

# How to Pass the Apple App Store Review Process (2025 Guide)

Apple maintains a strict app review process to ensure that every app on the App Store meets high standards of quality, safety, and compliance. Before any iOS app can be published, it must pass Apple's review, which checks for adherence to the [App Store Review Guidelines](#).

## Why this matters

A rejected app can delay your launch and cost valuable time. By understanding what Apple looks for and preparing your app accordingly, you can save yourself from the "rejection loop" and get your app approved on the first try. Use the following best practices to confidently publish your iOS app.

## Pre-Submission Checklist

Before you even hit "Submit for Review," go through this checklist to catch issues that might trigger an immediate rejection.

### 1 Test for Crashes & Bugs

Rigorously test on real devices and simulators. An app that crashes during Apple's review will be rejected outright. Use test cases to cover core features, edge cases, and low network conditions.

### 2 Complete All Metadata

Ensure the app name, description, category, keywords, screenshots, and privacy policy URL are accurate. Misleading metadata (claiming features you don't have) leads to rejection.

### 3 Update Contact Info

Ensure developer contact information in App Store Connect is current. If Apple needs to reach out for clarification, outdated info can stall your review.

### 4 Provide Demo Account

If your app requires login, provide a full-featured demo account in "App Review Notes". If specific hardware (like Bluetooth accessories) is needed, provide a video demo.

### 5 Backend Services

Keep servers online and testable during review. Test your app with a "fresh install" on a clean device to simulate a first-time user hitting your backend.

### 6 Review Notes & Compliance

Use notes to explain hidden features or special configurations. Verify you follow Human Interface Guidelines and technical rules for frameworks like Apple Pay or HealthKit.

## KEY FOCUS AREA 1

## Safety

User safety and appropriate content are top priorities. Guidelines cover content, data handling, and device risk.

### Objectionable Content

Apps must not contain offensive, disturbing, or harmful content. This includes pornography, graphic violence, hate speech, illegal drug references, or defamation. Content must be appropriate for your target age rating.

### User-Generated Content (UGC) Requirements

If your app allows users to post content (comments, photos, profiles), you **must** include:

- A way to filter out objectionable material (profanity filters, image moderation)
- A mechanism for users to report abusive content
- The ability to block abusive users
- Contact information in-app so users can reach the developer

### Data Privacy & Permissions

Collect only the data you need. If you access sensitive data (location, contacts, health, camera), you must include a usage description in your `Info.plist` explaining *why*. Fill out the App Privacy "nutrition label" in App Store Connect truthfully.

#### Missing Policy?

Every app collecting personal data must have a Privacy Policy URL in the metadata and accessible within the app (e.g., inside Settings).

## Kids Category

Apps for kids must not use behavioral advertising or collect unnecessary data. External links and purchases must be gated behind a "parental gate" (e.g., a math challenge).

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### KEY FOCUS AREA 2

## Performance

### Complete, Final Version

No placeholder content like "Coming Soon" buttons, dummy text, or lorem ipsum. All advertised features must work. Incomplete apps are rejected under guideline 2.1.

### No Crashes or Major Bugs

Test extensively on fresh installs. Apple reviewers often test on iPad even if you target iPhone, so ensure no UI "letterboxing" or layout breaks occur.

### Load Times & Stability

Apps shouldn't hang on launch. Use loading indicators for network calls. Broken content (empty screens due to server errors) counts as a bug.

### Approved APIs Only

No private APIs. No downloading executable code after release (except allowed scripts like standard JavaScript). You are responsible for all third-party SDKs in your code.

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### KEY FOCUS AREA 3

## Business & Monetization

Apple is strict about payment rules. Attempting to bypass In-App Purchase (IAP) is a common cause for rejection.

### Digital Goods Rule

If your app sells **digital content** (premium features, game currency, e-books, subscriptions), you **must** use Apple's IAP. You cannot direct users to a website to buy these.

**Exception:** Physical goods (food delivery, ride-hailing, physical products) must use alternative payment methods, not IAP.

### Restore Purchases

If you sell non-consumables or subscriptions, you must implement a "**Restore Purchases**" feature. This allows users to regain access on a new device without paying again.

### Subscriptions & Auto-Renewal

Clearly disclose pricing, duration, and terms. No dark patterns. Users must understand exactly what they are signing up for. Provide info on how to manage/cancel subscriptions.

### Sign in with Apple

If you use third-party social logins (Google, Facebook), you generally must offer "Sign in with Apple" as an equivalent option (Guideline 4.8).

