



6 Ways to Avoid HIPAA Violations

This is an extra resource to go along with the original article:
[Is your practice making these common HIPAA mistakes?](#)

Need some helpful reminders on how to stay compliant in a HIPAA-protected industry? The below will give you a quick rundown on potential violations to be mindful of, all while taking the necessary steps to keep protected health information (PHI) secure.

1. Educate

Ongoing training around HIPAA's many regulations isn't just important, it's likely required for you and your staff. New employees must be properly educated on the details of HIPAA compliance so they can avoid common mistakes—and termination or penalties—and existing employees should be officially refreshed annually.

2. Practice discretion in the office

It's important to protect any information that may help identify a patient—including name, phone number, and address. To be compliant, your office must avoid:

- Sign-in sheets
- Calling out patient names
- Allowing patient files to be visible to others
- Talking about cases or patients in unauthorized areas (elevators, hallways, cafeteria, etc.)

3. Be cognizant when making phone calls

Gain consent from the patient before contacting them by telephone, and be sure to know if they have given permission for another family member or friend to receive information about their healthcare. Always be sure you are speaking to an authorized listener before stating the reason for your call. In addition, it's a good idea to play it safe and never leave sensitive information or lab results in a voicemail.

4. Encrypt your emails

Never assume that digital content is secure or protected—it's not! By encrypting your emails, you can be confident that you are adhering to HIPAA regulations. Learn how here: [Your Guide to Staying HIPAA Compliant When Emailing Patients.](#)

5. Gain consent before sharing on social media

Never post a patient's name, photo, or testimonial without explicit, written consent. Also be sure that no patient information can be seen in office photos, even if it requires the viewer to zoom in. Review best practices here: [5 Ways to Stay HIPAA Compliant When Using Social Media.](#)

6. Use secure electronic forms

IntakeQ

After switching to EMRs, take care to properly shred and dispose of paper files. In addition, make having trusted digital partners like IntakeQ a priority so you can rest easy knowing that your digital forms are secure and HIPAA compliant.

Following the tips above will help keep you and your practice protected from penalties, while also building trust and a good reputation with current and potential patients.