

GMC Suspension Recovery Pack

Google Merchant Center Suspension Recovery Pack

A self-diagnosis playbook + appeal-letter template + pre-review checklist + reinstatement-killer list.

If your Merchant Center account just got suspended, here's a calm structured path to a clean appeal. No reinstatement guarantees. No fake compliance advice. No invented GTINs. This is the same diagnostic walk-through Useful Patch uses internally before doing a paid audit.

Section 1 — Read your suspension notice carefully (5 minutes, do this first)

Google's wording is famously vague but the exact phrase matters. Before doing anything, screenshot the suspension banner from your Merchant Center diagnostic tab. The phrase determines which of the 6 main suspension classes you're in.

If the notice says...	You're in class...	Most common root cause
"Misrepresentation"	A	Policy / contact / trust gap (most common, 60% of cases)

If the notice says...	You're in class...	Most common root cause
"Suspended due to policy violations" with no specifics	B	Same as A but Google won't say which one
"Account-level enforcement"	C	Past account behavior, often unrelated to current store
"Disapproved products: missing GTIN / brand mismatch"	D	Feed quality, fixable
"Price mismatch"	E	Feed-page consistency
"Suspended for promoting prohibited content"	F	Specific banned product (CBD, weapons, supplements)

What you do next depends on your class. If it's A or B, sections 2-3 are most important. If it's D or E, skip to section 6.

Section 2 — The 14 misrepresentation triggers, ranked by frequency

These are the things Google's automated misrepresentation classifier most commonly flags. We've ranked them by what we see across thousands of suspended stores.

Tier 1: triggers in 80%+ of misrepresentation suspensions

1. **No physical address visible** on the contact page. Google checks the contact page literally — text like "we're online only" doesn't count as an

address.

2. **No phone number or email visible** without first scrolling/expanding/contacting form. Google's crawler doesn't fill forms.
3. **Refund policy missing** — different from "returns" policy. Google requires a separate refund clause.
4. **Shipping policy doesn't list specific countries or regions** — generic "we ship worldwide" fails.
5. **About page is a generic template** — Google detects template phrasing across thousands of stores.
6. **Privacy policy is generic** or copied from a template generator.

Tier 2: triggers in 40-60% of cases

7. **Domain is brand-new** (under 90 days) with no business signal (companies house entry, social proof, reviews).
8. **Whois data is privacy-protected** but the store claims a specific country.
9. **HTTPS missing on key pages** (cart, checkout, contact).
10. **Robots.txt blocks Googlebot** or specific crawlers — sometimes done accidentally by SEO plugins.

Tier 3: triggers in 15-25% of cases

11. **Product images watermarked with another brand's logo** (drop-shipped without permission).
12. **Product titles claim "FDA-approved" or "doctor recommended"** without evidence.
13. **Pricing implies it's the cheapest** without evidence.
14. **"Limited time" countdown timers** that reset on page load.

For each one, the playbook below gives the exact thing to check, the page to fix, and what a "passing" version looks like.

Section 3 — Self-audit walk-through (do these in order)

Step 3.1 — Check your contact page (3 min)

Open `yourstore.com/contact` . Without scrolling or clicking, can you see: - ☐ A physical address (street, city, country) - ☐ A phone number - ☐ An email address (text, not an image) - ☐ A form OR a contact email visible above the fold

If 3 or more are missing, this alone is a 70% likely cause. Add them as plain text. Don't put the email behind JavaScript.

Step 3.2 — Check your policy pages

Open each in a new tab: - `yourstore.com/privacy` - `yourstore.com/refund` OR `/refunds` - `yourstore.com/return` OR `/returns` - `yourstore.com/shipping` OR `/delivery` - `yourstore.com/terms`

For each, check: - ☐ Page exists and returns HTTP 200 - ☐ Content is at least 200 words - ☐ Mentions specific countries/regions where applicable - ☐ Contains your business name (not “[Company Name]” placeholder) - ☐ Contains a real date or version number - ☐ Doesn't contain phrases from common policy generators

If using Shopify: go to Settings → Policies and verify each is filled out. The default Shopify-generated policies are flagged by Google's classifier as “template-likely” — you have to edit them.

Step 3.3 — Check your trust signals

- ☐ About page mentions a real person/team (not “we're a passionate team of...”)
- ☐ About page has at least one specific date (when you started)
- ☐ Footer has a copyright with your business name and current year
- ☐ At least one social media link that points to a real account (not just a logo)
- ☐ At least one third-party review platform mention (Trustpilot, Google Reviews, BBB) IF you have any

Step 3.4 — Check your domain

Run a whois lookup on yourstore.com. If: - ☐ Domain age is under 90 days, AND - ☐ Whois is privacy-protected, AND - ☐ Site has no Trustpilot/Google reviews, AND - ☐ Site has no Companies House / D&B / equivalent business registry entry

...then Google's classifier sees a "potentially fraudulent new store" pattern. Fix at least one of these (not all four — usually showing a Companies House number or equivalent in the footer is enough).

Step 3.5 — Check your products

Pick 5 random products. For each: - ☐ Product image is yours, not a stock image you can find elsewhere - ☐ Title doesn't contain "FDA-approved", "doctor recommended", "miracle", "guaranteed cure" - ☐ Description doesn't claim health benefits (cures, treats, prevents) - ☐ Price is consistent between feed and live page (open the product URL fresh, compare to your XML feed) - ☐ Stock status matches between feed and live page

Section 4 — The appeal letter template

After fixing what you found, request a re-review. The appeal text matters less than the diagnostics tab being clean, but here's the structure that gets faster reads from Google's review team:

Dear Merchant Center Review Team,

Account ID: [your MC ID]

Store: [your domain]

Suspension type: [exact wording from your suspension notice]

Suspension date: [date]

Summary of changes since suspension:

1. [Specific change #1]

- What was wrong: [exact thing, e.g., "Privacy policy was the default Shopify template"]

- What I changed: [exact action, e.g., "Replaced with a privacy policy specific to my business, dated 2020-XX-XX, mentioning UK GDPR compliance"]

- URL where this can be verified: yourstore.com/privacy

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2. [Specific change #2]
- What was wrong: [...]
- What I changed: [...]
- URL: [...]

