

Pfizer investigations, enforcement actions, and major lawsuits

Including Bribery: China, Russia

Research overview · Updated October 12, 2026

Pfizer has faced federal criminal and civil enforcement actions, foreign bribery investigations, allegations involving payments to healthcare professionals, drug-pricing and antitrust litigation, product-liability lawsuits, and disputes concerning COVID-19 vaccine marketing.

There is no single public database that reliably captures every investigation, lawsuit, regulatory inspection, and complaint involving Pfizer and all its subsidiaries worldwide. The following is a sourced overview of major documented cases, distinguishing concluded enforcement actions from allegations and unresolved litigation.

1. Major investigations and enforcement actions

2009 — Criminal and civil settlement over drug promotion

\$2.3 billion

Pfizer resolved federal investigations into alleged off-label promotion of Bextra and other medicines, including allegations involving payments to healthcare professionals. A subsidiary pleaded guilty to a criminal violation related to Bextra promotion. The package included a \$1.3 billion criminal penalty and \$1 billion in civil payments. Pfizer disputed most of the civil allegations.



Pfizer

Official record: [U.S. Department of Justice](#) · [Pfizer settlement announcement](#)

2012 — Foreign bribery investigation, including China

\$45 million+ in SEC payments, plus a \$15 million DOJ penalty

U.S. authorities investigated payments by Pfizer subsidiaries to government-employed healthcare professionals and officials in several countries, including China. Pfizer H.C.P. admitted to paying more than \$2 million in bribes in Bulgaria, Croatia, Kazakhstan, and Russia between 1997 and 2006. The SEC separately addressed conduct involving China and other countries.



SEC Charges Pfizer with FCPA Violations

+2

Important: The China-related allegations were part of the broader SEC case. The \$15 million DOJ penalty related to the separate Pfizer H.C.P. resolution.

Official records: [SEC FCPA announcement](#) · [DOJ announcement](#)

2018 onward — Tris Pharma and Quillivant XR

Pfizer disclosed receiving a federal subpoena in October 2018 concerning its relationship with Tris Pharma and manufacturing of drugs including Quillivant XR. In June 2025, the Department of Justice and related states declined to intervene in a whistleblower lawsuit. That procedural decision does not itself establish wrongdoing or mean the private lawsuit was dismissed.



SEC

Source: [Pfizer SEC filing](#)

2019 onward — Meridian auto-injector manufacturing

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York issued a civil investigative demand in February 2019 concerning alleged quality issues with auto-injectors manufactured at Pfizer's former Meridian Medical Technologies facility. A separate subpoena followed in August 2019. Pfizer disclosed producing records in response.



SEC

Source: [Pfizer SEC filing](#)

2020 onward — India manufacturing operations

The DOJ's Consumer Protection Branch requested documents in March 2020 concerning Pfizer's manufacturing operations in India, including a former facility in Irrungattukottai. The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York made a similar request in April 2020 concerning a civil investigation. Pfizer reported producing records in response. The cited filing does not establish a final finding of wrongdoing.



SEC

+1

Source: [Pfizer SEC filing](#)

2023 onward — Xeljanz pharmacy programs

In April 2023, Pfizer received a HIPAA subpoena from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Virginia, coordinating with the DOJ's Commercial Litigation Branch. The request concerned programs Pfizer sponsored in retail pharmacies relating to Xeljanz. Pfizer disclosed producing records. The cited filing does not state a final enforcement finding.



SEC

Source: [Pfizer SEC filing](#)

2025 — Biohaven/Nurtec physician-payment allegations

\$59.75 million settlement

Pfizer agreed to pay \$59,746,277 to resolve federal and state False Claims Act allegations concerning Biohaven's pre-acquisition speaker programs for Nurtec ODT. The government alleged that speaker honoraria and meals were used to induce prescriptions. Pfizer acquired Biohaven in 2022 and ended the programs. The settlement resolved allegations without an admission of liability.



United States Department of Justice

+1

Official record: [DOJ settlement announcement](#)

2. Major ongoing or recently reported litigation

These matters are not all government investigations. Some are private lawsuits, coordinated product-liability cases, or state enforcement actions. Their status can change as courts issue rulings and parties negotiate settlements.

Matter	What is being investigated or alleged	Reported status
Generic-drug pricing	Pfizer and its former subsidiary Greenstone face allegations of anticompetitive conduct in generic-drug pricing.	A Greenstone/Pfizer settlement received court approval in July 2026 for a direct-purchaser class. Other related litigation may remain.



SEC
+1

Zantac	Product-liability claims alleging that ranitidine products caused cancer, along with certain state and municipal claims.	Pfizer reported settling or agreeing in principle to settle a substantial majority of certain state-court cases as of May 2026. Remaining cases continued.  SEC +1
Depo-Provera	Plaintiffs allege that injectable medroxyprogesterone acetate used for contraception caused meningioma, a type of brain or spinal-cord tumor.	Pfizer reported an agreement in principle in June 2026 expected to resolve a substantial majority of cases in the federal multidistrict litigation. The agreement did not necessarily resolve every case.  SEC +1
Chantix	Consumers alleged economic harm after a voluntary recall involving nitrosamine contamination.	The parties reached an agreement in principle in March 2026, subject to court approval.  SEC +1
Texas COVID-19 vaccine lawsuit	Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton alleged that Pfizer made false or misleading representations about its COVID-19 vaccine.	The suit was filed in November 2023. The allegations should not be treated as established findings of liability.  LegalClarity
COVID-19 vaccine records litigation	Pfizer participated in litigation concerning the release of regulatory records related to its vaccine.	A separate case brought against the FDA resulted in the release of records; Pfizer was not the defendant in that lawsuit but intervened to protect proprietary information.  Reuters

3. Where to find the full investigation and enforcement records

For a more exhaustive investigation, these primary databases are useful because they contain court filings, enforcement announcements, and company disclosures.

U.S. Department of Justice

Criminal prosecutions, False Claims Act cases, foreign bribery resolutions, and federal civil investigations.

<https://www.justice.gov/>

Securities and Exchange Commission

Foreign Corrupt Practices Act enforcement, financial reporting, securities matters, and other corporate enforcement actions.

<https://www.sec.gov/enforcement-litigation>

Food and Drug Administration

Drug safety notices, manufacturing inspections, warning letters, recalls, and regulatory actions.

[FDA enforcement and investigations](#)

Pfizer's SEC filings

The company's annual reports and quarterly filings list material litigation, government inquiries, contingencies, and significant legal developments.

[SEC company filing search](#)

Search for Pfizer Inc. or ticker PFE.

4. What this record establishes

The documented history includes a major criminal and civil drug-promotion settlement, a foreign bribery resolution covering conduct in multiple countries including China-related SEC allegations, and later civil settlements involving alleged improper physician payments. It also includes government inquiries into manufacturing and commercial programs, antitrust litigation, and significant product-liability lawsuits.

It is important to distinguish a completed criminal or civil enforcement action, an investigation disclosed in a filing, a pending lawsuit, and an allegation that has not been proven. They are not equivalent.

This is a substantial overview of major publicly documented matters, but it is not a verified list of every Pfizer investigation worldwide.