



Guideline for Delivery Activities and Services via Digital Platforms and Applications

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Introduction

The delivery sector in Qatar represents one of the most prominent modern and rapidly growing sectors, closely linked to consumers' daily lives. Digital platforms and applications have become the primary intermediary for sales and advertising between providers on one side and consumers on the other.

In light of this rapid growth, and to ensure the sustainability of economic development within this sector, this guideline has been developed to clarify obligations, rights, and controls related to the protection of competition, the prevention of monopolistic practices, and consumer protection. It also aims to create a business environment that encourages investment, supports the development of delivery services, sustains small and medium-sized enterprises, and enhances trust in digital commerce through the proper application of relevant legislation. Furthermore, it provides a clear framework defining the obligations of digital platforms and applications, thereby strengthening the digital economy sector.

First:

**Pricing Freedom on Digital
Platforms and Applications**

First: Pricing Freedom on Digital Platforms and Applications

1. Freedom of pricing for providers (e.g. retail outlets such as restaurants):

- ◆ Providers may set their own pricing lists, which may differ from those used by delivery companies or digital platforms.
- ◆ Delivery companies may determine delivery service fees for consumers, provided such pricing is fair and serves the public interest.
- ◆ Platforms are prohibited from imposing prices, discounts, offers, or price adjustments on providers without prior explicit approval from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Pricing remains the exclusive right of the provider.
- ◆ All fees, commissions, and deductions must be clearly disclosed in contracts with providers, and any amendments require written approval from the provider.
- ◆ Platforms must not impose undisclosed discounts, financial terms, or hidden margins.
- ◆ Exploiting a provider's need to access a platform to impose unfair conditions or threaten service suspension is prohibited.
- ◆ Providers have the right to freely determine their prices across all sales channels. Platforms must not require price parity between platform prices and in-store prices, as this restricts pricing freedom.

2. Cancellation and refund policies:

- ◆ Responsibility is based on fault, with the liable party bearing cancellation and refund costs.
- ◆ Platforms must apply the following:
 - ◆ If cancelled before preparation: no cost to the consumer.
 - ◆ If cancelled after preparation: the consumer pays only the actual cost without additional fees.

3. Paid advertisements:

- ◆ Platforms must clearly disclose when a provider's ranking is influenced by paid advertising to ensure fair competition and transparency.

4. Visibility criteria and algorithms:

- ◆ Platforms must disclose general criteria used in ranking providers, including factors such as distance, customer reviews, delivery time, paid promotions, reliability, and capacity.
- ◆ Arbitrary limitation of geographic visibility is prohibited to ensure fair competition and avoid discrimination against small or local providers.
- ◆ Platforms must clearly disclose within their contracts all data, features, pricing elements, and criteria that affect the visibility and ranking of providers.

5. Management of uncollected cash orders:

- ◆ Implementing a pre-confirmation system for cash orders, with a mechanism to determine responsibility in case of non-collection.
- ◆ If the consumer fails to receive the order due to a provider error (e.g. missing items or incorrect order), the provider bears the cost.
- ◆ The platform bears the cost if the issue is attributable to the platform or delivery representative (e.g. excessive delay or damage during delivery).
 - ◆ Prior confirmation must be obtained before preparation, with clear notice that cancellation after preparation may result in a symbolic fee or temporary restriction of cash payment services.
 - ◆ In certain cases, responsibility may be shared between the platform and the provider based on agreed contractual terms.
 - ◆ Contracts must include provisions regulating cancelled cash orders.