### Prohibited Tactics

No crypto-currency mining on device. No misleading "free trials" that hide costs. No steering users to external payment platforms for digital goods.

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### KEY FOCUS AREA 4

## Design

### Human Interface Guidelines (HIG)

Your app should feel native. Standard controls, proper text size, and touch target sizing (44x44pt minimum) are expected. "Web wrapper" apps that look like a basic website are often rejected under guideline 4.2 for minimum functionality.

### Accurate Screenshots

Screenshots must match the app binary. Do not use concept art. If you change the UI, you must update the screenshots. Showing features that don't exist is considered misleading.

## Spam and Copycats

Do not submit multiple similar apps (e.g., 10 flashlight apps). Combine them into one container app. Re-skinneed copies are rejected.

### KEY FOCUS AREA 5

## Legal

### Privacy & Account Deletion

You must comply with GDPR/COPPA. **Critical:** If your app allows account creation, it must allow account deletion within the app (Guideline 5.1.1(v)).

### Intellectual Property

Ensure you own all content. No unauthorized trademarked names, logos, or copyrighted music.

### Regulated Categories

**Medical:** Needs disclaimers ("Not for diagnostic use") or regulatory clearance.

**Gambling:** Must be geo-restricted and fully licensed.

**Crypto:** Exchange apps must be from established financial institutions.

## Preparing Your App Store Listing

The review team compares your app's actual behavior to your listing claims. Inconsistencies lead to rejection.

### Accurate Description

Be factual. Avoid "Beta", "Test", or "Demo" terminology. Don't mention competitor platforms (e.g., "Android").

### App Icon & Version

The icon in the store must match the binary installed on the device. Version numbers should match.

### Support & Privacy URLs

Links must be live. The Support URL must provide a way for users to contact you.

### App Review Notes

Crucial field. Add demo credentials, explain special hardware (attach video link), and clarify non-obvious features here.

## The Review Process

### 1. Automated Scans

Immediate check for malware, private API usage, and basic metadata presence.

### 2. Waiting for Review

Usually 24-48 hours. Be responsive to emails if Apple requests info.

### 3. Human Review

A real person installs your app. They test flows (login, IAP, edge cases), check permissions, and verify your metadata claims.

### 4. Decision & Resolution

**Approved:** Ready for sale.

**Rejected:** Cited with guideline numbers. Fix the issue and resubmit. You can appeal to the App Review Board if you believe the rejection is unfair.

## Top Reasons for Rejection

### Common Rejection Reasons

**Crashes & Bugs:** The #1 reason

**Incomplete Info:** Missing demo accounts

**Broken Links:** Placeholder content/dead ends

**Privacy Violations:** Missing policies or data misuse

**Misleading Metadata:** Screenshots don't match app

**IAP Violations:** Selling digital goods via web links

**Poor UI/UX:** Substandard design or web wrappers

**Missing Features:** No "Restore Purchase" or "Delete Account"

## Deep Dive Guides

Explore our detailed guides on specific topics to help you navigate the App Store review process.

### GUIDE iOS Submission

Introduction  
Pre-Submission Checklist

#### KEY FOCUS AREAS

1. Safety
2. Performance
3. Business
4. Design
5. Legal

#### SUBMISSION

- Store Listing  
Review Process  
Common Rejections  
Deep Dive Guides  
References

### App Store Connect & TestFlight

Master the submission process, beta testing, and phased releases.



### Rejection Reasons & Fixes

Understand common rejection reasons and how to address them effectively.



### Legal & Privacy Compliance

Navigate privacy policies, GDPR, and content regulations.

## References

[App Review Guidelines - Apple Developer](#) — Official documentation on the review guidelines

[App Store Review Guidelines \(2025\): Checklist + Top Rejection Reasons](#) — Comprehensive checklist and analysis

[iOS App Store Review Guidelines: How to Pass & Avoid Rejection](#) — Detailed guide on passing the review

[App Review - Distribute - Apple Developer](#) — Official distribution and review process overview

## Conclusion

Passing Apple's App Store review is a rite of passage for iOS developers. It might seem daunting with all the rules and potential pitfalls, but with careful preparation and attention to detail, you can absolutely get your app approved smoothly. Remember to think like a reviewer: ensure your app is stable, content is appropriate, user experience is solid, and all App Store rules are followed from functionality to fine-print. Good luck with your submission!

Happy Developing!

Compiled based on official App Store Review Guidelines.

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