



Be a HIPAA Hero.

It's People. Not Paper.

Is it OK to throw the front desk log into the trash every night when I finish working?

No. Any paper with patient names must be shredded or torn up before it is placed in regular trash.

We have a shredder in the back of our office; which documents with patient information have to be shredded?

Anything containing patient identification should be shredded if no arrangements have been made for special confidentiality bins that are shredded by a waste company.

Passwords are a Privilege.

Our new employee keeps forgetting her password and asks me to let her use my computer while I'm at lunch; is this OK?

No. Not OK. No exceptions. Do not share passwords or let others use your computer while you are signed on. You could lose your right to have access to PowerChart, and effectively, your job. It's not worth it. Tell the new employee to call the Help Desk at **(231) 935-6053** to reset her password.

Do You Have a Job-Related Need to Know?

An employee was talking in the lunchroom about a patient she saw this morning; is that a breach of confidentiality?

Certain learning situations or shared work load are OK, but to tell others who have no job-related need to know details about a patient is a verbal breach. If the lunchroom is crowded, many ears could hear information that is confidential.

No Peeking.

We have an employee whose family members are seen in our practice; is it OK for her to review their test results?

No. Unless there is a job-related need to know or to be in chart, employees may not access charts out of curiosity or concern to learn about family members. If a family member objects to an employee seeing his or her chart, then the employee must assign the case to a coworker. Even if a family member asks you to look up their record and you have no job-related need to do so, you may not access their record. Family members should call their physician or physician's nurse.

An employee has a child seen in our practice; is it OK for her to look up her child's test results?

No. Employees have no right to access the electronic medical record of their minor child (under 18 years old). Employees may go to Medical Records and sign a Release of Information form and then get a copy of their minor child's chart.

Who Gets What.

We have patients in Florida for the winter and we get calls from physician offices there requesting charts; is there a policy for sending charts?

Minimum necessary records may be sent to physicians for continuity of care. In this case, since you don't know the new physician and have not received the request from the patient, ask for a signed Release of Information to be faxed to your office. Sometimes the minimum necessary is the whole chart, but ask for clarification as to what exactly is needed.

A child seen in our office usually is brought in by his grandmother. Today, his mother called for information from the chart. Is there a policy to determine if it is OK to share information?

The biological mother has the legal right to information about her minor child, even if the grandmother takes the child to appointments. There may be exceptions, such as if child has been placed in foster care, etc. Your office policy should address the exceptions.

An 82-year-old patient often comes with her daughter. She recently had tests done and the daughter called to get results; can we give them to her?

You can only give results to the daughter with documented verbal permission given by patient, or a signed Release of Information. Otherwise, the patient would have to call herself.