Second:

**Regulation of Promotional Offers
and Discounts**

Second: Regulation of Promotional Offers and Discounts

Application of offers and discounts in accordance with principles of competition and consumer protection:

- ◆ Providers, platforms, applications, and all delivery service providers must ensure that price discounts, promotional offers, discount programs, and prize draws offered to consumers are licensed by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and are valid, accurate, and not misleading, in accordance with applicable procedures and regulations.
- ◆ Prices before and after discounts must be displayed with full transparency, advertised quantities must be genuinely available, and misleading advertising, price inflation prior to discounting, concealment of offer conditions, or changing discount rates without prior approval must be avoided.
- ◆ Offers and discounts must respect consumer rights and fair competition rules, and must not be used to exclude competitors, present unrealistic pricing, impose offers on providers without their consent (unless otherwise agreed), or include non-compliant or unavailable products.
- ◆ Any promotional offer must be based on accurate and clear information, with the advertised price representing the final price without unjustified additional fees. Offers must be implemented within the licensed conditions and specified period, must be economically sustainable, and must not aim to create temporary dumping or predatory effects on competitors. Advertisements must be removed immediately upon license expiry, and required documentation must be provided to competent authorities upon request.

Third:

Provider Obligations

Third: Obligations of Providers

1. Compliance with announced prices:

The provider must sell products at the prices displayed on the platform or application, without unjustified increases upon payment or delivery. Any discrepancy between the displayed price and the price requested upon delivery constitutes a violation of transparency.

2. Disclosure of preparation time and expected delivery time:

The provider (and platforms or applications) must clearly inform the consumer, prior to order confirmation, of preparation time and expected delivery time, as this information is essential to the consumer's purchasing decision.

3. Food and product safety and service quality:

The provider (especially restaurants) must deliver goods (such as meals) or products in accordance with the description, safe for consumption, and packaged in a manner that prevents damage or contamination during delivery.

4. No additional off-platform charges (hidden or undisclosed fees):

Providers are prohibited from requesting additional fees from consumers that are not stated on the platform or application (such as packaging fees or price increases upon delivery).

5. Compliance with cancellation policies:

Providers must adhere to cancellation policies set by the platforms or applications, ensuring a balance of rights:

- ◆ If the order is cancelled before preparation begins, the provider is not entitled to compensation.
- ◆ If the order is cancelled after preparation begins, the provider is entitled only to recover actual costs.

6. Responsibility in description and advertising:

Providers must accurately describe products (ingredients, weight, calories, special attributes such as “gluten-free”), and any false advertising is considered misleading

7. Obliging delivery companies to register and electronically link delivery service prices with the Ministry:

Delivery companies, digital platforms and applications, and restaurants are required to register and electronically link the prices of goods and services with the Ministry, provide the relevant data as specified by the competent department, and report any changes to such data. This includes detailing the components of packages and preventing the imposition of undisclosed services or costs, without interfering in price setting or imposing price ceilings

Fourth:

**Obligations of the Delivery
Representative or Delivery Service
Provider**

Fourth: Obligations of the Delivery Representative or Delivery Service Provider

1. Commitment to timelines and delivery accuracy:

The representative must deliver the order within the time specified on the platform or application, and notify the consumer and platform in case of delays beyond their control (such as traffic or vehicle malfunction)

2. Safety of the order during transport:

The representative is responsible for maintaining the condition of the order during transport so that it reaches the consumer as received from the provider, without damage, mixing, or contamination

3. Professional conduct and behavior:

The representative must act respectfully and professionally when dealing with consumers and refrain from any verbal or physical misconduct.

4. No additional charges to consumers:

The representative is prohibited from requesting any additional payments beyond what is displayed on the platform or application (such as extra delivery fees or mandatory tips)

5. Use of approved delivery methods:

The representative must use approved delivery tools and equipment (such as temperature-controlled food bags) to ensure service quality.

Fifth:

**Monitoring, Enforcement, and
Penalty Mechanisms**

Fifth: Monitoring, Enforcement, and Penalty Mechanisms

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, through its Consumer Affairs sector, is responsible for regulating the market environment and ensuring fair competition through pre- and post-monitoring of market operations and common practices, intervening to deter violations when necessary, and carrying out oversight to detect and document violations related to delivery activities and services via digital platforms and applications, in accordance with applicable laws enforced by the sector's departments.



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