

# Health Information Compliance Alert

## Compliance Tool: Guidelines for Using Fax Machines

Take these 9 steps to protect patient health information when faxing

- 1) Use a fax cover sheet that includes a Confidentiality Statement.
- 2) Try to limit the faxing of PHI to urgent situations, when use of routine mail is not feasible.
- 3) Fax only the minimum necessary information needed to treat the patient, or to process the payment.
- 4) For your area receiving frequent faxes, designate a person to collect the faxes from the machine frequently.
- 5) Deposit faxes in a secure confidential place when received, not in an open inbox where anyone can see them.
- 6) Verify the fax number and location where you are faxing, and know who is going to receive it.
- 7) Train your employees and volunteers on the importance of confidentiality when sending and receiving faxed documents.
- 8) Program your fax machine, if possible, so that faxes arrive face down, and not lying face up with PHI exposed.
- 9) Locate your fax machine in a secure area that can be locked after hours.

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