

Law enforcement gains transparency

Video recordings will help monitor actions and safeguard people's legal rights

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A system will be established for governments at all levels to publicly disclose their administrative law enforcement moves, which will be recorded on video to boost transparency and clean governance, a recent State Council guideline said.

The document, released by the central government on Thursday, aims to improve the enforcement of administrative laws, better safeguard people's legal rights, and preserve the government's credibility.

It stipulates that information on government work should be unveiled to the public before the announcement of new policies on the enforcement of administrative laws.

Administrative law enforcement officials should clarify their identities when performing their duties and law enforcement verdicts should be made public within a certain period of time.

In addition, administrative law enforcement should be recorded and documented in all regions, in text and audiovisual media, keeping track of law enforcement proceedings, investigations, evidence collection, and auditing. These recordings should be systematically filed to keep a close eye on the process of law enforcement.

For example, all law enforcement actions that concern people's personal freedom, health and property, including compulsory demolition, will be recorded on video, with the recordings kept for evidence.

A review and approval mechanism for major administrative law enforcements will be introduced. Governmental departments should examine and review important cases before decisions are released. In cases that fail to pass the examination and approval procedure, the departments will have no right to make related decisions.

More efforts should be made to digitize administrative law enforcement by using big data, cloud computing and other technologies to establish comprehensive e-platforms for management and supervision.



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The guideline was issued two years after pilot programs were started in 32 regions and State Council departments, including Tianjin, the provinces of Anhui and Hebei, and the Ministry of Land and Resources, which was restructured into the Ministry of Natural Resources in March.

Administrative law enforcement is the main method of social and economic management in China, with government departments responsible for enforcing about 80 percent of the country's laws, 90 percent of local regulations, and almost all its admin-

istrative rules, Vice-Minister of Justice Liu Zhenyu told a policy briefing hosted by the State Council Information Office on Friday.

Liu said that while the country has made progress in the field of administrative law enforcement in the past few years, the guideline was issued to correct problems including violent enforcement, violation of legal procedures, and corruption.

On the other side of the coin, some people, such as those who occupied others' seats on trains and airplanes, didn't abide by admin-

istrative laws, the vice-minister said, and the new guideline would play a vital role in setting up disclosure, video recording and review mechanisms for administrative law enforcement.

Such disclosure will make the government "run under the sunlight" — a metaphor for clean governance — by punctually releasing information to people concerned, Liu said. All procedures will be recorded on video, helping to track all enforcement moves, while the review mechanism will ensure all major administrative decisions by

the government are in line with regulations and laws, he said.

For example, a traffic policeman in Shanghai became famous online in May for his standardized verbal responses and moves when checking automobile registrations. They were recorded on video, showing the usefulness of such technology.

Zhao Zhenhua, director of the administrative enforcement coordination department at the Ministry of Justice, said the guideline sets norms and concrete procedures for officials when they enforce laws and

regulations. All the standards are designed to correct illegal operations, he said, adding that all regions and State Council departments should release their own detailed plans by the end of March.

Wang Manchuan, secretary-general of the China Society of Administrative Reform, said the guideline is expected to build a law-governed environment with greater transparency, fairness and efficiency in the long run. It should also promote better relations between the government and the public if properly carried out, he said.

POLICY RESPONSE

University enrollments, generic drugs and apps in schools among items addressed

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Several ministry-level departments, including the Ministry of Education, the National Health Commission and the National Development and Reform Commission, have responded recently to issues of public concern.

Independent enrollments by universities under stricter control



Universities must adopt stricter rules when enrolling students independently to ensure equality and fairness, the Ministry of Education said in a notice on Friday.

It said universities must avoid overreliance on criteria such as research papers, patents and results in competitions organized by intermediary organizations as qualifications. They are also required to reduce quotas for students admitted through independent enrollment procedures.

Universities must establish special expert groups to carefully scrutinize applications, conduct stricter reviews of submitted material, and make enrollment procedures more transparent.

