

SpaceMed Feature

Planning an Outpatient Pharmacy: Small, Medium, or Large?

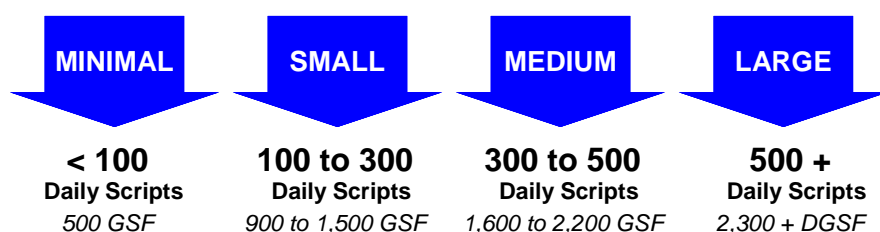
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Most outpatient pharmacies that are located within a hospital or in an ambulatory care center (on or off-campus) fall into one of four categories — minimal, small, medium, or large. Assuming that outpatient demand has been established based on the availability and convenience of similar services and potential competition from commercial pharmacies, the primary determinant of an outpatient pharmacy's size is the average number of daily prescriptions (scripts) that will be filled during the busiest eight-hour shift. This generally determines the numbers and sizes of rooms or areas and overall gross square feet (GSF) as follows:



TYPES OF SPACES REQUIRED

Regardless of the number of daily scripts, most outpatient pharmacies require the following spaces:

- **One or more dispensing windows** (including queuing space) with one dispensing window per each 100 daily scripts.
- **Separate cashier window** (including queuing space) for outpatient pharmacies with more than 100 scripts per day.
- **Waiting area** with two seats typically planned for each dispensing station.
- **Retail display area** which can vary depending on the type and variety of items to be stocked.
- **Consult cubicle** for private customer communication is generally planned for pharmacies with more than 100 scripts per day.
- **Fill area** with an administrative workstation, filling area (with working stock), handwashing sink, and refrigerator/freezer; generally 1.5 NSF per each daily script is planned for the fill area itself with the other spaces a fixed size.
- **Receiving/breakdown area** to stage incoming bulk medications; this area is generally a fixed size regardless of the number of daily scripts.

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- **Bulk storage room** which is generally a fixed size although larger outpatient pharmacies may require more space.
- **Office/cubicle for the manager** which is required for all outpatient pharmacies.
- **Staff toilet room** (handicapped) is mandatory for each outpatient pharmacy.

ADDITIONAL SPACE FOR LARGER OUTPATIENT PHARMACIES

Larger outpatient pharmacies — such as those with more than 500 scripts per day — may require additional space such as:

- Expanded retail display area (180+ NSF).
- A second cashier station (50 NSF).
- A larger receiving/breakdown area (20+ NSF), an additional handwashing sink (10 NSF) and refrigerator/freezer (15 NSF), and more bulk storage space (20+ NSF).
- Medication disposal station to encourage customers to drop off outdated medications (20 NSF).
- Office/cubicle for a supervisor (40 NSF) in addition to the manager's workstation.
- Separate research cubicle to house reference books and a computer workstation (40 NSF).
- Staff coat closet or locker area (20 to 40 NSF).
- An optional compounding room (approximately 280 NSF) with a laminar flow hood and a contiguous ante room to comply with USP 797 requirements.

An outpatient pharmacy should be located in an area with a high volume of outpatient traffic and the entrance should be convenient and highly visible from the main circulation corridor.

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