



5 Steps for Streamlining Recall Management

1. Consumer notification is rapid and successful

You will need to cooperate with your regulatory agency to develop and issue a public announcement to the media. An announcement that fulfills the regulatory agency's requirements will form the basis for any other notifications you may make, including letters mailed directly to consumers in a warranty database. All forms of notification should be concisely written, provide consistent recall information, and issue a clear call to action.

2. Notification to retailers, consignees, and vendors is timely and effective

Consignees should also be contacted individually about the recall. These target audiences can be notified in a number of ways, including news releases, online communications, confidential data registries, traceable direct deliveries, safety alerts, and physician and retail communications. This is critical to ensuring that your recall is effective and closed out as quickly as possible.

3. You documented all communication to consumers, retailers, and vendors

The notification should also be structured appropriately so that you can catalog all communication in order to monitor effectiveness. The documentation will also be helpful for compliance purposes when reporting to the regulatory agency or corporate stakeholders.

4. Affected products were pulled from commerce in a timely fashion

When recalls get to large or complicated, retrieval field forces can be used to conduct site visits and remove affected product from retail shelves.

Another advantage of using retrieval services is preservation of the relationship between manufacturers and retailers. Recalls are a serious inconvenience for all parties involved. Providing a field force retrieval service is a value added service that the manufacturer can offer to help retailers and make sure that the logistics of the recall are executed quickly and efficiently.

An added consideration in using a retrieval field force for the removal of products is brand protection. If for any reason it appears that traditional removal from the marketplace will be slow or incomplete, using retrieval services can help speed the process, minimize errors, and protect the brand from further damage.

5. You documented all product retrieval efforts

When monitoring the recall process, regulators rely on their own recall documentation of consumer complaints, effectiveness checks, and industry studies to determine whether a company has achieved recall effectiveness and compliance. As a manufacturer or retailer managing a recall, you need to provide regulators with all the recall documentation you can gather to support your request to close out the recall as soon as possible. A vast number of data points must be tracked in your recall documentation – including recall notices sent, phone calls received, locations visited, and remedies provided to consumers.

Documentation is also the key to preventing future litigation and increased recall costs. Detailed records of each step in the recall process and every action taken to complete the recall must be logged to meet the reporting guidelines of regulatory agencies and to prepare to defend future litigation.

With this in mind, your legal team should receive all recall documentation from the consumer notification process and call center records. With this information in hand, lawyers can mine the data for potential litigation threats, manage the appropriate follow-up, and mitigate risk before lawsuits are filed.