The ministry also vowed strict punishment for those violating the rules, including students and school officials, in line with laws and regulations.

The practice of independent enrollment by universities was introduced more than a decade ago as an alternative to the national college entrance exam. Tests of a student's academic ability and personality are usually required. This year, universities will start the independent enrollment process in March, the ministry said.

Listing of generic drugs designed to encourage research and production

A list of generic drugs will be announced before the end of June as part of efforts to encourage pharmaceutical companies to step up production and research, according to a work plan jointly issued on Wednesday by 12 government departments, including the National Health Commission.

The list will be updated at the end of every year, starting from 2020.

Key generic technologies of major chemical and biological medicines on the list will be incorporated into national plans for research and development.

The plan also promised to prioritize the approval of generic drugs on the list and ensure they have the same quality and effectiveness as their branded counterparts.

Approvals for private medical institutions to be simplified

The approval procedures for private sector investors wanting to open medical institutions will be further simplified, according to a notice issued on Wednesday.

The notice, jointly issued by nine departments, including the National Development and Reform Commission, is aimed at further optimizing approval procedures for the opening of medical institutions by private capital and creating a more enabling environment.

The notice includes a list of approval items and



procedures for those in the private sector seeking to open medical institutions.

As part of the simplified approval items, private medical institutions covering areas below 300 square meters or with investments lower than 300,000 yuan (\$43,700) will be exempted from complex approval procedures for firefighting facilities.

Mobile device apps in schools must meet standards and be approved

The Ministry of Education has urged education authorities and schools nationwide to establish daily supervision to ensure that mobile device apps used by schools meet relevant standards.

The ministry said in a notice published on Wednesday that details of the content, links, functions and information security of apps must be strictly reviewed and submitted to higher education authorities for approval.

The notice warned schools against using apps to increase the course load for students, and said educational apps used by students on campus should be free of charge.

Apps not filed with and approved by the education authorities are forbidden from being used by schools.

Policy digest

Easier deregistrations for companies in pipeline

The central government will introduce measures to make it easier for owners to deregister a company as part of efforts to better the business environment, according to a decision at a State Council executive meeting chaired by Premier Li Keqiang on Wednesday.

A statement released after the meeting said the procedures for deregistering companies will be simplified. Individuals wanting to deregister their companies now only need to publish the information through the National Enterprise Information Credit Information Publicity System instead of having to publish notices in newspapers, the statement said.

The number of materials required for deregistration will be reduced significantly, and individuals filing for such services need only provide items such as liquidation reports. Companies that have been denied requests for deregistration can apply again when set conditions are met, it said.

Deregistration procedures that involve the tax, social security, commerce and customs authorities will be further simplified. Taxpayers who have not applied for the use of invoices and those who do not owe taxes can be exempt from tax clearance procedures. Businesses that do not owe social security fees can also apply for a quick deregistration process, it added.

The government will also promote one-stop online deregistration services via administrative service platforms, and conduct joint law enforcement targeting market entities that have lost

their social credit, the statement said, adding that the new measures are expected to halve the amount of time needed for some business deregistrations.

Comprehensive bonded zones to be upgraded

The State Council executive meeting on Wednesday decided to roll out measures to upgrade the country's comprehensive bonded zones in line with advanced international standards.

More efforts will be made to facilitate domestic sales by companies in the zones, a statement released after the meeting said. Businesses in the zones will be granted general taxpayer status for value-added tax as part of a pilot policy. Processing and manufacturing companies in the zones will be allowed to undertake outsourced processing businesses from outside the zones for the mainland market. Applications for the automatic import license will no longer be required for selling products made in the zones, such as cellphones and auto parts, in the domestic market.

In order to spur research, development and innovation, all goods and items that companies in the zones import for research and development purposes will be exempted from import licensing, the statement said.

In the course of corporate production and operation, any eligible item entering the comprehensive bonded zones and bonded goods being transferred from one zone to another will be exempted from customs clearance procedures.