3. [...]continue for each change. Ideally 5-8 specific items...

Trust evidence:
Company registration: [Companies House number / DUNS / state filing]
Business address: [verifiable address, not a virtual mailbox]
Domain registered: [date, e.g., "2024-03-15", showing >2 years operating]
Customer reviews: [Link to Trustpilot/Google reviews if any]

I have not modified any product feed data, GTINs, brand identifiers, or compliance claims. All changes
were to public-facing trust signals on the store itself.

Thank you for the re-review

[Your name]
[Your business name]
[Date]
```

Why this template works: Google’s review team reads thousands of appeals. The ones that get a fast read are the ones that say, in order: (1) here’s the exact thing that was wrong, (2) here’s the exact change, (3) here’s where you can verify. Avoid the words “automated”, “wrongly suspended”, “competitor reported me” — they all delay your case.

Section 5 — The “do NOT do this” list (reinstatement-killer moves)

Things people do in panic that get them permanently suspended:

1. **Submit multiple appeals in 24 hours.** Each appeal restarts a 1-7 day review queue. Submit ONE clean appeal after fixing everything.
2. **Edit your feed to add fake GTINs.** Permanent ban category.
3. **Add fake testimonials to “fix” trust signals.** Detected by reverse image search, permanent ban risk.
4. **Change your domain or business name.** Google links accounts via card processor + business address. New domain doesn’t help and looks evasive.

5. **Open a second Merchant Center account from the same business.** Linked-account ban.
 6. **Use a VPN to make your store look like it's based in a different country than your feed says.** Detected via Stripe/PayPal payment processing region. Permanent.
 7. **Edit policy pages to copy a competitor's word-for-word.** Caught by Google's text similarity.
 8. **Hire a "guaranteed reinstatement" service that won't tell you what they're doing.** Most of them either modify your store in ways that get permanent bans, or they use exploits (fake business records, hijacked Google reps) that Google specifically scans for now.
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Section 6 — If your suspension is feed-related (Class D or E)

For "disapproved products" or "price mismatch":

Disapproved products checklist

- ☐ All products have GTINs OR are explicitly marked `identifier_exists: false` for handmade/own-brand
- ☐ Brand field matches the actual product brand (not your store name unless you're the manufacturer)
- ☐ Product titles match what's on the live page (not optimized for keywords)
- ☐ Images don't have promotional text overlay ("SALE!", "50% OFF!", "FREE!")
- ☐ Categories use Google's product taxonomy, not your custom one
- ☐ Adult/age-restricted products have correct flags

Price mismatch checklist

- ☐ Feed price matches live page price (check 5 random products in incognito)
- ☐ Currency in feed matches store currency

- ☐ Sale prices use `sale_price` field, not `price` , with valid `sale_price_effective_date`
 - ☐ Tax included/excluded matches your country's standard
 - ☐ Multi-currency stores: each region has its own feed targeting, not one feed for all
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Section 7 — When to give up and rebuild

Some suspensions are unrecoverable. Honest signals it's time to start a new account:

- The suspension says “permanently disabled” with no appeal option
- You've already submitted 3+ appeals over 30+ days with no movement
- The suspension type is Class F (prohibited content) and you legitimately sell that category
- Google explicitly states the account is on “do not reinstate” list

Starting fresh means: - New domain (different name) - New business entity (different Companies House / state filing) - Different payment processor account - Different physical address - Built up over 90+ days BEFORE connecting Merchant Center

If your products are in a borderline category (CBD, supplements, weapons accessories, gambling-adjacent), accept that Google Shopping will be hostile and build other channels: Bing Shopping, Meta Catalog, Pinterest Shopping, direct-to-consumer SEO.

Section 8 — When to hire help

You probably don't need an audit if: - You can clearly identify which class your suspension is in - You can find at least 3 specific things on your store that match the triggers in this playbook - You have time to fix them yourself

You DO benefit from a paid audit if: - The diagnostic tab gives you no hint - You've fixed obvious things and re-appealed and got nothing - Your store has 10K+ products and you can't manually audit - You want a second opinion before sending the appeal letter

A real audit (like the Useful Patch £199 one at useful-patch.com/merchant-center-audit/) gives you: - A specific list of what triggered YOUR suspension - Page-by-page evidence of what to fix - The appeal text written for your specific case - The order to fix things in (some fixes can make it worse if done in the wrong order)

Skip “guaranteed reinstatement” services. Most of them are either modifying your store in dangerous ways or they have a specific Google contact that's increasingly unreliable. The £199-£500 you pay them is gone if their method stops working — and Google's policy of escalating bans on “service-using” stores means the worst case is permanent suspension, not just delay.

Final checklist before you submit your appeal

- ☐ Class identified (Section 1)
- ☐ At least 3 specific triggers identified and fixed (Section 2/3)
- ☐ Each fix has a verifiable URL
- ☐ Policy pages updated with real dates
- ☐ Trust evidence collected (registry number, address, age)
- ☐ Appeal letter written with exact specific changes
- ☐ You did NOT do any of the killer moves in Section 5
- ☐ You waited at least 48 hours since the last change (let Google re-crawl)

Good luck.

Useful Patch — useful-patch.com/merchant-center-audit/ This playbook £29 (one-time, no subscription). £199 personalised audit available if you want a specific, store-by-store fix list.