register within three working days of the contract. Check this for every legal entity together with your lawyer.

If you need delivery now, there is no point in waiting for 2027. A permit is issued within five working days. The law will take effect no earlier than September 2027, and it still needs a decree.

Follow the draft decree. The requirements on couriers, aggregators and the register will appear there. It is easier to put your position on them through the industry associations taking part in the consultation.

Take the "white list" into account when choosing a channel. As long as pharmacy chains' websites are not on it, in regions with connectivity restrictions orders go to the platforms that are.

Method. The register of remote-sale permits was downloaded from Roszdravnadzor's website on 26 September 2026: 763 entries. The year of issue is taken from the registration date. The register appears to show only permits in force, so years are compared through the rate of issue. The 441 permits in force dated between 1 January 2025 and 23 September 2026 give at least 21 permits a month. According to the explanatory note, 676 permits were issued over 2020–2025; subtracting the 198 permits in force issued in 2025 leaves no more than 478 for 2020–2024, or no more than nine a month. The author assigned legal entities to pharmacy chains using the lists of legal entities on the chains' websites, the domains in the "website" field of the register and EGRUL data on management companies, and for some entries by a matching name, director or address. For 82 of the 441 entries ownership could not be established. "No address of the pharmacy's own website" means an empty "website" field in the register. The text of the draft law, the explanatory note and the course of the consultation are taken from the regulation.gov.ru portal and the Garant legal database as of 26 September 2026.

This material is informational and analytical in character and is not legal advice. The draft law may change before adoption, and the requirements for pharmacies will be set by a future government decree.

SOURCES

- ◆ Draft federal law amending Article 15.1 of the law "On Information, Information Technologies and the Protection of Information" and Articles 5 and 55 of the law "On the Circulation of Medicines"; with explanatory note and financial and economic justification
- ◆ Government Decree No. 697 of 16 May 2020
- ◆ Roszdravnadzor register of permits for the remote retail sale of medicines, EGRUL data
- ◆ RNC Pharma, AlphaRM
- ◆ Kommersant, Interfax, Habr, Vademecum, TASS, Roszdravnadzor's Telegram channel
- ◆ Ozon materials for sellers, public materials of Yandex and pharmacy chains